Safeguarding Policy

Adopted by Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham & Ellough Joint Parish Council — 20th May 2026



This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.

Next Review: April 2027

Introduction

Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham & Ellough Joint Parish Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. We recognise our responsibility to ensure that all Parish Council activities, services and facilities are safe, and that concerns are responded to promptly and appropriately.

This policy reflects current legislation, statutory guidance, and the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership (SSP) multiagency procedures.

Definitions

Children and Young People

Anyone under 18 years of age.

Adult at Risk

An adult aged 18 or over who: has needs for care and support; is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect; and is unable to protect themselves from harm.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Parish councillors, employees, volunteers, contractors, and anyone working on behalf of the Parish Council.
- Any individual, group, club, or organisation using Parish Council facilities to deliver services or activities involving children, young people, or adults at risk.

⚠ All users must comply with this policy as a condition of use.

Safeguarding Responsibilities

The Parish Council will fulfil its safeguarding duties through the following commitments:

- **Safe Facilities**: Provide safe, well-maintained facilities and conduct regular risk and safety assessments.
- **Awareness & Training**: Ensure councillors, staff and activity leaders understand safeguarding expectations.
- **Group Policies**: Require groups using Parish Council facilities to have their own safeguarding policy or adopt this one.
- **DBS Checks**: Ensure that individuals who have regular unsupervised contact with children or adults at risk have appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.
- **Contact Information**: Display up-to-date safeguarding contact information on noticeboards.
- **Public Events**: Ensure parents/carers remain responsible for their children at public events and that a clearly identified safe point for lost children is available.

Safe Working Practice

All users of Parish Council facilities must adhere to the following requirements:

- **Supervision**: Never leave children or adults at risk alone with adults who do not have appropriate DBS clearance. Plan activities so that more than one adult is present or within sight/hearing.
- **Mixed Groups**: Where possible, have male and female leaders working with a mixed group. Maintain accurate registers of attendance; under-8s must be collected by a parent/carer.
- **Photography & Consent**: Obtain written parental/carer consent before taking photographs or videos of children and young people. Separate written consent must be obtained before any such images are shared on social media or websites.
- **First Aid & Safety**: Ensure access to a first aid kit, telephone, and knowledge of fire procedures. Provide appropriate supervision for personal care or first aid, ideally with two adults present or in view of others.
- **Outdoor Activities**: Ensure outdoor activities are suitable for weather conditions and that shelter is available.

Behaviour Expectations

All users must communicate and behave professionally and appropriately, treat others with respect and consideration, and report any incidents of racism, sexism, bullying or discriminatory behaviour to group leaders, councillors, the Clerk, or parents/carers as appropriate.

Requirements for Groups Using Parish Facilities

Groups delivering activities involving children or adults at risk must:

- Hold valid public liability insurance.
- Have a safeguarding policy and/or agree to follow this policy.
- Ensure leaders have appropriate enhanced DBS checks.
- Conduct risk assessments for all activities.
- Ensure members understand and follow this policy while using Parish Council facilities.

Recognising Abuse

Abuse may include, but is not limited to, the following forms:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Domestic Abuse
- Online Abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Self-Neglect (Adults)
- Financial or Material Abuse (Adults)
- Modern Slavery

Anyone working with or around children or adults at risk must complete appropriate safeguarding training. Free introductory training is available via the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership.

Reporting Concerns

If someone is at immediate risk of harm, call 999 immediately.

If Someone Discloses Abuse to You

- Listen calmly and do not show shock or disbelief.
- Do not promise to keep it secret.
- Do not ask probing questions or attempt to investigate.
- Tell them what you will do next and who you will tell.
- Record what was said as soon as possible, using their own words.

Otherwise

- Report concerns to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- For allegations against staff or volunteers, contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Record concerns factually and confidentially; do not investigate.

Allegations Against Staff, Councillors or Volunteers

- Individuals must avoid placing themselves in vulnerable or compromising situations.
- Any allegation or concern about a person in a position of trust must be reported immediately to the Chair of the Parish Council.
- The Parish Council will follow the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership procedures for managing allegations and will consult the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) before taking any action.
- No internal investigation should begin until advice has been sought from the LADO.

Whistleblowing

- The Parish Council encourages a culture where concerns can be raised without fear.
- Staff, councillors, volunteers and facility users have a duty to report concerns about the behaviour or actions of others.
- Advice may be sought from the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership or Suffolk County Council's safeguarding team.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- Information will be shared only when necessary to protect a child or adult at risk.
- The Parish Council will follow UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 requirements.
- Records will be stored securely and retained in line with the Council's Data Retention Policy.

Useful Safeguarding Contacts

Contact	Details	Telephone
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	To report a concern of abuse or neglect. To discuss whether a referral is required, call the Professional Consultation Line on 03456 061 499 to speak with a MASH social worker. Email: customer.first@suffolk.gov.uk	0808 800 4005
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	To report an allegation against a person in a position of trust. Email: LADO@suffolk.gov.uk	0300 123 2044
Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership (SSP)	For general safeguarding issues and training. Website: suffolksp.org.uk	—