Parish Council

# Youth & Safeguarding Policy 2026

This policy applies to all Council-run youth services, activities, trips, events, outreach, online engagement and other work where children and young people are present or involved.

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| **Policy owner** | Parish Clerk |
| **Operational lead** | Youth & Community Officer |
| **Applies to** | Employees, casual workers, agency workers, volunteers, councillors acting in service delivery, students and contractors |
| **Revised** | August 2026 |
| **Review frequency** | At least annually, and sooner following legislative change, a serious incident or lessons learned |
| **Next review** | August 2027 |

*Important: local contact details in Appendix 1 should be checked at each annual review and immediately following notification of any local safeguarding pathway change.*

## Change Log

| Review Date | Action | By Whom |
|---|---|---|
| August 2026 | Full Review | AB |
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# 2026 Updates

This document replaces the previous CSNPC Youth Safeguarding Policy suite, which referenced safeguarding guidance from 2015-2016. The revised policy is aligned primarily to Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and current Swindon Safeguarding Partnership arrangements. Keeping Children Safe in Education is school/college guidance and does not directly govern a parish council youth service; however, relevant safeguarding themes and safer-working principles are used here as good practice.

- Uses the current 2026 Working Together framework and updated local Swindon referral routes.
- Distinguishes clearly between safeguarding concerns about a child and allegations/concerns about an adult working with children.
- Adds explicit procedures for child-on-child abuse, exploitation, online harm, domestic abuse, missing children, behaviour management and low-level concerns.
- Updates DBS wording: eligibility is role-based; barred-list checks are only lawful where the role meets the legal criteria. There is no universal legal requirement to repeat every DBS certificate every two years.
- Updates information-sharing expectations so that data protection is not treated as a barrier to proportionate safeguarding information sharing.
- Updates Prevent wording to reflect the 2023 Prevent Duty Guidance. Parish councils are not listed as specified local authorities in that guidance, but radicalisation concerns will be managed as safeguarding concerns and escalated through appropriate local arrangements.
- Replaces outdated named LADO information and old MASH contact details with current role-based and local contact arrangements.
- Adds vaping and other nicotine products to the no-smoking approach and strengthens professional boundaries around personal devices and social media.

# 1. Policy statement

Central Swindon North Parish Council (CSNPC) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child and young person who uses, visits or participates in its services. The welfare of the child is paramount. Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility, and concerns must be acted on promptly rather than assumed to be someone else’s responsibility.

For this policy, a child is anyone under the age of 18. The Council recognises that children may experience harm inside or outside the family, in the community, in peer groups and online, and that abuse may be perpetrated by adults or by other children.

The Council will listen to children, take their wishes and feelings seriously, work in a trauma-informed and anti-discriminatory way, and make decisions based on the child’s safety, welfare, individual needs and circumstances.

# 2. Scope

This policy applies to all CSNPC youth provision and to everyone acting on behalf of the Council in connection with children and young people, whether paid or unpaid. It applies at Council premises, in parks and open spaces, on trips and transport, during outreach activity, at partner venues and in digital or social-media contact.

Partner organisations and contractors remain responsible for their own safeguarding arrangements. CSNPC will obtain proportionate assurance before they deliver activities involving children on the Council's behalf or within Council youth provision.

# 3. Legal and guidance framework

This policy should be read alongside the Council's wider HR, health and safety, equality, data protection, complaints, whistleblowing, social media, lone working and recruitment arrangements. Relevant legislation and guidance includes, as applicable:

- *Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004;*
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 (Department for Education);*
- *Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, as amended, and current Disclosure and Barring Service guidance;*
- *Protection of Freedoms Act 2012;*
- *Sexual Offences Act 2003;*
- *Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 and Serious Crime Act 2015;*
- *Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and Prevent Duty Guidance: England and Wales (2023);*
- *Domestic Abuse Act 2021;*
- *Equality Act 2010;*
- *Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR;*
- *Human Rights Act 1998;*
- *Online Safety Act 2023, where relevant to online services and platforms;*
- *Swindon Safeguarding Partnership procedures and the current Right Help at the Right Time threshold guidance.*

# 4. Definitions and safeguarding principles

## 4.1 Safeguarding and promoting welfare

Safeguarding includes providing help and support as soon as problems emerge; protecting children from maltreatment whether that is within or outside the home, including online; preventing impairment of children's physical and mental health or development; ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

### 4.2 Significant harm

Some concerns may indicate that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. Staff do not need to prove that significant harm has occurred before sharing a concern or seeking advice. Where there is uncertainty, staff should consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Children and Families Contact Swindon without delay.

