



Safeguarding

(V1.0 revised 15/12/2022 11:46:00 by Gemma Cumming)

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Overview

The purpose and scope of this policy statement

Wokingham Town Council is a Local Authority which as part of its activities organises public events which may include those involving children and young people

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect children and young people who receive Wokingham Town Council services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services
- To provide staff and volunteers, as well as children, young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection. This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Wokingham Town Council, including senior managers and elected council members, paid staff and volunteers.

Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation is available from [nspcc.org.uk/learning](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/learning).

Statement

We believe that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people, a deputy and a lead elected member for safeguarding
- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers

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- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently
- recruiting and selecting staff & volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
- making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

Supporting Documents

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents, including:

- Role description for the designated safeguarding officer
- Dealing with disclosures and concerns about a child or young person
- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- Recording concerns and information sharing
- Child protection records retention and storage
- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Behaviour codes for children and young people
- Photography and sharing images guidance
- Online Safety
- Safer recruitment
- Anti-bullying
- Managing complaints
- Whistleblowing
- Health and safety policy
- Staff continuous professional development
- Adult to child supervision ratios

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Contact

Nominated safeguarding lead

Name: Katy Hughes

Phone/email: khughes@wokingham-tc.gov.uk 0118 978 3185/0

Deputy safeguarding lead (online safety co-ordinator)

Name: Gemma Cumming

Phone/email: artsandculture@wokingham-tc.gov.uk 0118 978 3185

Elected member lead for safeguarding

Name: Philip Cunnington

Phone/email: 07711 800401 p.cunnington@wokingham-tc.gov.uk

Local Authority Designated Lead (LADO)

0118 974 6141

lado@wokingham.gcsx.gov.uk

NSPCC Helpline 0800 800 5000

This policy statement came into force on January 31st 2020. We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy statement and accompanying procedures were last reviewed
on.....(date)

Signed:
(print name)

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Appendices

Role Description of designated Safeguarding Lead

Purpose of the role:

To take the lead in ensuring that appropriate arrangements for keeping children and young people safe are in place at Wokingham Town Council. To promote the safety and welfare of children and young people involved in Wokingham Town Council's activities at all times.

Duties and responsibilities:

1. Take a lead role in developing and reviewing Wokingham Town Council's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.
2. Take a lead role in implementing Wokingham Town Council's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures: ensuring all safeguarding and child protection issues concerning children and young people who take part in Wokingham Town Council's activities are responded to appropriately.
3. Make sure that everyone working or volunteering with or for children and young people at Wokingham Town Council, including elected members understand the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures and know what to do if they have concerns about a child's welfare.
4. Make sure children and young people who are involved in activities at Wokingham Town Council and their parents know who they can talk to if they have a welfare concern and understand what action the organisation will take in response.
5. Receive and record information from anyone who has concerns about a child who takes part in Wokingham Town Council's activities.
6. Take the lead on responding to information that may constitute a child protection concern, including a concern that an adult involved with Wokingham Town Council may present a risk to children or young people. This includes:
 - a. assessing and clarifying the information
 - b. making referrals to statutory organisations as appropriate
 - c. consulting with and informing the relevant members of the organisation's management
 - d. following the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures
7. Liaise with, pass on information to and receive information from statutory child protection agencies such as:
 - a. the local authority child protection services
 - b. the police. This includes making formal referrals to agencies when necessary.
8. Consult the NSPCC Helpline or statutory agencies when support is needed, by calling 0808 800 5000 or emailing help@nspcc.org.uk.
9. Work closely with elected members to ensure they are kept up to date with safeguarding issues and are fully informed of any concerns about organisational safeguarding and child protection practice.
10. Report as appropriate to the elected members on issues relating to safeguarding and child protection, to ensure that child protection is seen as an ongoing priority issue and that

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safeguarding and child protection requirements are being followed at all levels of the organisation.

11. Be familiar with and work within inter-agency child protection procedures developed by the local child protection agencies.
12. Be familiar with issues relating to child protection and abuse, and keep up to date with new developments in this area.
13. Attend regular training in issues relevant to child protection and share knowledge from that training with everyone who works or volunteers with or for children and young people at Wokingham Town Council.
14. Lead team meetings, supervision sessions and management meetings as arranged.
15. Work flexibly as may be required and carry out any other reasonable duties. Appointment to this role is subject to satisfactory vetting and barring checks. Safeguarding leads must have received relevant safeguarding and child protection training that is specific to their role. This training should be refreshed regularly and they should keep up to date with any changes in safeguarding and child protection legislation and guidance.

