

Witham Town Council: Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

Everyone has a duty to safeguard children, young people, and vulnerable adults. This policy promotes good practice in safeguarding for those using Witham Town Council facilities. The Town Council will review it annually.

Definitions

Children and young people: Anyone under the age of 18 years

Vulnerable Adult: Anyone over 18 who is:

- Unable to care for themselves
- Unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation
- Or may be in need of community care services

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Anyone working for or on behalf of Witham Town Council whether in a paid, voluntary, or commissioned capacity.
- Any individual using the Town Council facilities for the purpose of delivering any service to children, young people, or vulnerable adults.

Promoting a Safe Environment

To promote a safe environment, Witham Town Council will:

- Provide safe facilities and conduct regular safety assessments.
- Ensure that employees, councillors, and leaders of activities in Town Council facilities are aware of safeguarding expectations.
- Require users of Town Council facilities to be safe to work with children, young people, and vulnerable adults.
- Ensure that attendees at functions are aware that parents are responsible for their children's safety and clearly communicate the location of a dedicated safe place for lost children.
- Make all staff aware of safeguarding contacts for advice and help on notice boards.

Use of Facilities by Groups

Groups using Town Council facilities with children, young people, or vulnerable adults must:

- Have public liability insurance.
- Have a suitable safeguarding policy or agree to work to the Town Council's policy.
- Ensure leaders have valid enhanced DBS checks as appropriate.
- Conduct risk assessments for individual activities.

Safe Working Practice

All users of Town Council facilities must follow safe working practices, including:

- Never leaving children, young people, or vulnerable adults unattended with adults who have not been subject to a DBS check.
- Planning activities to involve more than one person being present or in sight/hearing of others.
- Ensuring appropriate gender balance of leaders when possible.

- Maintaining accurate attendance registers.
- Obtaining permission for photos or videos of individuals.
- Ensuring access to first aid kits and knowledge of fire procedures.
- Providing appropriate assistance with toilet trips and first aid.

Expectations of Behaviour

All users of Town Council facilities should:

- Maintain appropriate and professional communications and behaviour.
- Treat others with respect and consideration.
- Refrain from and report any instances of racism, sexism, or bullying.

Allegations against Staff and Volunteers

- If an allegation is made, immediately inform the Town Clerk or Mayor of Witham.
- Follow the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) procedures for managing allegations against staff/volunteers.
- Do not attempt to investigate before consulting with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Whistleblowing

Staff and volunteers have a duty to raise concerns about colleagues' actions or attitudes, and appropriate advice will be sought from the LADO or Safeguarding Team.

Causes for Concern

Staff and volunteers should be concerned by any action or inaction which significantly harms the physical and/or emotional development of a child or vulnerable adult. Abuse categories include:

1. Physical Abuse
2. Emotional Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse
4. Neglect

Training

All staff and volunteers in contact with children should have safeguarding awareness. Free introductory online training or specific face-to-face safeguarding training can be arranged through the Essex Safeguarding Children Board.

Useful Safeguarding Contact Details

Essex Safeguarding Board- 0345 603 7630 or <https://www.essexsab.org.uk/reporting-concerns>

This policy was adopted by Witham Town Council on 10th December 2024

Date for review: December 2025