Skipton Town Council

Policy Name:	**Safeguarding Policy**
Date of Last Review:	**14 May 2026**
Version Number:	**V1**
Responsible Officer:	**Chief Officer**
File Location:	**Shared Drive**
Next Review Due:	**May 2027**
Added to Policy Register:	**YES**

1. Policy Statement

1.1 Skipton Town Council is committed to taking all reasonable precautions to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable persons that use its services and promotes a safeguarding culture and environment.
1.2 The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount
1.3 All children and vulnerable adults have the right to protection from abuse
1.4 All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
1.5 All staff, volunteers and elected members of the Council have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer
1.6 All staff, volunteers and elected members are not to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred
1.7 The Chief Officer is the responsible officer for implementing this policy and named person for Child Protection & Safeguarding within Skipton Town Council.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 All members, volunteers and staff of Skipton Town Council must:
2.1.1 Understand and apply this policy and procedures in their activities
2.1.2 Identify opportunities and undertake appropriate training to support them in their role
2.1.3 Act appropriately at all times and be able to challenge inappropriate behaviour in others
2.1.4 Be able to recognise harm and know how to report concerns in a timely and appropriate way

2.2 Members and Managers of Skipton Town Council must:
2.2.1 Encourage all staff and volunteers to understand this policy
2.2.2 Offer opportunities to undertake appropriate safeguarding training and refresher training

2.2.3 Ensure the policy and procedure is adhered to and to undertake regular compliance audits

2.2.4 Ensure that the Council's whistle-blowing policy is communicated to all staff and volunteers.

2.3 The role and responsibilities of the named person(s) are:
2.3.1 To ensure that all staff are made aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they are concerned that a child/young person may be subject to abuse or neglect
2.3.2 Ensure that any concerns about a child or vulnerable adult are acted on, clearly recorded, referred on where necessary and, followed up to ensure the issues are addressed.
2.3.3 The named person(s) will record any reported incidents in relation to a child/young person or breach of Safeguarding policies and procedures. This will be kept in a secure place and its contents will be confidential.

3. Procedures

3.1 The Council will maintain an operating procedure, which can be found at the end of this policy
3.2 The Chief Officer will always refer allegations or suspicions to North Yorkshire County Council Social Services for investigation.
3.3 The operating procedures shall include sections on: definition of abuse, what staff should do if they have concerns / a child says or indicates they are being abused, emergency action and allegations of abuse against staff.

4. Skipton Town Council Standards

4.1 Councillors, volunteers and other members of staff will not be subject to DBS checks unless there is a change in their council duties which requires regular contact with children or vulnerable people.
4.2 All volunteers should submit two references (including phone numbers) by reputable individuals (not family members) which the Chief Officer will check.
4.3 If the Council becomes aware or is informed of information from a reputable source (e.g. Police, NSPCC, Social Services etc.) that an individual is not suitable to be involved with a Council project, it has the right to stop the individual from having any further involvement in any Council projects or services.
4.4 The Recruitment Policy will be adhered to for the recruitment of Skipton Town Council Staff.

5. Use of video and Photography

The use of photographs and images of young people will be controlled to prevent possible misuse. In general, agreement will be sought from parents or guardians that images can be used as appropriate and the consent form completed and signed.

Related Documents (links to procedures etc)

Risk Assessments for all Town Council Departments
Lone Working Policy

Code of Conduct
Disciplinary Procedure
Grievance Procedure
Bullying and Harassment Policy
Recruitment Policy

SAFEGUARDING OPERATING PROCEDURES

Definitions of Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child/vulnerable adult. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child/vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children/vulnerable adults maybe abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger for example, via the internet.

An abused child/vulnerable adult is one who has suffered from, or is believed likely to be, at risk of significant risk of physical injury, neglect, emotional abuse or sexual abuse.

