

Safeguarding Policy

Spaldwick Parish Council: Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Date of adoption: January 2021

Last reviewed: May 2025

Next review due: May 2026

1. Introduction

Spaldwick Parish Council fully accepts its role and responsibility in safeguarding children and vulnerable people. This policy applies to all staff, councillors, volunteers and contractors. This policy is vital to the Council's role as an owner, provider and operator of children's play areas including any facility the council provides. However, any agency working with children and vulnerable people has full responsibility to ensure the users are safeguarded.

2. Key Elements of Policy

2.1 Spaldwick Parish Council's primary aim is to ensure as far as possible that children and vulnerable people are safe and secure in any facility or environment it provides.

2.2 Spaldwick Parish Council shall ensure that anyone employed by the Council shall be appropriately checked for suitability when working with or around children and vulnerable people by ensuring that staff are DBS checked to a standard disclosure unless informed otherwise in which case an enhanced disclosure shall be applied for.

2.3 Spaldwick Parish Council shall ensure that all staff, Councillors, volunteers and contractors are aware of child and vulnerable adult protection and shall know the procedure to follow should an issue arise.

2.4 Spaldwick Parish Council shall take advice and guidance from its Child Protection Councillor, and/or Local Safeguarding Children's Board, Every Child Matters and any other relevant body or agency. (See Appendices)

2.5 Spaldwick Parish Council's Clerk has responsibility in ensuring that all staff, Councillors, volunteers and contractors are in receipt of this policy.

2.6 Spaldwick Parish Council understands and recognises four main types of abuse and shall ensure that all staff, Councillors, volunteers and contractors are aware of and alert to types and signs of abuse and the procedure in reporting any concerns. (See Appendix 1: Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse.)

3. Responding to Suspected incidents of Abuse

3.1 Spaldwick Parish Council shall support in every way that it can children, young people or vulnerable adults who have been abused by informing the appropriate authority. If it is suspected that abuse or poor practice is taking place there is a clear obligation to report such matters to the proper authority, the decision for such action shall be taken by the Clerk (under delegated powers) following consultation with the designated Councillor for Child Protection and the Chairman. The authority shall make, or cause to be made, such enquiries as they consider necessary to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare (Children Act 1989 section 47(1)).

3.2 Spaldwick Parish Council shall do its best to ensure that any relevant bodies are notified of any child or vulnerable adult protection incidents and that good communication and links are made in order to safeguard them.

3.3 Spaldwick Parish Council shall record any concerns they have about a child or vulnerable adult immediately even if the concern needs no further action and the record must be kept in a secure and effective way.

Appendix 1

Spaldwick Parish Council: Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse 2010

1. Neglect -

Occurs when a parent fails to meet a child's essential needs for food, clothing, shelter or medical care, or when children are left without proper supervision which leaves them unsafe or unprotected. Some indications are:

- Consistently unkempt, dirty appearance
- Medical needs of child unmet
- Delay in the child's development without other clear cause
- Lack of responsiveness with peers or adults in everyday social situations
- Behaviour such as head banging or rocking
- Repeated failure by parents/carers to prevent injury
- Consistently inappropriately clothed for the weather
- Hazardous living conditions
- Failure to attend any sort of appointments
- Non-organic failure to thrive

2. Physical Abuse - Occurs when parents or adults deliberately inflict injuries on a child, or do not protect the child from injury. Some indications are:

- Unexplained injuries - bruises, scars, bites or burns, particularly if they are recurrent injuries of varying ages and types
- Child shows fear about returning home
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Bruising on very young babies

3. Emotional Abuse -

Occurs when parents fail to show their children sufficient love or attention or when they threaten, taunt or belittle them, causing them to become nervous, withdrawn, aggressive, or disturbed in their behaviour. Some indications are:

- Very low self-esteem
- Lack of any sense of fun
- Excessively clingy or attention seeking behaviour
- Over reactions to mistakes or over anxious to please
- Substantial failure to reach potential in learning
- Self harming; compulsive rituals
- Unusual patterns of response to others showing emotion

4. Sexual Abuse -

Occurs when an adult or older child involves a child in sexual activity to which the child does not or cannot consent, because of his or her age or understanding. Some indicators are:

- Withdrawn, fearful or aggressive behaviour to other children or adults
- Poor concentration at school or learning problems which do not match intellectual ability
- Behaviour with sexual overtones inappropriate to age
- Complaints of genital itching or pain

- Unexplained abdominal pain
- Distrust of a familiar adult or anxiety about being left with a particular person, relative, babysitter or lodger
- Unexplained gifts or money
- Apparent secrecy
- Wetting day or night when previously dry and clean
- Severe sleep disturbances or nightmares
- Chronic illness, especially throat infections
- Venereal disease or other sexually transmitted diseases
- Marked reluctance to take part in physical activity or to change clothes for PE, for example
- Phobias or panic attacks
- Self-mutilation or attempted suicide
- Running away from home

Appendix 2

Spaldwick Parish Council: Code of Conduct when working with children

1. This code of conduct has been produced as a guide to any Spaldwick Parish Council Councillors and officers who come across children.
2. Avoid physical contact unless it is justified in the context of the activity, explained to the individual, and with their permission.
3. Physical restraint may be needed to manage certain situations, such as if a fight breaks out. Ensure the purpose of your actions is clear, and keep any physical intervention to the minimum required to prevent harm to any young people or others.
4. A distressed child may require physical contact, such as an arm round the shoulders, to comfort or reassure them. Try to ensure you are with, or in sight of, a colleague, and ensure the purpose of your actions is clear.
5. Conduct all dealings with children in a public environment in full view of others.
6. Do not place yourself in a situation where you may be open to suspicion or allegation, or where your actions may be misinterpreted.
7. Maintain a safe environment.
8. Avoid being alone with a child in any situation.
9. Avoid spending excessive time with a child or young person.
10. Avoid using inappropriate language in front of, about, or to a child.
11. Try not to approach a child when a parent is present. If you have a concern about a child's behaviour take it up with the parent in a non-threatening way.
12. Try to use the disabled toilet when possible to avoid being in a toilet alone with a child.
13. Remember to keep calm when challenging a child's behaviour. Shouting or swearing is not a good idea and try to speak to the child in a way which you would be comfortable with someone speaking to your child.
14. Remember that children are not purposeful trying to aggravate you and generally see no wrong in what they're doing so try to explain why you are asking them to do something.

15. Never ask a child to enter the building with you.

16. If you have any concern with a child or a policy refer to the Spaldwick Parish Council's child protection policy and seek advice from the Council's Child Protection Advisor.

Appendix 3:

What is Vulnerable Adult Abuse?

1. Physical abuse-

Includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, being locked in a room, inappropriate sanctions or force-feeding, inappropriate methods of restraint, and unlawfully depriving a person of their liberty. Some indications are:

- Unexplained or inappropriately explained injuries (cuts, bruising, fractures, burns on unlikely areas of the body- all at various stages of healing)
- Person exhibiting untypical self-harm
- Medical problems that go unattended or evidence of over-/under-medication.
- Sudden and unexplained incontinence
- Person flinches at physical contact
- Person appears frightened or subdued in the presence of particular people
- Person asks not to be hurt
- Person may repeat what the alleged abuser has said (e.g. 'Shut up or I'll hit you')
- Reluctance to undress or uncover parts of the body, including wearing clothes that cover all/specific parts of them
- A person without capacity not being allowed to go out of a care home when they ask to-or-to be discharged at the request of an unpaid carer or family member

2. Sexual abuse

Including exposure to, harassment, images or acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Denial of a sexual life to consenting adults is also considered abusive practice.

Any sexual relationship that develops between adults where one is in a position of trust, power or authority in relation to the other may also constitute sexual abuse. Some indications are:

- Person has infections or sexually transmitted diseases that are not otherwise explained
- Person appears unusually subdued, withdrawn or has poor concentration
- Person exhibits significant changes in sexual behaviour or outlook.
- Person experiences pain, itching or bleeding in the genital or anal area
- Person's underclothing is torn, stained or bloody
- A woman who lacks the mental capacity to consent to sexual intercourse becomes pregnant
- Sexual exploitation

The sexual exploitation of adults at risk involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where they receive 'something' (e.g. food) as a result of engaging in sexual activities.

Sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the person's immediate recognition e.g. being persuaded to post or being sent sexual images on the internet or mobile phone with no immediate payment or gain

3. Psychological abuse

Psychological abuse includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

Psychological abuse is the denial of a person's human and civil (choice, opinion, privacy, dignity, beliefs, sexuality)

It includes preventing the adult from using services or accessing information that would otherwise support them.

Some indications are:

- Atypical ambivalence, deference, passivity, resignation or low self-esteem
- Person appears anxious or withdrawn, especially in the presence of the alleged abuser
- Atypical changes in behaviour (e.g. continence problems, sleep disturbance)
- Person is not allowed visitors or phone calls
- Person's movement is restricted or they are locked in
- Person is denied access to aids or equipment, (e.g. glasses)
- Person's access to personal hygiene and toilet is restricted
- Bullying via social networking internet sites and persistent texting

4. Financial or material abuse

Financial or material abuse includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements. Some indications are:

- change in living conditions
- lack of heating, clothing or food
- inability to pay bills and unexplained shortage of money
- unexplained withdrawals from an account or the recent addition of signatories
- unexplained loss misplacement or sudden/ unexpected changes to a will or financial documents

This is not an exhaustive list, nor do these examples prove that there is actual abuse occurring. However, they do indicate that a closer look and possible investigation may be needed.

5. Neglect and acts of omission

Including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide health, care education medication, nutrition and heating.

Neglect also includes a failure to intervene in situations that are dangerous to the person concerned or to others, particularly when the person lacks the mental capacity to assess risk for themselves. Instances can be isolated or repeated, at home or in an institution, intentional or unintentional. Some indications are:

- Person has inadequate heating or lighting
- Person's physical condition or appearance is poor (e.g. sores, soiled clothing)

- Person is malnourished or dehydrated
- Person cannot access appropriate medication or medical care
- Person is not afforded appropriate privacy or dignity
- Person or a carer has inconsistent or reluctant contact with health and social services
- Visitors are refused access to the person
- Person is exposed to unacceptable risk

6. Discriminatory abuse

Harassment because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Indicators for discriminatory abuse may not always be obvious and may also be linked to any of the aforementioned indicators and types of abuse.

- A person may reject their own cultural background or racial origin or other personal beliefs, sexual practices or lifestyle choices
- A person making complaints about the service not meeting their needs

7. Organisational abuse

Organisational abuse includes, neglect and poor care practice within an institution or one's own home (one off incidents or on-going ill-treatment and through neglect or poor professional practice. It can occur when staff:

- receive little support from management and inadequate guidance
- are inadequately trained or poorly supervised / supported
- receive inadequate guidance

Such abuse is also more likely where there are inadequate quality assurance and monitoring systems in place. Some indications are:

- Unnecessary or inappropriate rules and regulations
- Lack of stimulation or the development of individual interests
- Inappropriate staff behaviour
- Restriction of external contacts or opportunities to socialise

8. Self-neglect

Self-neglect can be defined as the inability, intentional or unintentional, to maintain a socially and culturally accepted standard of self-care with the potential for serious consequences to the health and well-being of the individual and potentially to their community. Indications include being:

- either unable, or unwilling to provide adequate care for themselves
- unable to obtain necessary care to meet their needs
- unable to make reasonable /informed decisions due to the state of their mental health, a learning disability or an acquired brain injury
- unable to protect themselves adequately against potential exploitation or abuse
- refusing essential support without which their health and safety needs cannot be met

Appendix 4

Spaldwick Parish Council: Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy Useful Contacts

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board

Tel: 01733 863744

Email: safeguardingboards@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Children's Social Care Services

Contact Children's Social Care Services at Cambridgeshire Direct on 0345 045 5203 (8-6pm Monday to Friday).

If you urgently need help outside office hours you can contact Cambridgeshire Social Care on 01733 234724

Cambridgeshire Constabulary Headquarters

Hinchingbrooke Park Huntingdon

Cambridgeshire PE29 6NP

Telephone: 0345 456 4564

NSPCC

NSPCC Helpline, 42 Curtain Road, London, EC2A 3NH.

Helpline website: www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/

Telephone: 0808 800 5000

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk