



CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SAFEGUARDING POLICY (PART 1)

Overarching Statement

Dunstable Town Council believes that every child, regardless of age, gender, religion, race or disability, has the right, at all times and in all situations, to feel safe and protected from any practice or situation that results in the child being at risk from significant harm.

Dunstable Town Council recognises that effective child protection work requires sound procedures, good inter-agency cooperation and a workforce that is competent and confident in responding to child protection situations.

We recognise our legal duty to safeguard children and young people under the Children's Act 2004 and *Every Child Matters, Working Together to Safeguard Children* 2018. Our procedures are in accordance with those of the local safeguarding children board.

The Children Act 1989, includes all children and young people up to the age of 18 years.

For the purpose of this document, the remit of the Town Council is defined as any work with children within buildings, parks, gardens, online and play activities. It also includes any work with children facilitated in the name of the Town Council or by the Town Council acting as agents for other organisations.

Any group, organisation or agency working with the Town Council and children and young people, will be expected to have their own Child Protection Policy and must be willing to work within the guidelines of Dunstable Town Council's Children & Young Peoples Safeguarding Policy. All groups, individuals, or organisations working within the Town Council's remit will be given a copy of the Town Council's Children & Young People's Safeguarding Policy.

This policy has been agreed by Full Council and all staff are aware of this policy.

Aims and Objectives

- Protect children/young people from maltreatment
- Prevent the impairment of children's/young people's health or development
- Help children/young people to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully
- Enable staff, volunteers and visitors to safeguard and promote the welfare of children/young people
- Promote a culture that makes our youth/community premises safer places to socialise, learn and develop
- Listen to and respect all children/young people

- Involve children/young people in decisions that affect them and enable them to influence/develop services with and for their benefit
- Share information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involve children/young people appropriately using jargon-free language
- Recruit staff, volunteers and external providers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- All staff, volunteers and external agencies to follow Dunstable Town Council Child Protection Guidelines (*Part 2*)
- Provide effective management through induction, support and training
- Deal appropriately with allegations/concerns about staff, volunteers or visitors in accordance with Dunstable Town Council guidelines (*Part 2*)
- Respect confidentiality in line with the Dunstable Town Council guidelines (*Part 2*)
- Confront bullying, racism, harassment and discrimination
- Provide effective first aid from a qualified member of staff
- Promote internet safety

Health & Safety – of premises/activities will follow Dunstable Town Council Health & Safety Policy

Safer recruitment and selection

In line with statutory guidance the following will apply for all paid staff and volunteers working with or in a setting where there are children/young people as stated in the Disclosure and Baring Service guidelines:

- A DBS enhanced disclosure is obtained for all staff and regular volunteers leading sessions
- Dunstable Town Council will abide by Disclosure and Baring Service guidelines in all recruitment processes.
- The Town Council holds an up-to-date single central record detailing a range of checks carried out on staff and volunteers including identity checks
- All new appointments who have lived outside the UK will be subjected to additional checks as appropriate

Safe practice

Safe working practice ensures that children/young people are safe and that all relevant staff and volunteers:

- Are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should always avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motives and intentions
- Work in an open and transparent way
- Work with other colleagues where possible in situations open to question
- Discuss and/or take advice from a nominated person (*Part 2*) over any incident which may give rise to concern
- Record any incidents or decisions made in line with Part 2
- Apply the same professional standards regardless of gender, religion, ethnicity, ability or sexuality
- Are aware of Dunstable Town Council Child Protection guidelines (*Part 2*)

- Are aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them

Safeguarding Partners

Dunstable Town Council recognises that it is essential to establish positive and effective working relationships with other agencies. The HM Government advice in Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018, defines 'safeguarding partners' as the local authority and any person or body involved in the provision, supervision or oversight of sport or leisure. There is a joint responsibility on all agencies to share information to ensure the safeguarding of all children/young people. This guidance has been updated to reflect the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act and it supersedes the HM Government *Information sharing guidance for practitioners and managers* published in March 2015.

Training and staff induction

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Officer attends child protection training and refresher training every two years. All other community/youth staff, including casual workers, undertake appropriate induction training and refresher training every three years.

All staff are provided with the Town Council's Children & Young Peoples Safeguarding policy and informed of the Town Council's child protection arrangements on induction.