Training for nominated child protection leads:

learning.nspcc.org.uk/training/designated-and-lead-officer-training-and-refresher-courses

Helpful resources for a nominated child protection lead:

- Child abuse and neglect learning.nspcc.org.uk/key-topics/child-abuse-and-neglect/
- Recognising and responding to abuse learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/recognising-and-responding-to-abuse/
- Safeguarding and child protection learning.nspcc.org.uk/key-topics/safeguarding-and-child-protection/

Dealing with Disclosures and Concerns

It can be very hard for children and young people to speak out about abuse. Often they fear there may be negative consequences if they tell anyone what's happening to them.

Some may delay telling someone about abuse for a long time, while others never tell anyone, even if they want to.

It's vital that children and young people are able to speak out and that whoever they tell takes them seriously and acts on what they've been told.

Even if a child doesn't tell someone verbally about what's happened to them, there may be other indicators that something is wrong. People who work with children need to be able to recognise the signs and know how to respond appropriately.

Disclosure

Disclosure is the process by which children and young people start to share their experiences of abuse with others. This can take place over a long period of time – it is a journey, not one act or action.

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Children may disclose directly or indirectly and sometimes they may start sharing details of abuse before they are ready to put their thoughts and feelings in order.

Not all disclosures will lead to a formal report of abuse or a case being made or a case being taken to court, but all disclosures should be taken seriously.

It takes extraordinary courage for a child to go through the journey of disclosing abuse.

It's vital that anyone who works with children and young people undertaking this journey is able to provide them with the support they need.

How disclosure happens

Children and young people may disclose abuse in a variety of ways, including:

- directly– making specific verbal statements about what's happened to them
- indirectly – making ambiguous verbal statements which suggest something is wrong
- behaviourally – displaying behaviour that signals something is wrong (this may or may not be deliberate)
- non-verbally – writing letters, drawing pictures or trying to communicate in other ways.

Children and young people may not always be aware that they are disclosing abuse through their actions and behaviour.

Sometimes children and young people make partial disclosures of abuse. This means they give some details about what they've experienced, but not the whole picture. They may withhold some information because they:

- are afraid they will get in trouble with or upset their family
- want to deflect blame in case of family difficulties as a result of the disclosure
- feel ashamed and/or guilty
- need to protect themselves from having to relive traumatic events.

Adults need to be able to notice the signs that a child or young person might be distressed and ask them appropriate questions about what might have caused this. They should never wait until a child or young person tells them directly that they are being abused before taking action. Instead, they should ask the child if everything is OK and discuss their concerns with the Council's designated safeguarding lead, or the NSPCC helpline.

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Responding to disclosures

Three key interpersonal skills help a child feel they are being listened to and taken seriously:

Show you care, help them open up:

Give your full attention to the child or young person and keep your body language open and encouraging. Be compassionate, be understanding and reassure them their feelings are important. Phrases such as 'you've shown such courage today' help.

Take your time, slow down:

Respect pauses and don't interrupt the child – let them go at their own pace. Recognise and respond to their body language. And remember that it may take several conversations for them to share what's happened to them.

Show you understand, reflect back:

Make it clear you're interested in what the child is telling you. Reflect back what they've said to check your understanding – and use their language to show it's their experience.

If a child tells you they are experiencing abuse, it's important to reassure them that they've done the right thing in telling you. Make sure they know that abuse is never their fault.

- Never promise confidentiality
- Never talk to the alleged perpetrator about the child's disclosure.
- Take a non-biased approach which is both fair to the child and the alleged perpetrator
- Make notes which should then be shared with the Safeguarding Lead who will decide the course of action which may include involving statutory agencies.

Managing allegations against staff and volunteers

Any allegation or concern that an employee or volunteer has behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child will be taken seriously and dealt with sensitively and promptly.