Abuse can take many forms including:

• Physical Abuse eg. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm

• Emotional Abuse eg. Tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring

• Sexual Abuse eg. Unwanted physical contact, involving children/vulnerable adults with sexual images or comments

• Neglect

• Bullying eg. Physical, assault, threats & intimidation, name calling, spreading rumours

What staff should do if they have concerns / a child says or indicates they are being abused

If a child/vulnerable adult confides in you:

• Stay calm, approachable and open to what they have to say

• Listen to them carefully without interrupting

• Make it clear that you are taking what they are telling you seriously

• Acknowledge that you understand how difficult this might be for them to say what they are saying

• Reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling someone

• Let them know that you will do everything you can to help them

• Do not show any shock or disgust;

• Do not probe further;

• Do not ask leading questions that might suggest the answer;

• Do not make assumptions;

• Do not make any comments about the alleged abuser;

• Do not make promises you cannot keep, particularly about keeping the information 'secret', but explain that you may need to share it with an appropriate person;

Make a written statement note of what the child has said as soon as possible after the event.

If the child says the alleged abuser is on the premises or a member of staff, do not approach the individual, just observe.

Maintain confidentiality – only inform your Manager. At this stage the Line Manager will decide on the next course of action.

Emergency Action

In some cases it may be important or an absolute necessity to protect a child/vulnerable adult. In these cases employees should:

• Wherever possible take immediate action to protect them from the immediate harm or possible immediate harm.

• Inform your Manager immediately.

• Contact the Social Services or Police as soon as possible. If necessary dial 999 and report the incident or your concerns to the Police. The Police are the only agency with statutory powers for the immediate protection of children/vulnerable adults. In urgent cases do not delay making a referral – make it straight away and make it direct.

Should you suspect or be informed that abuse has taken place you should inform your line manager and the Chief Officer immediately.

If your manager is not available contact North Yorkshire County Council:

Telephone: 01609 780780

Email: social.care@northyorks.gov.uk

www.northyorks.gov.uk/safeguarding

Keep evidence of everything you have observed/heard.

Contact Police if needed.

There is also a NSPCC Help Line Tel: 0808 8005000 for experienced advice about possible abuse situations.

If you feel unsure as to whether parents are involved in a suspected abuse you should not approach the parents on the subject as this could place the child at

further risk. This is a very difficult situation to assess therefore advice should be sought from any of the above under such circumstances.

Allegations of abuse against Staff

It may be that the person is unclear whether allegations that are made constitute abuse or poor practice and are therefore unsure of the action to be taken. It is essential for this reason that the person in charge informs the Chief Officer of the situation and where necessary obtain advice from Social Services. It is possible that this may be just one of a series of instances of which you are unaware that could constitute something more serious.

It is acknowledged that any suggestion that a member of staff is or may be abusing a child/vulnerable adult will raise concerns amongst other staff, including the inherent difficulties in reporting such matters. However, it is important that any concerns for the welfare of a child/vulnerable adult arising from abuse or harassment by a member of staff should be reported immediately.

Skipton Town Council will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is or may be abusing a child/vulnerable adult.

Any concerns must be discussed with the Chief Officer where the best course of action will be decided. It is crucial that allegations are taken seriously and any appropriate action taken to protect the welfare of the child/vulnerable adult.

If, following consideration by the Chief Officer, the allegation is clearly one about poor practice then the person in charge will deal with this situation as a misconduct issue.

If the allegation is one of abuse and/or one against the person in charge then the Chief Officer must contact North Yorkshire Council Social Services team and act upon their advice.

The Chief Officer must be informed immediately of any allegations of abuse made against a member of staff. They will then make an immediate decision as to whether the individual should be temporarily suspended from duty, as a neutral act, pending further investigations. The Chief Officer will keep the Mayor advised at all times.

Irrespective of a social services or Police Investigation the Chief Officer will assess all individual cases under the appropriate misconduct and disciplinary procedure to decide whether a member of staff can be reinstated and if so how it can be handled with sensitivity.