



Birchington Parish Council

Safeguarding Policy

Our commitment

Birchington Parish Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk.

The Council recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and is committed to creating and maintaining a safe environment for all those who come into contact with the Council through its services, facilities, events, meetings and activities.

The Council will take all reasonable steps to prevent abuse, neglect or exploitation and will respond appropriately to any safeguarding concerns brought to its attention.

This policy applies to all Councillors, employees, volunteers, contractors and anyone acting on behalf of the Council.

The law

This policy is based upon the principles contained within:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Care Act 2014
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

A child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

An adult at risk is a person aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support and who is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and is unable to protect themselves because of those needs.

Related policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's:

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy

The Council's responsibilities

The Council will:

- Accept its moral and legal responsibility to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk.

- Promote a culture of awareness and vigilance in relation to safeguarding.
- Ensure Councillors, employees and volunteers understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Work in partnership with statutory agencies and safeguarding organisations where appropriate.
- Ensure that safeguarding concerns are taken seriously and dealt with promptly.
- Ensure that records relating to safeguarding concerns are maintained securely and confidentially.
- Review this policy regularly and update it in line with legislation and best practice.

The Council will appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will be responsible for receiving concerns and coordinating referrals where necessary.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead shall normally be the Parish Clerk.

In the absence of the Parish Clerk, concerns should be reported to the Chair of the Council.

Confidentiality and information sharing

The Council will respect confidentiality and comply with data protection legislation.

Information relating to safeguarding concerns will only be shared where necessary and proportionate to protect a child, adult at risk or where a crime may have been committed.

The safeguarding of an individual will take precedence over any requirement to obtain consent where there is a risk of significant harm.

Recognising abuse

Abuse can take many forms and may include:

Children

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Child exploitation
- Domestic abuse
- Online abuse

Adults at Risk

- Physical abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Self-neglect
- Domestic abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational abuse
- Modern slavery

Reporting concerns

Any safeguarding concern should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Where an individual is in immediate danger, Kent Police should be contacted by dialling:

999

If a crime has been committed but there is no immediate danger, Kent Police can be contacted on:

101

When responding to a concern, Councillors, employees and volunteers should:

- Remain calm.
- Listen carefully.
- Reassure the individual that they have done the right thing by speaking up.
- Take the concern seriously.
- Avoid asking leading or probing questions.
- Not promise confidentiality.
- Explain that the information may need to be shared with appropriate agencies.
- Record the information as accurately as possible.

Recording concerns

A written record should be made as soon as possible and should include:

- The date and time of the concern.
- The name of the person reporting.
- The facts of what was seen, heard or disclosed.
- Any action taken.
- Details of any referral made.

Where possible, the exact words used by the individual should be recorded.

Safeguarding records will be stored securely with access restricted to authorised persons.

Concerns regarding children

If there are concerns about a child or young person, a referral should be made through the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership portal:

www.kscmp.org.uk/guidance/worried-about-a-child

Out of hours concerns can be reported to Kent County Council's Emergency Duty Team on:

03000 419191

Concerns regarding adults at risk

If there are concerns about an adult at risk, a referral should be made to Kent County Council Adult Social Care:

www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/report-abuse

Advice and support regarding adult safeguarding can also be obtained through the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board.

Allegations against Councillors, employees or volunteers

Any allegation made against a Councillor, employee, volunteer or contractor acting on behalf of the Council must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If the concern relates to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the matter should be referred directly to the Chair of the Council.

Where appropriate, the Council will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Kent Police, Kent County Council or other relevant agencies.

The Council will comply with its legal duties regarding referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Recruitment and DBS checks

The Council will undertake Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks where roles meet the relevant eligibility criteria.

The Council will seek to ensure that all employees, volunteers and contractors understand and comply with this policy.

Training

The Council will provide safeguarding awareness information appropriate to the roles undertaken by Councillors and employees.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead should undertake appropriate safeguarding training and refresher training as required.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated in accordance with changes in legislation, guidance and Council activities.

Last Review: May 2026

Next Review: May 2027