

MICKLEFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

This policy became effective on and from : 21st August 2006

SIGNED :  . DATE : 21/8/2006 .

Cllr. Jon A. Crossley (Chairman)

SIGNED :  . DATE : 21/8/2006

Joanne Hebden (Clerk to the Council)

* Note: by the above signatures it is hereby confirmed that all Councillors and Officers of Micklefield Parish Council, and all relevant volunteers, are aware of, and committed to following, the policy outlined.

Micklefield Parish Council, as a Local Authority, Body Corporate, and Sole Trustee of Micklefield Recreation Ground Charity, recognises that the protection and safety of children and young people, i.e., those who have not yet reached their eighteenth birthday, is everyone's responsibility. This Policy, the related Procedures and the Code of Good Practice, which follow, establishes the roles and responsibilities of staff¹, Councillors and volunteers in relation to the protection of children, with whom their work or activities brings them into contact.

In relation to child protection, the approach Micklefield Parish Council will take is based on, and reflects, the principles of relevant legislation and guidance relating to the protection of children².

- > the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration
- > all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religious belief and sexual orientation have a right to protection from harm or abuse.

The Full Council is responsible for child protection within Micklefield Parish Council. The Full Council has designated the Clerk to oversee this on its behalf. This will include ensuring the implementation and monitoring of this policy. The Chairman of the Parish Council will deputise at times when the Clerk is on leave or otherwise unavailable.

¹ Within this document, the term "staff" refers to any person, either paid or unpaid, carrying out any duties on behalf of Micklefield Parish Council.

² The Children Act 1989 - England and Wales
The Human Rights Act 1998
The Protection of Children Act 1999
The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000
The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000
Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
Working Together to Safeguard Children, Department of Health 1999
Caring for the Young and Vulnerable, Home Office, 1999

In relation to the recruitment and selection of staff, and the activities of Councillors and volunteers, this will also include ensuring that, where relevant, the appropriate 'statutory' Criminal Record Bureau checks are carried out, and references taken which refer to candidates' suitability to work/have contact with children.

It is also the responsibility of the Full Council of Micklefield Parish Council, to ensure that all staff and volunteers, for whom the Parish Council is responsible, and all Councillors, are aware of and understand the importance of implementing this Policy and the related Procedures and Code of Good Practice.

Whilst Full Council recognises that Micklefield Parish Council is not a child protection agency, if children are to be truly protected it is essential that everyone working with children and young people contributes to the work of those with direct responsibility for the protection of children. The procedures that follow recognise and are consistent with that objective and have been designed to complement local Area Child Protection Committee procedures.

As a responsible body, we cannot and should not restrict our sense of duty to those children and young people we identify as our service users. Staff, Councillors and volunteers, through their work and activities, come into contact with a number of children each and every year. By being vigilant and acting where concerns exist, we can play an important part in their protection.

In operating this policy, staff, Councillors and volunteers must also be aware that within the field of child protection there is no confidentiality, as would normally be expected. Concerns relating to the abuse of children and young people must be reported as outlined in the following procedures.

Guidance in the form of a Code of Good Practice has also been developed to provide staff, Councillors and volunteers with ideas that not only will help to protect children, but will also help to identify any practices, which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse. Staff, Councillors and volunteers should familiarise themselves with this and if it is necessary to carry out practices contrary to it, only do so after discussion with, and the approval of, the Clerk or, in the Clerk's absence, the Chairman of the Parish Council.

Remember, non-action is never an option, in child protection.

END OF CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

MICKLEFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Part One

PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IF YOU THINK A CHILD MAY BE AT RISK OF ABUSE, IS BEING, OR HAS BEEN, ABUSED EITHER BY:

- >• a member of staff
- >• a Councillor
- >• a volunteer
- >• a member of the child's family
- >- any other person, including another child

The Full Council of Micklefield Parish Council is responsible for ensuring that all staff and volunteers, for whom the Full Council is responsible, and all Councillors, are aware of and understand the importance of implementing these procedures. Even though the overwhelming majority of children, which you will come into contact with through your work and activities on behalf of the Parish Council are likely to experience a perfectly safe and happy childhood.

It is recognised as well, that a percentage of the children that you come into contact with will, through the nature of their experiences, demonstrate behaviours which might be indicators of child abuse. Many factors associated with disadvantage can also result in a child's behaviour being affected, thereby making the identification of abuse even more difficult. You are not expected to suddenly become expert in child protection nor are you expected to investigate child abuse. You are, however, expected to comply with these procedures.

Staff, Councillors or volunteers, who for any reason become concerned that a child may be at risk of abuse, is being, or has been, abused must immediately report that concern to the Clerk or, in the Clerk's absence, the Chairman of the Parish Council.

The Clerk or the Chairman will discuss your concerns with you to clarify their cause and obtain all the known relevant information. This will then be forwarded to the appropriate local Social Services Department stating that it concerns child protection.

In the absence of the Clerk or the Chairman you should report the concerns directly to the local Social Services Department and then inform the Clerk or the Chairman as soon as possible.

Should the concern relate to the Clerk or the Chairman, regardless of the availability of either, you should contact the Social Services Department directly.

N B If your concerns are raised by something you become aware of while in a school, or through a school related activity, undertaken in the course of your work or activities on behalf of the Parish Council, you must immediately inform the school's Child Protection 'Designated Teacher', and then follow the instruction as outlined above.

END OF CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES PART ONE

MICKLEFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Part Two

PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IF A CHILD TELLS YOU THAT THEY ARE BEING, OR HAVE BEEN, ABUSED:

Children will occasionally disclose abuse to an adult they have come to feel they can trust. This happens for many reasons but the important thing to remember is that if they do tell you, they are doing so in the hope that you will act to stop it happening, even if they ask you not to do anything with the information.

Children may feel as if they are betraying someone they are close to and whom they love. It is not unusual for a child to love the abuser but want the abuse to stop, especially when that person is a parent or carer. Equally, it may be someone they fear eg. an adult whom they perceive to be able to influence decisions concerning their future. Either way, it takes great courage for a child to talk to an adult about abuse and your response can be crucial.

It is important to remember too, that it can be more difficult for some children to tell than for others. Children who have experienced prejudice and discrimination through racism may well believe that people from other ethnic groups or backgrounds don't really care about them. They may have little reason to trust those they see as authority figures and may wonder whether you will be any different.

Children with a disability will have to overcome barriers before disclosing abuse. They may well rely on the abuser for their daily care and have no knowledge of alternative sources. They may have come to believe they are of little worth and simply comply with the instructions of adults.

If a child discloses abuse to you, in the course of your work or activities on behalf of the Parish Council, it is important to react appropriately.

Do:

- Remain calm and receptive
- Listen without interrupting
- Only ask questions of clarification if you are unclear what the child is saying
- Make it clear you take them seriously
- Acknowledge their courage in telling you
- Tell them they are not responsible for the abuse
- Let them know you will do what you can to help them

Do NOT:

- Allow your shock or distaste to show
- Probe for more information/ask other questions
- Make assumptions or speculate
- Make negative comments about the abuser
- Make promises you cannot keep
- Agree to keep the information secret

It is, therefore, essential that everything possible is done to protect the children who place their trust in us. If a child tells you that they are being, or have been, abused you must:

- >- Make an immediate record of what the child has said, using their own words
- >* Follow the instructions for reporting to the Clerk or the Chairman of the Parish Council, as set out in procedure one
- >• Tell them that you will have to inform the Clerk or, in the Clerk's absence, the Chairman of the Parish Council and that the childcare authorities will also have to be informed

END OF CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES PART TWO

MICKLEFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

CHILD PROTECTION

CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

The following Code has been developed to provide you with advice that not only will help to protect children, but will also help you and your colleagues identify any practices which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse.

Good practice will also protect Micklefield Parish Council through reducing the possibility of anyone using their role to gain access to children, in order to abuse.

While it is not intended that this code should restrict staff, Councillors and volunteers from normal ways of working and carrying out activities on behalf of the Parish Council, e.g., comforting a distressed child through providing a hug, there is much they can do to avoid situations that may give rise to misinterpretation, which will also work to protect children.

If in doubt, consider how an action or activity may be perceived as opposed to how it is intended.

Wherever possible, you should be guided by the following advice.

If it is necessary to carry out practices contrary to the following Code of Good Practice, you should only do so after discussion with, and the approval of, the Clerk or, in the Clerk's absence, the Chairman of the Parish Council.

Child protection Code of Good Practice

- Avoid unobserved situations of one - to - one contact with a child. If it is unavoidable, always keep a door open and ensure you are within the hearing of other adults
- Never invite a child to your home without the knowledge and consent of the parents/carers and the Clerk/Chairman of the Parish Council
- Never offer to or take a child alone in your own vehicle without the knowledge and consent of the parents/carers and the Clerk/Chairman of the Parish Council
- If it is necessary to do things of a 'personal' nature for a child, e.g., nappy changing or toileting if they are very young or disabled, ensure these are carried out with the full knowledge of the parents/carers and the Clerk/Chairman of the Parish Council
- Develop a culture in which staff, Councillors and volunteers feel comfortable enough to point out inappropriate attitudes and behaviours to each other
- Don't engage in or allow any sexually provocative games involving or observed by children, whether based on talking or touching
- Never make suggestive remarks or discriminatory comments to a child
- Don't engage in or tolerate any bullying of a child, either by adults or other children
- Don't engage in or tolerate inappropriate physical activity involving children
- Never enter a room where a child may be changing their clothes or not be fully dressed, without first clearly getting their consent to enter
- Respect all children, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, disability or sexual identity
- Avoid 'favouritism' and singling-out 'troublemakers'
- Never trivialise child abuse
- Never let allegations by a child go unreported, including any made against you