Casual staff and volunteers are made aware of the Town Council's arrangements for child protection and of their responsibilities. They are given access to a copy of this policy kept at all Town Council buildings

Child / young persons

On any occasion where the Town Council is acting in *loco parentis* it will keep up to date and accurate information in order to keep children/young people safe and provide appropriate care for them, including:

- Names and contact details of persons with whom the child normally lives
- Names and addresses of all persons with parental responsibility
- Emergency contact details
- Details of any persons authorised to collect the child/young person from an activity/venue
- Any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the child/young person

Child protection – responding to disclosure

Disclosures or information may be received from children/young people, parents/carers or other members of the public. The Town Council recognises that those who disclose such information may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully to whom they speak.

Accordingly, all staff will handle disclosures with sensitivity. Such information cannot remain confidential, and staff will immediately communicate what they have been told to a nominated person and make, date and sign a written record (see appendix 1 for full procedural details).

Staff will not investigate but will wherever possible, elicit enough information to pass on to a nominated person in order that they can make an informed decision of what to do next as stated in Part 2. Refer to Part 3 for more specific responses to different types of disclosure or observation.

Staff will:

- Listen to and take seriously any disclosure or information that a child/young person may be at risk of harm
- Try to ensure that the person disclosing does not have to speak to another member of staff
- Clarify the information
- Try to keep questions to a minimum and of an 'open' nature
- Try not to show signs of shock, horror or surprise
- Not express feelings or judgements regarding any person alleged to have harmed the child/young person
- Explain sensitively to the person that they (staff) have a responsibility to refer the information to a nominated person
- Reassure and support the person as far as possible
- Explain that only those who 'need to know' will be told
- Write down disclosures as they were made and date, sign and keep securely until passed on to appropriate person/s – this needs to be done the same working day as the disclosure was made
- Also refer to Part 2

Action by the nominated person

Following any information raising concern, the nominated person will consider:

- Any urgent medical needs of the child/young person
- Contacting the emergency duty office of Children's Social Services by phone or police if there is immediate and significant risk
- Follow up telephone referral in writing within 48 hours
- If and when to share information, this will be recorded along with reasons for the decision
- Using Local Safeguarding Children Board disclosure policy - methodology See *Part 3*
- If the appointed person is dissatisfied with the response from Social Services or the Police, the escalation process can be used by the *nominated safeguarding officer*

Allegations against Dunstable Town Council employees and volunteers or employees / volunteers of an organisation working within the Dunstable Town Council remit.

Local authority designated officer Dunstable Town Council understands that children/young people can be the victims of abuse by those who work with them in any setting. All allegations of abuse will be taken seriously. Where there is an allegation that a member of staff/volunteer/contractor has: behaved in a way that has harmed a child/young person or may have harmed a child/young person; possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child/young person; or has behaved towards a child/ren or young person in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children/young people, the allegations will be

forwarded to the Local Authority Designated Officer, based at Central Bedfordshire Council and advise will be followed.

Monitoring and recording

Accurate records will be made as soon as practicable and will clearly distinguish between observation, fact, opinion and hypothesis. Staff will keep a written record of any observations made, for example unexplained bruises or cleanliness. All records will be signed and dated, any information will be recorded verbatim where possible and a note made of the location and description of any injuries seen.

All child protection documents will be retained in a 'child protection' file, and such files will be kept securely.

Working with voluntary and community organisations

Dunstable Town Council when working with the VCS (funding - financially and officer resource) Hiring of DTC buildings will ask to see their Safeguarding policies and procedures. Any safeguarding concerns brought to the attention of a DTC officer / volunteer will be raised in line with the organisations policy and procedure. In the absence of an up-to-date policy, the town council DSL will raise concerns with the NSPCC.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES (PART 2)

DEFINITION OF SIGNIFICANT HARM

Dunstable Town Council uses the definition for Significant Harm as taken from the Children Act 1989, PART IV (10)

'Where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child's health and development, his health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child?'

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for this purpose as guidance as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is:

- the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

(Working Together, 2018)

This includes but is not limited to safeguarding children in certain circumstances:

Emotional Abuse	Bullying	Gangs
Sexual Abuse	Racism	Forced marriage
Neglect	Photographs	Substance abuse
Physical Abuse	Female genital mutation (FGM)	Up skirting
Financial Abuse	Radicalization / extremist behavior	E:safety including sexting
Online including grooming	Contextual	Mental health / wellbeing
Domestic violence	Peer on peer abuse	Self – neglect
Self-harm	Child exploitation / trafficking	Modern slavery

Child abuse is divided into 4 categories which are:

- **Emotional abuse** - is when a child is made to feel unloved, inadequate, stupid, frightened, threatened, or blamed deliberately by an adult or another young person.