Depending on the situation, the response may involve:

- the police investigating a possible criminal offence
- Wokingham Borough Council child protection services making enquiries and/or assessing whether a child is in need of support
- Wokingham Town Council following the relevant disciplinary procedures with individuals concerned.

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By working with partner agencies Wokingham Town Council would ensure that any children involved are given appropriate support.

Roles and responsibilities

Wokingham Town Council has appointed the Town Clerk as the senior manager and Safeguarding Lead who is responsible for dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse about someone who works with children.

The Safeguarding Lead will ensure all staff and volunteers know who the responsible person is and how to contact them. If there is a concern about the nominated person, it should be reported to their deputy or the Chairman of the Council.

The Safeguarding Lead will be fully trained in managing allegations against or concerns about abuse by a member of staff or volunteer. They will know who to contact if any concerns are raised, such as the police or local child protection services.

Local Authority Designated Lead (LADO)

0118 974 6141

lado@wokingham.gcsx.gov.uk

Behaviour Code for Adults Working with Children

Purpose

This behaviour code outlines the conduct Wokingham Town Council expects from all our staff and volunteers. This includes Councillors, staff and anyone who is undertaking duties for the organisation, whether paid or unpaid. The behaviour code aims to help us protect children and young people from abuse and reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations being made. Wokingham Town Council is responsible for making sure everyone taking part in our services has seen, understood and agreed to follow the code of behaviour, and that they understand the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.

The role of staff and volunteers

In your role at Wokingham Town Council you are acting in a position of authority and have a duty of care towards the children and young people we work with. You are likely to be seen as a role model and are expected to act appropriately.

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Responsibility

You are responsible for:

- prioritising the welfare of children and young people
- providing a safe environment for children and young people
- ensuring equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose
- having good awareness of issues to do with safeguarding and child protection and taking action when appropriate.
- following our principles, policies and procedures including our policies and procedures for child protection/safeguarding
- staying within the law at all times
- modelling good behaviour for children and young people to follow
- challenging all unacceptable behaviour and reporting any breaches of the behaviour code to Town Clerk/Arts & Culture Officer
- reporting all concerns about abusive behaviour, following our safeguarding procedures this includes behaviour being displayed by an adult or child and directed at anybody of any age.
- being aware of your digital footprint - the information about a person that exists on the internet as a result of their online activity
- only using authorised official accounts to send official communications
- using staff accounts for professional purposes only, including email, website and social media accounts
- taking steps to avoid being found by children on social media, by selecting strict privacy settings, using a different display name and choosing an appropriate display picture

Rights

You should:

- treat children and young people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination
- understand that children and young people are individuals with individual needs
- respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems, and appreciate that all participants bring something valuable and different to the group/organisation
- challenge discrimination and prejudice

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- encourage young people and adults to speak out about attitudes or behaviour that makes them uncomfortable.

Relationships

You should:

- promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect
- avoid favouritism
- be patient with others
- exercise caution when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- ensure your contact with children and young people is appropriate and relevant to the work of the project or activity you are involved in
- ensure that whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people
- if a situation arises where you are alone with a child or young person, ensure that you are within sight or hearing of other adults
- if a child specifically asks for or needs some individual time with you, ensure other staff or volunteers know where you and the child are.
- only provide personal care in an emergency and make sure there is more than one adult present if possible unless it has been agreed that the provision of personal care is part of your role and you have been trained to do this safely.

Respect

You should:

- listen to and respect children at all times
- value and take children's contributions seriously, actively involving them in planning activities wherever possible
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy as far as possible.
- if you need to break confidentiality in order to follow child protection procedures, it is important to explain this to the child or young person at the earliest opportunity.

Unacceptable behaviour

When working with children and young people, you must not:

- allow concerns or allegations to go unreported

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- take unnecessary risks
- smoke, consume alcohol or use illegal substances
- develop inappropriate relationships with children and young people
- make inappropriate promises to children and young people
- engage in behaviour that is in any way abusive including having any form of sexual contact with a child or young person.
- let children and young people have your personal contact details (mobile number, email or postal address) or have contact with them via a personal social media account
- not engage or communicate with children or children's families via personal or non-official- authorised accounts
- not use social media in a way that would breach other Wokingham Town Council policies.
- act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- patronise or belittle children and young people
- make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and young people.