### 4.3 Child-centred and inclusive practice

- The child's safety and welfare are the primary consideration.
- Children will be listened to and their wishes and feelings considered in a way appropriate to age and understanding.
- Practitioners will be alert to barriers to disclosure, including disability, communication needs, trauma, fear, discrimination, family circumstances and previous experiences of services.
- Racism, discrimination, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, ableism and other forms of prejudice will be challenged rather than normalised.
- Parents and carers should normally be involved, unless doing so would increase risk, impede a safeguarding enquiry or place anyone at greater risk.

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

### 5.1 Council

- Approve an appropriate safeguarding framework and ensure sufficient resources, training and oversight.
- Ensure appropriate safer recruitment, DBS eligibility decisions and supervision arrangements.
- Ensure staff can raise concerns and use whistleblowing arrangements without fear of retaliation.
- Receive assurance on policy review and safeguarding arrangements without receiving unnecessary personal case information.

### 5.2 Parish Clerk / Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Act as the Council's strategic safeguarding lead and ensure local safeguarding procedures are followed.
- Provide or obtain advice to staff and volunteers dealing with concerns.
- Make or oversee referrals to Children and Families Contact Swindon, police, LADO, DBS or other agencies where required.
- Ensure safeguarding records are accurate, secure, chronologically maintained and access is restricted to those who need to know.
- Ensure allegations about adults working with children are managed separately from ordinary child-welfare referrals.
- Ensure relevant lessons from incidents, complaints and referrals are reflected in practice and training.
- Ensure suitable cover arrangements exist when the DSL is unavailable.

### 5.3 Senior Youth Worker / session lead

- Maintain safe day-to-day practice, staffing, attendance and session arrangements.
- Ensure staff and volunteers know how to report concerns and where safeguarding information is kept.
- Complete and review risk assessments and dynamic risk assessments for activities.
- Report concerns immediately to the DSL and take emergency action where needed.

### 5.4 All staff, volunteers and others working with children

- Read and follow this policy and the Code of Conduct.
- Remain alert to signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation and changes in behaviour.
- Record and report concerns promptly; never assume someone else will act.
- Do not investigate allegations themselves or confront an alleged perpetrator.
- Know that safeguarding information may need to be shared without consent when necessary and proportionate to protect a child.
- Immediately report any concern about the behaviour of an adult working with children, including a low-level concern.

## 6. Recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation

Abuse can occur in any family or community and can be committed by adults or other children. It can be physical or non-physical and can take place in person or online. The four recognised categories of abuse remain physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Concerns often overlap and should be considered in the context of the child's lived experience.

### 6.1 Physical abuse

Physical abuse may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm. It can also include fabricated or induced illness.

### 6.2 Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional maltreatment likely to cause severe and adverse effects on emotional development. It may involve humiliation, threats, rejection, silencing, inappropriate expectations, coercive control, exposure to domestic abuse, serious bullying or exploitation.

### 6.3 Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child understands what is happening. It includes contact and non-contact abuse, grooming, sexual exploitation, sexual images and technology-assisted abuse. Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by adults or children of any gender.

### 6.4 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to cause serious impairment of health or development. It can include inadequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, medical care, emotional care or protection from danger.

# 7. Specific safeguarding issues

## 7.1 Child-on-child abuse

All child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and must not be dismissed as banter, part of growing up or normal behaviour. It can include bullying (including prejudice-based and cyberbullying), physical abuse, sexual violence or harassment, coercive or controlling behaviour, abuse within intimate relationships, sharing sexual images, initiation or hazing, exploitation and harmful online behaviour.

Victims, alleged perpetrators and other children affected may all require safeguarding support. Staff must avoid language that blames or shames children and must consider age, development, power imbalance, coercion and wider peer-group dynamics.

## 7.2 Child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation

Exploitation can involve an individual or group taking advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Apparent consent does not remove the possibility of exploitation. Indicators may include unexplained money or gifts, older associates, missing episodes, changes in behaviour, carrying weapons, drug activity, unexplained injuries or increasing secrecy.

## 7.3 County lines, gangs and serious violence

Staff should be alert to children being used to transport drugs, money or weapons, becoming indebted or controlled by others, or being drawn into serious violence. Missing episodes, travelling to unfamiliar areas, multiple phones, unexplained cash and changes in friendship groups can be indicators.

## 7.4 Domestic abuse

Children can be victims of domestic abuse where they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse between people aged 16 or over who are personally connected. Domestic abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, coercive or controlling. Concerns must be treated as safeguarding concerns even where the child is not the direct target of the abuse.

## 7.5 Harmful practices

Concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, so-called honour-based abuse, breast ironing or other harmful practices must be treated as safeguarding concerns and referred promptly. Staff must not attempt family mediation where doing so could increase risk.

## 7.6 Radicalisation and Prevent

Radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism or extremist ideologies associated with terrorism. CSNPC will treat concerns about susceptibility to radicalisation as safeguarding concerns and seek advice through local safeguarding/Prevent arrangements. The Council will not rely on stereotypes about religion, ethnicity, political views or identity.

## 7.7 Online safety and technology-assisted harm

- Online abuse, grooming, coercion, sexual harassment and exploitation;
- Non-consensual creation or sharing of nude/semi-nude or sexual images, including AI-generated or manipulated material;
- Cyberbullying, hate, harassment and threats;

- Exposure to harmful or age-inappropriate content, extremist material or dangerous challenges;
- Location sharing, doxxing, impersonation, scams and misuse of personal data.

Online concerns must be responded to with the same seriousness as offline concerns. Staff must preserve relevant evidence where safe to do so, but must not ask children to forward illegal sexual images or search devices in a way that could create further risk or unlawful possession.

### 7.8 Mental health, self-harm and suicide concerns

Mental health difficulties are not in themselves evidence of abuse, but changes in mental health or behaviour may indicate that a child has suffered or is at risk of harm. Any immediate risk to life or serious injury must be treated as an emergency. Wider concerns should be shared with the DSL and parents/carers or appropriate services as the circumstances require.

### 7.9 Children who go missing

Repeated or unexplained missing episodes can be a warning sign of abuse, exploitation or other harm. The specific missing-child procedure for Council youth sessions is set out at section 18.

## 8. Responding to a disclosure or concern

If a child makes a disclosure or a staff member becomes concerned, the following approach must be used:

1. Listen carefully and give the child your full attention.
2. Stay calm. Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking.
3. Do not promise secrecy or confidentiality. Explain that information will only be shared with people who need it to help keep them safe.
4. Do not ask leading, probing or repeated questions. Use only open questions necessary to clarify what is being said.
5. Do not investigate, confront the alleged perpetrator or seek to obtain proof.
6. If the child is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical attention, call 999 and take reasonable steps to secure immediate safety.
7. Record the concern as soon as possible using the child’s own words where possible, including date, time, place, people present, observations and actions taken.
8. Report the concern to the DSL immediately. If the DSL is unavailable and delay could place the child at risk, contact Children and Families Contact Swindon or police directly.
9. Do not delay a referral because some information is missing.

# 9. Referrals and thresholds

CSNPC will follow the current Swindon Safeguarding Partnership Right Help at the Right Time guidance. A child does not need to be at immediate risk of significant harm before help can be sought. Early support should be considered where needs are emerging, while child-protection concerns must be referred promptly.

Professionals should normally tell parents/carers about a referral and seek their involvement. Consent is not required where there are reasonable grounds to believe that seeking it would increase risk, prejudice a police or safeguarding enquiry, or otherwise be contrary to the child's interests. The rationale must be recorded.

If a referral is not accepted and the Council remains concerned, the DSL will seek clarification, provide additional information and use the Swindon professional resolution/escalation process where appropriate. Professional disagreement must not result in a child being left at risk.

# 10. Information sharing and confidentiality

- Safeguarding information is confidential, not secret.
- Information should be shared when it is necessary and proportionate to safeguard or promote a child's welfare.
- Data protection legislation does not prevent appropriate safeguarding information sharing.
- Only relevant information should be shared, with people who need it, and decisions should be recorded.
- Where safe and appropriate, children and parents/carers should be informed about information sharing.
- Information may be shared without consent where there is a lawful basis and this is necessary to protect a child or another person from harm.

Safeguarding records must be stored securely, separately from routine youth-service records where practicable, with access restricted to authorised staff. Records will be retained in line with the Council's retention schedule and any applicable safeguarding or legal requirements.

# 11. Concerns or allegations about adults working with children

Any concern that a member of staff, volunteer, contractor or other person working with children may have harmed a child, committed a criminal offence involving a child, behaved towards a child in a way indicating they may pose a risk, or behaved in a way that raises safeguarding suitability concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL/Parish Clerk.

The Council will seek advice from the Swindon Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where the allegation-management threshold may be met. The LADO manages and oversees the process but does not conduct the employer's investigation. The Council will not begin a substantive investigation or alert the person concerned before taking LADO/police advice where that could compromise safeguarding or criminal enquiries.

If the allegation concerns the Parish Clerk/DSL, it must be reported to the Council Chair or another formally nominated senior officer/councillor who will contact the LADO directly.

### 11.1 Low-level concerns

A low-level concern is any concern - no matter how small - that an adult working with children may have acted in a way inconsistent with the staff Code of Conduct, including conduct outside work that could affect suitability. It does not mean the concern is insignificant. Low-level concerns must be recorded and reviewed so that patterns can be identified and action taken early.

### 11.2 DBS referrals

Where CSNPC is a regulated activity provider and the statutory referral conditions are met, the Council has a legal duty to refer the individual to the Disclosure and Barring Service. This can apply where a person is dismissed, removed or redeployed from regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not resigned or otherwise left, because of relevant conduct, harm or risk of harm.

## 12. Safer recruitment and DBS checks

- Roles will be assessed before recruitment to determine whether a DBS check is legally eligible and, if so, at what level and whether a barred-list check is permitted.
- Enhanced DBS with Children's Barred List checks will only be requested where the role meets the legal definition of regulated activity or other lawful eligibility criteria.
- Identity, employment/volunteering history, appropriate references and relevant qualifications will be checked proportionately.
- Gaps in employment history and safeguarding-related concerns arising during recruitment will be explored.
- No person known to be barred will be permitted to undertake regulated activity with children.
- Where the DBS Update Service is used, status checks will only be undertaken with the individual's permission and for the same workforce/level of check.
- The Council will not rely on an arbitrary two-year DBS renewal cycle as a substitute for ongoing safeguarding supervision. Rechecks will be risk-based and consistent with Council policy, legal eligibility and Update Service arrangements.
- Induction will include safeguarding, professional boundaries, reporting routes, behaviour expectations, emergency procedures and local safeguarding contacts.

## 13. Training and supervision

All staff and volunteers working with children will receive safeguarding induction appropriate to their role before or as soon as practicable after starting. Refresher training will be provided regularly and when guidance or local procedures change. The DSL and deputies will undertake enhanced safeguarding training appropriate to their responsibilities and maintain current knowledge between formal courses.

Safeguarding will be included in supervision and team briefings where appropriate. Staff must understand that training does not replace the requirement to seek advice when uncertain.

# 14. Staff and volunteer Code of Conduct

Adults working with children hold a position of trust and must maintain clear professional boundaries. Staff and volunteers must:

- Treat children with dignity, fairness and respect and avoid humiliating, threatening, sexualised or discriminatory language.
- Use physical contact only where appropriate, necessary and proportionate, for example first aid, safety or an appropriate activity, and never as punishment.
- Avoid being alone with a child where reasonably practicable. Where one-to-one work is necessary, use an agreed, observable and risk-assessed arrangement.
- Never form sexual or exploitative relationships with children, exchange sexualised messages, or encourage dependency or secrecy.
- Never use personal social-media accounts to befriend or privately message children using the service.
- Use Council-approved accounts/devices and communication channels for youth work wherever available.
- Not give or accept inappropriate gifts, loans or money, and not create favouritism.
- Not consume alcohol or illegal drugs before or during duty, and not work while impaired.
- Report any accidental or unavoidable boundary breach, unusual incident or concern promptly so it can be transparently recorded.