Another form of emotional abuse is when a child is put at risk of danger by an adult or another young person. A child may have higher expectations put upon him/her than is appropriate to his/her age. All other forms of abuse involve an element of emotional ill treatment.

- **Physical abuse** - is when a child is hit, shaken, thrown, poisoned, scalded, burnt, drowned, suffocated or such like by an adult or another young person which causes physical harm to the child. Physical abuse is also the failure to prevent actual or likely physical harm to a child by failing to report actual or likely abuse. A worker suspecting actual or likely abuse does have a **duty of care** to report any suspicions by following the appropriate sequence for referral.
- **Neglect** - is when a child's basic needs are not met. That is, the child is not given the right food, drink, shelter, clothing, warmth, or hygiene, which results in the child's health and development being impaired. Neglect is also the failure to protect a child from danger. Neglect is also psychological when a child's basic emotional and educational needs are not met.
- **Sexual abuse** - Which can include non-contact activities, when a child is shown photographs or other images depicting sexual content inappropriate to the child's age and understanding by an adult or another young person? Sexual abuse is when a child is forced to watch pornography or sexual activity. Sexual abuse can be when sexual suggestions or gestures are made to a child inappropriate to the child's age or understanding by an adult or another young person. Physical sexual abuse is when a child is forced or enticed into sexual behavior by an adult or another young person. This includes touching and non-penetrative contact as well as penetrative sexual acts.

When the term '**significant harm**' is referred to within this policy, it pertains to The Children's Act 1989, PART IV (10)

It is possible to reduce situations for the abuse of children/young people by promoting good practice.

RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE

Child Abuse can be interpreted as not taking action to protect a child you believe to be at risk of significant harm.

It is not your responsibility to decide if child abuse has occurred, however it is your responsibility to take action regardless of how small your concern.

Inform a nominated person who will take responsibility for seeking any additional advice by contacting Children's Social Services Department, and/or the Police. The agency receiving the referral will take responsibility for ensuring that the appropriate investigation is undertaken and the child protected. Dunstable Town Council is a referral agency not an investigating agency.

Do not take sole responsibility; consult a nominated person so that together you can begin to protect the child and also so that you can get support for yourself in what could be a difficult and distressing situation.

Always be publicly open when working with children/young people. Avoid any situation where you and an individual child/young person are completely unobserved.

If a child/young person requires first aid this should be administered in accordance with the approved code of practice.

Respect a child's/young person's right to privacy.

Avoid situations that compromise your relationship with children/young people and that are unacceptable in a relationship of trust.

Remember that someone else might misinterpret your action, no matter how well intentioned.

DO NOT:

- Permit abusive activities (ridiculing, bullying etc.)
- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children/young people away from others.
- Take children alone on car journeys, however short
- Invite or allow children/young people into your home
- Take children/young people to your home
- Accept friend requests or make friend requests online on your personal social media account
- Give out your personal information - phone number, email address, gaming account details, home address
- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others.
- Share a room with a child/young person.
- If a case arises where the above situations are unavoidable, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of a nominated person or child's/young person's parent/carer.
- Make suggestive remarks or gestures, even in fun.
- Let suspicion, disclosure or allegations of abuse go unrecorded or reported.
- Rely on just your good name to protect you.
- Believe it could not happen to me.

LISTENING TO THE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON.

Remember a child's/young person's welfare is paramount and this must be the most important consideration.

Do advise a child/young person that you are willing to listen but that you may have to pass the information on. You cannot keep secrets.

Listen carefully to any complaint or allegation by the child/young person, tell and show the child/young person that you are taking them seriously.

If a child's/young person's behavior or your observations give rise to concern, then talk to the child/young person sensitively to find out if anything is worrying them. Do not make suggestions or lead the conversation. Use the TED approach to gather more information if required.

- Tell me about that...
- Explain to me...
- Describe to me...

If a child/young person makes a disclosure do not ask leading questions.

Write down as soon as possible what the child/young person has said using his/her terminology. Do not interrupt.

Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, whilst passing no judgment.

Stay calm; do not take hasty or inappropriate action.

A child/young person's confidentiality should be respected at all times (refer to Dunstable Town Council's Confidentiality clause in Dunstable Town Council's Handbook).

CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

Research shows that disabled children/young people may be at a greater risk of abuse and need to be safeguarded on an equal basis to other children/young people. The Town Council will ensure that disabled users can access services and activities, along with promoting a positive attitude towards disabled children/young people.

WORKING WITH UNDER FIVES

Children under the age of 5 should always be under the supervision of their parent/carer. DTC staff/volunteers should not take responsibility for toilet duties for any child.

E-SAFETY

- To make children/young people aware of the dangers of the internet through informal education
- Software is in place in Town Council buildings to minimise access and to highlight any person accessing inappropriate sites or information
- **Dunstable Town Council has a gaming policy** and social media policy (see appendix)
- Children/young people will be reminded not to give out their personal details, phone numbers, schools, home address or computer password
- The police will be involved if there is any criminal element to misuse of the internet, phones or any other form of electronic media
- It is Officers responsibility to know the legislation regarding social media age appropriateness

DUTY OF CARE

All adults working within the remit of the Town Council, either as paid or volunteer workers, have a duty of care to the children with whom they work. This means that the failure to report any suspicions of abuse could result in a child being harmed. The guiding principle is the welfare of the child and the sequence for referral must be followed. The worker's/volunteer's

suspicion of abuse should be passed to a nominated person at Dunstable Town Council, who will then follow referral procedure. Whilst it is the responsibility of a worker/volunteer to refer his/her/their suspicions to the nominated person, the worker/volunteer's responsibility ends once information has been passed onto the nominated person. In some cases, a worker may have to give a statement to a Town Council official, the police and/or social services.

REPORTING INCIDENTS

If a worker/volunteer suspects that a child/young person has been abused, or if a child/young person has informed the worker/volunteer of abuse, the worker/volunteer must report this to a nominated person on the sequence for referral immediately. Once their suspicions have been passed to the nominated person, along with any written notes of the conversation had with the child/young person making the allegation, the responsibility of the worker/volunteer ends. Although as previously stated, a worker/volunteer may have to make a statement to the police and/or children's services. Any worker reporting an incident of suspected abuse is entitled to additional supervision or counseling. **NB** notes of a conversation with a child should be made as soon as possible after the conversation and not during the conversation. Please refer to the appropriate listening section of this document for further guidance.

If the referrer is not a Town Council employee, their first contact is their line manager, then it is the responsibility of that manager or officer of that organisation to inform the Town Council immediately. The manager/officer of the organisation or agency will be expected to refer suspicions of abuse to the police and /or social services and the nominated person at the Town Council. (*Current nominated persons listed at page 4*) The Town Council will treat it as breach of contract if it is not informed and the referral is subsequently brought to the attention of the Town Council.

Allegations of abuse against a council employee/volunteer or employee/volunteer of an organisation working within Dunstable Town Council's remit.

Remember it is the Child's/Young Person's welfare, which is of paramount importance.

If an allegation of abuse is made against a worker, either paid or voluntary, working directly for the Town Council, that person will be suspended from duties working with children until a full and appropriate investigation has taken place. The Local Authority Designated Officer, based at Central Bedfordshire Council, will be informed at the first stage of any investigation. It is Dunstable Town Council's responsibility to ensure that this officer is informed. This is for the protection of the child and the worker. Once the investigation has been completed the Town Council will be informed and if satisfied that the accusation was unfounded or a reoccurrence of events is no longer possible, the worker will be re-instated but will be expected to have regular supervision with a line manager.

If an allegation of abuse is made against an employee/volunteer who works for an organisation, sub-contractor, or hirer or is an agent of the Town Council or using the facilities of the Town Council, then that employee/volunteer will be denied access to that forum, and any other under the Town Council's remit, until a full and appropriate investigation is completed and the Town Council is assured that a reoccurrence of events are no longer possible. The Town Council reserves the right to continue to deny access until it is fully satisfied that all appropriate action has been taken.

Nominated Persons:

Paul Hodson, Town Clerk and Chief Executive (Designated Safeguarding Officer) **07593 553666**

Becky Wisbey, Head of Community Services (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer) **07850 708867**

Gill Peck, Youth and Community Manager (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer) **07816 541321**

Jack Adams-Rimmer, Senior Neighbourhood Development Officer (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer) **07801 575139**

The nominated person will forward safeguarding concerns onto the Children's Social Services department at Central Bedfordshire Council through the completion of a BIC 100 Form which should then be e-mailed or faxed. The Children Specialist Referrals Services can also be contacted by telephone for advice.