Upholding this code of behaviour

You should always follow this code of behaviour and never rely on your reputation or that of our organisation to protect you. If you have behaved inappropriately you will be subject to our disciplinary procedures. Depending on the seriousness of the situation, you may be asked to leave Wokingham Town Council or stop working in partnership with us. We may also make a report to statutory agencies such as the police and/or the local authority child protection services. If you become aware of any breaches of this code, you must report them to Town Clerk/Arts & Culture Officer.

Behaviour Code for Children & Young People

Purpose

This code of behaviour aims to make sure everyone who participates in Wokingham Town Council's services knows what is expected of them and feels safe, respected and valued. Wokingham Town Council must make sure that everyone taking part in our services has seen, understood and agreed to follow the code of behaviour, and that they understand the consequences of inappropriate behaviour. We expect people who take part in our services to display appropriate behaviour at all times. This includes behaviour that takes place outside our organisation and behaviour that takes place online.

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Basic principles

This code of behaviour aims to:

- identify acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
- encourage cooperation, honesty, fairness and respect
- create an environment where your self-esteem, self-respect and self-confidence will grow
- encourage you to recognise and respect the rights of others
- encourage you to take responsibility for your own behaviour
- help resolve conflicts and make it clear what will happen if you decide not to follow the code.

Dos and don'ts

You should:

- cooperate with others
- be friendly
- listen to others
- be helpful
- have good manners
- treat everyone with respect
- take responsibility for your own behaviour
- talk to Wokingham Town Council Lead Officer about anything that worries or concerns you
- follow this code of behaviour and other rules (including the law)
- join in and have fun!

You shouldn't:

- be disrespectful to anyone else
- bully other people (online or offline)
- behave in a way that could be intimidating
- be abusive towards anyone.

Regarding Online activities

- I will be responsible for my behaviour when using the internet, including social media platforms, games and apps. This includes the resources I access and the language I use.
- I will not deliberately browse, download or upload material that could be considered offensive or illegal. If I accidentally come across any such material I will report it immediately to the group leader.
- I will not send anyone material that could be considered threatening, bullying, offensive or illegal.
- I will not give out any personal information online, such as my name, phone number or address.

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- I will not reveal my passwords to anyone.
- I will not arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone I meet online unless I have discussed this with my parents and/or group leader and am accompanied by a trusted adult.

A copy of these dos and don'ts will be visible at all times during any event.

What happens if I decide not to follow the code of behaviour?

This code of behaviour is part of our process for making sure everyone who takes part in our services receives the support they need.

Minor or first-time incident

If you behave in a way that doesn't follow our behaviour code, our staff or volunteers will remind you about it and ask you to comply with it. They will give you an opportunity to change your behaviour. This gives you the chance to think and to plan how you could behave differently, with support from staff and/or volunteers.

Formal warning

If you continue not to follow the code of behaviour after your first reminder, or if your behaviour is more serious, you will be given a formal warning by the person running your activity. They will make a record about what happened and inform your parents or carers if this is appropriate. They will also talk with you about what happened and agree what support you need to improve your behaviour in the future. We may also decide that a sanction is appropriate such as restricting you from taking part in some activities

Final warning

If the support we have put in place isn't helping you to change your behaviour, we may need to give you a final warning. Again this will be recorded and we'll inform your parents or carers as appropriate. At this point, we may need to talk with you and your parents or carers about other services that might be more able to give you the support you need.

Child protection procedures

If any member of staff or volunteer becomes concerned that your behaviour suggests you may be in need of protection or that you may present a risk of harm to other children and young people, they will follow our child protection procedures. This may involve making a referral to the local authority. If child protection procedures are necessary we will talk this through with you and your parents or carers as soon as possible, unless doing so would put you in danger or interfere with a police investigation.

The role of parents and carers

We see parents and carers as valuable partners in promoting positive behaviour and will involve them as appropriate. We will always inform and involve your parents or carers if you receive a formal warning about your behaviour, unless doing so would put you in danger.

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Photography and Sharing Images Guidance

The purpose and scope of this policy statement

Wokingham Town Council works with children and families as part of its activities. These include:

- Open access free family events
- Ticketed events aimed at children and young people
- Events for schools and organised groups (such as Brownies and Scouts)
- Ad hoc publicity opportunities (e.g. opening of a new play park)
- Student representation

Photographs taken at open access free family events where they are general shots and aim to present an overall view of the event or part of the event should avoid any recognisable images of children.

Ticketed events will always include information on photographic consent in the Terms and Conditions when booking and will be on display within the venue.

For events organised for/with external groups such as schools, consent will be passed to the school or group in question to manage in line with their policies and will be confirmed with the school in writing.

There should always be a designated member of staff or responsible adult on hand to advise and ensure the policy is adhered to.

The purpose of this policy statement is to:

- protect children and young people who take part in Wokingham Town Council's services, events and activities, specifically those where photographs and videos may be taken
- set out the overarching principles that guide our approach to photographs/videos being taken of children and young people during our events and activities
- to ensure that we operate in line with our values and within the law when creating, using and sharing images of children and young people

This policy statement applies to all staff, volunteers, councillors and other adults associated with Wokingham Town Council.

We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind

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- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to take, share and use images of children safely.

We recognise that:

- sharing photographs and films of our activities can help us celebrate the successes and achievements of our children and young people, provide a record of our activities and raise awareness of our organisation
- the welfare of the children and young people taking part in our activities is paramount
- children, their parents and carers have a right to decide whether their images are taken and how these may be used, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation
- consent to take images of children is only meaningful when children, their parents and carers understand how the images will be used and stored, and are fully aware of the potential risks associated with the use and distribution of these images
- there are potential risks associated with sharing images of children online.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- always asking for written consent from a child and their parents or carers before taking and using a child's image
- always explaining what images will be used for, how they will be stored and what potential risks are associated with sharing images of children
- making it clear that if a child or their family withdraw consent for an image to be shared, it may not be possible to delete images that have already been shared or published
- Using first names only if we do need to identify images of children are being used in our published material.
- never publishing personal information about individual children and disguising any identifying information (for example the name of their school or a school uniform with a logo)
- making sure children, their parents and carers understand how images of children will be securely stored and for how long (including how we will control access to the images and their associated information)
- reducing the risk of images being copied and used inappropriately by:
 - only using images of children in appropriate clothing (including safety wear if necessary)

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- avoiding full face and body shots of children taking part in activities where there may be a heightened risk of images being misused
- using images that positively reflect young people's involvement in the activity.

Wokingham Town Council has a procedure for reporting any abuse including the misuse of images of children as part of our safeguarding policy and procedures. We will ensure everyone involved in our organisation knows the procedures to follow to keep children safe.

Photography and/or filming for personal use

When children themselves, parents, carers or spectators are taking photographs or filming at our events and the images are for personal use, we will publish guidance about image sharing in the event programmes and/or announce details of our photography policy before the start of the event.

This includes:

- reminding parents, carers and children that they need to give consent for any individual or organisation to take and use their images
- asking people to gain permission from children, their parents and carers before sharing photographs and videos that include them
- recommending that people check the privacy settings of their social media account to understand who else will be able to view any images they share
- reminding children, parents and carers who they can talk to if they have any concerns about images being shared.

Photography and/or filming for Wokingham Town Council's use

Children, young people, parents and carers must be made aware if photography and filming is part of the programme and give written consent.

If we hire a photographer for one of our events, we will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- providing the photographer with a clear brief about appropriate content and behaviour
- ensuring the photographer wears identification at all times. Including if necessary supplying the photographer with an official badge and/or high vis jacket.
- informing children, their parents and carers that a photographer will be at the event and ensuring they give written consent to images which feature their child being taken and shared
- not allowing the photographer to have unsupervised access to children
- not allowing the photographer to carry out sessions outside the event or at a child's home

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- reporting concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography following our child protection procedures.

Photography and/or filming for wider use

If people such as local journalists, professional photographers (not hired by Wokingham Town Council) or students wish to record one of our events and share the images professionally or in the wider world, they should seek permission in advance.

They should provide:

- the name and address of the person using the camera
- the names of children they wish to take images of (if possible)
- the reason for taking the images and/or what the images will be used for
- a signed declaration that the information provided is valid and that the images will only be used for the reasons given.