Referral Numbers:

- Access and Referral Hub- 0300 300 8585 8.45am to 5.20 pm Monday to Thursday and Friday 8.45 am to 4.20 pm.
- Access and Referral Hub e-mail: Access&Referral@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk or cs.accessandreferral@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
- Access and Referral Hub out of office hours/weekends – 0300 300 8123 5.00 pm to 9.00 am Monday to Thursday 4.00 pm to 9.00 am Friday to Monday.
- Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) 0300 300 8142 / LADO@centralbedfordshire.gcsx.gov.uk
- Bedfordshire Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit Referral Team - 01234 846960.
- Bedfordshire Police Child Exploitation Unit – Online Form: <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information/give-information-online>
- Referral on BIC100 www.bedfordshirelscb.org.uk click on Child Protection Referral Form which is BIC 100

ABUSE IN ADOLESCENCE (PART 3)

Central Bedfordshire Council state '***if you are concerned about a child or young person call 0300 300 8585 immediately or out of hours call 0300 300 8123 or email cs.accessandreferral@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk who can give advice or may investigate the circumstances.***'

Central Bedfordshire Council list the different types of abuse a child or young person may experience: sexual, neglect, physical, emotional or bullying in an environment. If there are concerns regarding any of these, the above contact information should be used and the discussed prior to this with the designated safeguarding officer for Dunstable Town Council.

Emotional Abuse

- **Emotional abuse** - is when a child is made to feel unloved, inadequate, stupid, frightened, threatened, or blamed deliberately by an adult or another young person. Another form of emotional abuse is when a child is put at risk of danger by an adult or another young person. A child may have higher expectations put upon him/her than is appropriate to his/her age. All other forms of abuse involve an element of emotional ill treatment.

Sexual Abuse

- **Sexual abuse** - Which can include non-contact activities, when a child is shown photographs or other images depicting sexual content inappropriate to the child's age and understanding by an adult or another young person? Sexual abuse is when child is forced to watch pornography or sexual activity. Sexual abuse can be when sexual suggestions or gestures are made to a child inappropriate to the child's age or understanding by an adult or another young person. Physical sexual abuse is when a child is forced or enticed into sexual behaviour by an adult or another young person. This includes touching and non-penetrative contact as well as penetrative sexual acts.

Neglect

- **Neglect** - is when a child's basic needs are not met. That is, the child is not given the right food, drink, shelter, clothing, warmth, or hygiene, which results in the child's health and development being impaired. Neglect is also the failure to protect a child from danger. Neglect is also psychological, when a child's basic emotional and educational needs are not met.

Physical abuse

- **Physical abuse** - is when a child is hit, shaken, thrown, poisoned, scalded, burnt, drowned, suffocated or such like by an adult or another young person which causes physical harm to the child. Physical abuse is also the failure to prevent actual or likely physical harm to a child by failing to report actual or likely abuse. A worker suspecting actual or likely abuse does have a **duty of care** to report any suspicions by following the appropriate sequence for referral.

Financial abuse

- Financial abuse is a way of controlling the way in which someone has access to, spends and maintains their own money.

The Care Act 2014 definition states financial abuse can be related to money, property or belongings.

Financial abuse might look like:

- Borrowing money and not giving it back
- Stealing money or belongings
- Taking benefit away from someone
- Taking money as payment for coming to visit or spending time together
- Forcing someone to sell their assets without consent
- Tricking someone into bad investments
- Forcing someone to make changes in inheritance

Online including grooming

Young people are accessing online forums in many forms – this list includes but is not exclusive to:

Social Media – Facebook / Instagram / Snap / Tik-Tok / Whatsapp
Gaming
Online forums
Video calling
Chat rooms
Apps

Although many of the above forums have age restrictions; many young people are still accessing them. If a young person begins to have new and unexplained items for example clothes, money or mobile phone that they can't or won't explain, has unexplained gifts, has become secretive, is spending more or less time on their devices, is spending more time away from home or is showing signs of being upset, distressed or withdrawn; this could be a sign of grooming.

Grooming can happen by anyone of any age. The person builds up a form of trusting relationship which could be romantic, as a mentor, as an authority figure or as a dominate and persistent figure. A groomer may use the same sites and online forums as young people, pretend to be younger and build up a trusting relationship with the victim.

A child is unlikely to know they have been groomed. Any child is at risk. If a child discloses grooming, the Dunstable Town Council safeguarding policy must be followed immediately. If you are concerned a child may be groomed but have no evidence and they have not disclosed this – speak to the Nominated Safeguarding Officer for advice.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse can affect anyone. It is important that both children and vulnerable adults are protected. Domestic abuse includes physical violence, sexual, psychological, emotional, financial or material abuse.

Children who witness domestic abuse need to be safeguarded, even if they are not subjected to the violence themselves. It is proven that the trauma from domestic abuse can have a profound impact on both those whom experience it and those whom witness it.

If it is thought that a child is at risk of or is witnessing domestic abuse then an officer/volunteer needs to report this to DTC's Safeguarding Officer, where necessary referrals to CBC social care and/or the police will be made. If there is immediate risk to the child and it is an emergency, the Police and CBC may be contacted first.

Vulnerable adults who may be at risk of domestic abuse may not be aware that they are being taken advantage of and may find it difficult to communicate this. Therefore it is important to be aware of warning signs that this may be happening and concerns recorded to ensure those who are at risk are safeguarded. Please see Adult Safeguarding Policy.

Self-harm Policy

Self-harm is often a physical response to some emotion pain. There are many types of self-harm, including but not exclusive to cutting, burning, pinching, hair pulling and scratching. Eating disorders or misusing drugs and alcohol, as well as self-poisoning are also types of self-harm. Everyone at times can be covered in cuts and bruises but self-injury is often when somebody deliberates injures themselves as a response to their emotions.

Anybody from any background or culture may self-harm, and can happen to any gender and at any age. Self-harm can happen for many reasons; this can include struggles with self-worth, anxiety, anger, or as self-punishment for something somebody has done, for something that has been done to them or they have been told they have allowed somebody to do.

It does not matter what term is used, or to put a label on self-harm, what is important is knowing how to respond if somebody was to disclose to you that they are struggling with self-harm.

Often if somebody discloses that they are self-harming, it has taken them a long time to build up to that point.

As with all safeguarding, it is important not to ask leading questions, but to ask open questions which allow clarification.

selfharmUK suggests if somebody makes a disclosure to you that:

- you spend time listening and being patient
- try not to make demands or ultimatums
- ask them what help they would like
- be honest – if you need to tell somebody else then let them know
- don't worry if you don't understand
- get some support for you too.

If someone discloses self-harm to an officer/volunteer; record what they have said as soon as you can after. If someone has disclosed that they have self-poisoned – call 999. They may have self-poisoned several hours before telling you, but it is important they are checked, as it could still be in their bloodstream and have a delayed reaction.

If someone discloses self-injury, do not think that the depth of the injury indicts what is happening. Often if someone is self-harming, something else is happening which could lead to further safeguarding being needed. Talk to the young person about harm minimization and keeping cuts and wounds clean and equipment used to be kept clean and sterilised if they are cutting.

Further information can be found by visiting, Wiltshire Children's and Young People's Trust: Model Guidance: Schools Responding to Self-harm:

http://www.wiltshirehealthyschools.org/documents/varioussguidance/A020-13_Model_guidance_for_schools_responding_to_incidents_of_self-harm_FINAL1.pdf

Bullying

Young Minds suggest that specific types of bullying include:

- homophobic bullying based on your sexual orientation
- racist bullying because of your skin colour
- religious bullying because of your beliefs or faith.
- sizeist bullying referring to your body size
- sexist bullying focusing on you being of the opposite sex
- cyberbullying targeting you online, often anonymously
- bullying because you are different

Bullying can be a one-off or it can go on for a long time. And bullying can happen to anyone.

If you notice a young person is being bullied, is bullying or has reported bullying; a record of this needs to be recorded. Any concerns or observations should also be recorded and discussed with the Nominated Safeguarding Officer to decide on what action needs to be taken.

Racism

Being treated differently or unfairly because of our race, skin colour or ethnicity can negatively affect our mental health.

Racism can happen anywhere. It can happen at school, at work, or at home; it can happen online or outside; it can even happen within families and relationships. Sometimes racist abuse is obvious - verbal abuse about the way someone looks, stereotypes about how someone might behave, or physical violence and bullying, for example. Sometimes racism is part of the structures and systems that we live in. And sometimes racism is 'subtle' and difficult for other people to notice.

If you are aware someone is experiencing racism, be available to talk, be aware of signs it could be affecting their mental health and offer to support the young person if they want to report it as hate crime.

If you witness someone being racist, challenge this appropriately and keep a written record of what has happened and what you have done.

Female genital mutation (FGM)

Female genital mutation is something that is illegal in this country, and it is important to be aware of the signs in case this is taking place.

It has become more common over the years in other countries and at times some people are taken to different countries to have this procedure performed.

It is extremely dangerous, very painful and can cause all types of infections. Female circumcision should never be carried out, unless by a doctor for medical reasons.

If an officer or volunteer suspects that a child or young person has been subject to this procedure, new legislation states 999 must be called if there is an immediate danger and the police informed.

If you are aware somebody has already been taken abroad you also need to call the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 020 7008 1500. It is important that this is brought to the attention of the safeguarding Officer without delay and a referral made to CBC social services. There are a number of signs to look out for as a warning they may have experienced this or may be due to have this carried out.

- going to a different country for a long period of time with no explanation for why
- prolonged and regular toilet breaks
- seeking medical attention more
- change of clothing
- expressing they are about to become a woman or enter womanhood.

Photographs

When publishing photographs, it is important not to use the full name of the people identified within the photographs. Permission by parent/carer for all those under the age of 13, or by the young person aged over 13, must be obtained before any images are used publicly by Dunstable Town Council.

Radicalisation (Extremism / terrorism)

The counterterrorism and security act 2015 legally requires a range of organisations including schools, local authorities, prisons, police and health bodies to take steps to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. (gov.uk).

Officer's/volunteers who are concerned about a child or vulnerable adult being involved in extremism or terrorism or at risk of participating in these acts, has a duty of care to ensure they are safeguarded from this.

Signs that radicalisation may be happening:

- Dress or appearance changing
- Losing interest in things that once interested person
- Using sites which are linked to extremism or posting, wearing or displaying symbols linked to it.

Contextual safeguarding

The organisation will endeavour to understand and respond to young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. This can be different relationships that are formed in their neighbourhoods, schools and online which can feature violence and abuse.

Staff will have oversight of the nature and number of the contexts in which abuse has occurred within the geographical area of responsibility as well as the individual affected.

This can be done through information gathering during disclosure, or relationships built with that young person over a period of time.

Such information could inform the commissioning of contextual preventative, early and reactive interventions as part of the wider safeguarding system.

Peer on Peer

Children and young people may abuse their peers. This could be but is not exclusive to: emotional abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse, grooming, bullying, harassment, sexting and through technology.

It is important to know that:

- A child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity;
- The age of consent is 16;
- Sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

If you become aware that any of the above is happening, or a child or young person discloses a form of peer-on-peer abuse to you, that the safeguarding procedure is followed.

Child exploitation

This guidance uses the following description of child sexual exploitation: Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability. (GovUK)

It is very important if someone has been sexually exploited that they are not seen as bad or as a criminal. This lies with the perpetrator, and it is important that the child/ young person is safeguarded as sexual exploitation is significant harm.

Sexual exploitation is not something which should be kept confidential. Officers/volunteers should discuss the issues with the Safeguarding Officer and refer to CBC for further investigation and support.

Gangs

The NSPCC states that Criminal exploitation is child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes.

They advise that the word 'gang' means different things in different contexts, the government in their paper 'Safeguarding children and young people who may be affected by gang activity' distinguishes between peer groups, street gangs and organised criminal gangs.

- **Peer group**

A relatively small and transient social grouping which may or may not describe themselves as a gang depending on the context.

- **Street gang**

"Groups of young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity."

- **Organised criminal gangs**

"A group of individuals for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain (financial or otherwise). For most crime is their 'occupation.'

It's not illegal for a young person to be in a gang – there are different types of 'gang' and not every 'gang' is criminal or dangerous. However, gang membership can be linked to illegal activity, particularly organised criminal gangs involved in trafficking, drug dealing and violent crime.

If a young person discloses the gang they are in is making them feel unsafe, putting them or others at risk of harm or making them take part in illegal activity, make a written record and report this to the Nominated safeguarding officer. If a young person or someone else is at immediate risk of harm, the police should be contacted – 999.

Forced marriage

Forced marriage is when someone is forced into a marriage agreement without choice or consenting to the marriage. Either both or one of the parties to married without consenting to it. If someone has learning disabilities, they may not be able to consent. Either pressure or abuse is used to make the marriage happen.

The anti-social behaviour, crime and policing act 2014 states: '*Taking someone overseas to force them to marry or marrying someone who lacks mental capacity to consent are both criminal offenses.*'

Officers/volunteers who are concerned that a young person is at risk of forced marriage must raise this with the Safeguarding Officer, keep records that are clear and concise explaining actions taken and the reason for them. If no action is taken, it is important this is explained.

Involving families in the case of forced marriage may increase the risk of serious harm to the individual. (HM Government, The Right to Choose: Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage.)

Forced marriage needs to be handled as a child protection issue. At times immediate protection is needed and therefore CBC social care and the police may need to be informed to safeguard the child / other children within the household and/or vulnerable adults.

Substance misuse

Substance misuse amongst young people has broadly declined since 2001 (Young Minds).

It is illegal for young people to use alcohol or smoke cigarettes until they are 18 however, we are aware that some young people will engage with this behaviour prior to turning 18. Youth workers will soft challenge and work with young people who may be taking part in this behaviour.

The possession, use or supply of illegal substances will be dealt with appropriately by officers. Informal education and information will be provided to young people who need support and referrals made as and when required.

Upskirting

Upskirting is an intrusive practice involving someone taking a photograph under another's clothing without their knowledge. This is illegal and perpetrators can face two years imprisonment. Upskirting can happen to anyone and any gender.

E:safety (Including Sexting)

BECTA Safeguarding Children in a Digital World, Developing an LSCB e:safety strategy can be found here:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/BEC1-15535.pdf>

It is important that young people are aware of being safe when accessing the internet. DTC will not befriend any young people or vulnerable adults on their personal social media accounts. DTC employees and volunteers will not be 'friends' with children, young people or vulnerable adults who access a service provided by DTC.

Young people will be supported to understand how to remain safe when accessing the internet. Young people making a disclosure regarding e:safety will be treated the same as any other type of disclosure.

'The law says 'Sexting can be seen as harmless, but creating or sharing explicit images of a child is illegal, even if the person doing it is a child. A young person is breaking the law if they:

- take an explicit photo or video of themselves or a friend
- share an explicit image or video of a child, even if it's shared between children of the same age possess
- download or store an explicit image or video of a child, even if the child gave their permission for it to be created.

However, as of January 2016 in England and Wales, if a young person is found creating or sharing images, the police can choose to record that a crime has been committed but that taking formal action isn't in the public interest.

Crimes recorded this way are unlikely to appear on future records or checks, unless the young person has been involved in other similar activities which may indicate that they're a risk'. (NCPCC)'

Any indecent material received by a young person must be reported to the nominated safeguarding officer. Never ask to see the material. If the nature of sexting is deemed as a serious nature, the police will be contacted, and the sexting will be reported.

Mental health / wellbeing

If a young person is struggling with their mental health, Officers will listen to the young person. Officers will ask if the young person is currently or in the past has received support from professionals regarding their mental health. Dunstable Town Council Officers will refer young people to other agencies to support with young people's mental health if required.

If officers are concerned about a young person's mental health, officers will give the young person Samaritans number.

If officers suspect or are informed that a young person is at immediate risk of harm due to their mental health i.e young people has overdosed Officers should call 999 followed by a written record of what happened and have a discussion with the nominated safeguarding officer.

Self-neglect

For further information about a young person experiencing neglect – see the neglect section in this document.

For older young people, there are various signs of self-neglect which can include:

- very poor personal hygiene
- unkempt appearance
- young person suddenly displays changes to their needs alongside a change in their life
- intentional and active self-neglect – someone refusing to book a doctor's appointment who requires medical support
- Unintentional – for example someone with a learning disability may have a lapse which affects their ability to keep up personal hygiene

If you are concerned someone's appearance and personal hygiene has changed; make a written record of your observations and discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Modern slavery (Child trafficking)

Many children and young people are trafficked into the UK from other countries. Trafficking is where children and young people are forced or persuaded to leave their homes and are moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Signs of child trafficking include:

- Spend a lot of time doing household chores
- Rarely leave their house or have no time for playing
- Be orphaned or live apart from family
- Live in low-standard accommodation
- Be unsure which country, city or town they're in
- Can't or are reluctant to share personal information or where they live
- Not be registered with a school or GP practice
- Have no access to their parents or guardians
- Be seen in inappropriate places like brothels or factories
- Have money or things you wouldn't expect them to have
- Have injuries from workplace accidents
- Give a prepared story which is very similar to stories given by other children

If you think a child or young person is in danger, speak to the nominated Safeguarding Officer who will then contact:

- Police if young person in immediate danger or at risk – 999
- Children protection services
- Modern Slavery helpline to get help, report suspicion or seek advice – 0800 0121700

Dunstable Town Council's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Flowchart