Wokingham Town Council will verify these details and decide whether to grant permission for photographs/films to be taken. We will seek consent from the children who are the intended subjects of the images and their parents and inform the photographer of anyone who does not give consent.

At the event we will inform children, parents and carers that an external photographer is present and ensure they are easily identifiable, for example by issuing them with a coloured identification badge.

If Wokingham Town Council is concerned that someone unknown to us is using their sessions for photography or filming purposes, we will ask them to leave and (depending on the nature of the concerns) follow our child protection procedures for reporting concerns.

Storing images

We will store photographs and videos of children securely, in accordance with our safeguarding policy and data protection law.

We will keep hard copies of images in a locked drawer and electronic images in protected folders with restricted access.

Images will be stored for a period of no more than 2 years. With the exception of images for historical purposes, e.g. of the Mini Mayor, which will be subject to specific parental consent outlining this exception.

We will never store images of children on unencrypted portable equipment such as laptops, memory sticks and mobile phones.

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Wokingham Town Council does not permit staff and volunteers to use any personal equipment to take photos and recordings of children. Personal professional standard cameras may be used should staff have access to them, however the storage device/memory card will be Wokingham Town Council's property and be deposited in the office securely at the event end. Inbuilt storage capacity within personal cameras will not be used.

Related policies and procedures

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures, including:

- Safeguarding.
- Data Protection
- Procedures for responding to concerns about a child or young person's wellbeing.
- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers.

Legal framework

This statement has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England.

Summaries of key legislation and guidance is available on:

- online abuse learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse
- child protection learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system

Online Safety

The purpose of this policy statement

Wokingham Town Council works with children and families as part of its activities.

Online activities can include:

- Provision of entertainment and cultural activities through webinars
- Sharing and provision of knowledge, entertainment and cultural activities through our social media channels either aimed directly at young people or more commonly via their parents social media accounts
- Inclusion in Virtual Council meetings for our young council representatives

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The purpose of this policy statement is to:

- ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is paramount when adults, young people or children are using the internet, social media or mobile devices
- provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to online safety
- ensure that, as an organisation, we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use online devices.

The policy statement applies to all staff, volunteers, children and young people and anyone involved in Wokingham Town Council's activities.

We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- children should be able to use the internet for education and personal development, but safeguards need to be in place to ensure they are kept safe at all times.

We recognise that:

- the online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however it can also present risks and challenges
- we have a duty to ensure that all children, young people and adults involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online
- we have a responsibility to help keep children and young people safe online, whether or not they are using Wokingham Town Council's network and devices
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare and in helping young people to be responsible in their approach to online safety.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- appointing an online safety coordinator
- providing clear and specific directions to staff and volunteers on how to behave online through our behaviour code for adults

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- supporting and encouraging the young people using our service to use the internet, social media and mobile phones in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others
- supporting and encouraging parents and carers to do what they can to keep their children safe online
- developing an online safety agreement for use with young people and their parents/carers
- developing clear and robust procedures to enable us to respond appropriately to any incidents of inappropriate online behaviour, whether by an adult or a child/young person
- reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly
- ensuring that user names, logins, email accounts and passwords are used effectively
- ensuring personal information about the adults and children who are involved in our organisation is held securely and shared only as appropriate
- ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their written permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given
- providing supervision, support and training for staff and volunteers about online safety
- examining and risk assessing any social media platforms and new technologies before they are used within the organisation.

If online abuse occurs, we will respond to it by:

- having clear and robust safeguarding procedures in place for responding to abuse (including online abuse)
- providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of abuse, including bullying/cyberbullying, emotional abuse, sexting, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation
- making sure our response takes the needs of the person experiencing abuse, any bystanders and our organisation as a whole into account
- reviewing the plan developed to address online abuse at regular intervals, in order to ensure that any problems have been resolved in the long term.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. Summaries of the key legislation and guidance are available on:

[online abuse learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse](https://online.abuse.learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse)

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[bullying learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying](http://bullying.learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying)

[child protection learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system](http://child.protection.learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system)

Safer Recruitment

Wokingham Town Council will follow best practice and principles in terms of safely recruiting staff and volunteers who are working directly with children and young people.

A robust, planned and fair process will be followed to ensure the right person for the role is appointed. This will include:

- identifying and rejecting applicants who are unsuitable to work with children and young people
- responding to concerns about the suitability of applicants during the recruitment process
- responding to concerns about the suitability of employees and volunteers once they have begun their role
- ensuring all new staff and volunteers who will be working directly with children participate in an induction which includes child protection

Safer recruitment forms part of the overall Safeguarding Policy and Practice of the Council and Wokingham Town Council's commitment to equal opportunities.

Anti Bullying Procedure

Wokingham Town Council works with children and families as part of its activities. These include:

- Open access, free family events
- Ticketed events aimed at children and young people
- events for schools and organised groups (such as Brownies and Scouts)
- Ad-hoc publicity opportunities (such as opening of new play park)
- Student representation.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to prevent bullying from happening between children and young people who take part in our activities
- to make sure bullying is stopped as soon as possible if it does happen and that those involved receive the support they need
- to provide information to all staff, volunteers, Councillors about what we should all do to prevent and deal with bullying. This policy statement applies to anyone working on behalf of Wokingham Town Council, including staff, Councillors and volunteers.

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Separate documents set out:

- our code of behaviour for children, young people and adults
- our policies and procedures for preventing and responding to bullying and harassment that takes place between adults involved with our organisation.

What is bullying?

Bullying includes a range of abusive behaviour that is

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally.

More detailed information about bullying is available from learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in the UK.

The NSPCC provides summaries of the key legislation and guidance on:

- bullying learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying
- online abuse learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse
- child protection learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system

We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- bullying causes real distress. It can affect a person's health and development and, at the extreme, can cause significant harm
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- everyone has a role to play in preventing all forms of bullying (including online) and putting a stop to bullying.

We will seek to prevent bullying by:

- developing a code of behaviour that sets out how everyone involved in our organisation is expected to behave, in face-to-face contact and online, and within and outside of our activities
- holding regular discussions with staff, volunteers and Councillors about bullying and how to prevent it.

These discussions will focus on:

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- group members' responsibilities to look after one another and uphold the behaviour code
- practising skills such as listening to each other
- respecting the fact that we are all different
- dealing with problems in a positive way
- checking that our anti-bullying measures are working well
- providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of bullying, including racial, sexist, homophobic and sexual bullying
- putting clear and robust anti-bullying procedures in place

Making sure our response to incidents of bullying takes into account:

- the needs of the person being bullied
- the needs of the person displaying bullying behaviour
- needs of any bystanders
- our organisation as a whole.

Reviewing the plan developed to address any incidents of bullying at regular intervals, in order to ensure that the problem has been resolved in the long term.

We recognise that bullying is closely related to how we respect and recognise the value of diversity. We will be proactive about:

- seeking opportunities to learn about and celebrate difference
- increasing diversity within our staff, volunteers and Councillors as members of our organisation.

More information about responding effectively to bullying is available:

- protecting children from bullying and cyberbullying learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying
- recognising and responding to abuse learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/recognising-and-responding-to-abuse

Related policies and procedures

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures including:

- Safeguarding policy statement.
- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers.
- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers.

Whistleblowing

Staff and volunteers should feel confident about challenging the behaviour of others and voicing concerns. They will know to contact the Safeguarding Lead if they feel unable to report an incident within the Council.

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They can also make a report to the police or local child protection services

Local Authority Designated Lead (LADO)

0118 974 6141

lado@wokingham.gcsx.gov.uk

or by contacting the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line:

- 0800 028 0285
- help@nspcc.org.uk

Health and Safety

See Health and Safety Policy

Staff Continuous Professional Development

Wokingham Town Council is committed to ensuring that all staff are supported to deliver their role effectively which includes access to professional development wherever identified.

Professional development is recognised as continuous from induction through to the point of leaving the organisation.

This may include direct face-to-face training, internal support, on-line training and dedicated time for personal research. The Council maintains a healthy budget to provide for the above which is accessible to all staff regardless of role or responsibility.

Adult to Child Supervision Ratios

A risk assessment will be undertaken as part of every event plan which will include consideration of the following:

- the nature and duration of activities
- the competence and experience of staff involved
- the requirements of location, accommodation or organisation
- any special medical needs
- any specialist equipment needed.