# 15. One-to-one working, transport and trips

## 15.1 One-to-one working

A blanket prohibition on ever being alone with a child can be impractical and may prevent legitimate support. One-to-one work must instead be necessary, proportionate, authorised where required, observable or interruptible where practicable, and recorded when it is outside normal arrangements. Closed or isolated spaces should be avoided unless risk-assessed.

## 15.2 Transport

- Council transport must comply with vehicle, insurance, licence and driver-competence requirements.
- Journeys should normally be planned so that staff are not alone with a single child. If an exceptional situation arises, the reason and arrangements should be recorded and a parent/carer and manager informed where appropriate.
- Children must use appropriate restraints and seat belts, and passenger capacity must never be exceeded.
- Private vehicles should only be used for transporting children where this is specifically authorised and insurance/driver requirements are satisfied.

### 15.3 Trips and off-site activities

Trips and higher-risk activities require appropriate risk assessment, staffing, emergency contacts, consent arrangements, medical/allergy information and a clear plan for travel, supervision, medication and emergencies.

## 16. Photography, video and images

- Images will only be taken for a defined and legitimate purpose using Council-approved equipment or arrangements wherever practicable.
- Consent and privacy information will be obtained/provided as required by the Council's data-protection arrangements.
- Children must not be photographed or filmed in changing areas, toilets or situations in which they may be vulnerable or embarrassed.
- Names and other identifying information will not be unnecessarily combined with images.
- Images must be stored securely and deleted/retained in accordance with the Council's retention requirements.
- Any concern about inappropriate photography or image sharing must be treated as a safeguarding concern.

## 17. Online communication and social media

- Youth-service accounts are professional accounts and must be managed by authorised staff.
- Personal accounts must not be used to contact, follow, friend or privately message children who use Council youth services.
- One-to-one digital communication should be avoided where possible; use group, parent/carer or auditable Council channels where appropriate.
- No staff member should request or retain sexual images of a child. Any such incident must be escalated immediately to the DSL and handled in accordance with police/safeguarding advice.
- Location, personal data, medical information or safeguarding information must not be shared through insecure public channels.
- Online disclosures are safeguarding disclosures and must be recorded and acted upon in the same way as face-to-face disclosures.

## 18. Missing child / child unaccounted for procedure

This procedure applies when a child expected to be under the supervision of CSNPC cannot be located, fails to return from an agreed activity, leaves without agreement in circumstances that cause concern, or is otherwise unaccounted for.

10. Confirm the child is genuinely missing by checking the attendance/sign-out record, toilets, agreed activity areas and with staff, without leaving other children inadequately supervised.
11. Alert the session lead immediately and record the time the child was last seen, what they were wearing, relevant risks and any known destination.
12. Undertake a brief, proportionate local search only where it is safe to do so and does not reduce supervision of other children.

13. Contact the parent/carer promptly unless there is a safeguarding reason not to do so.
14. Call police without delay where the child is at immediate risk, particularly because of age, vulnerability, exploitation concerns, weather, environment, injury, lack of contact, or suspicious circumstances. Use 999 for an emergency; otherwise follow police advice.
15. Inform the DSL and, where safeguarding concerns exist, Children and Families Contact Swindon.
16. When the child is found, ensure their immediate welfare, notify relevant parties and explore the reasons for the episode in a non-blaming manner.
17. Complete an incident/safeguarding record and review whether risk assessments, staffing, consent or session arrangements need to change.

Children must not be physically restrained from leaving solely to enforce attendance unless restraint is necessary, lawful and proportionate to prevent immediate harm. Any use of physical intervention must be reported and recorded under the Council's incident arrangements.

# 19. Behaviour management policy

CSNPC youth provision should be welcoming, inclusive and safe. Expectations will be explained positively and consistently. Behaviour management will focus on safety, restoration, learning and proportionate boundaries rather than humiliation or punishment.

## 19.1 Expected behaviour

- Respect other people, their property, personal space and differences.
- Follow reasonable safety instructions and activity rules.
- Do not bully, threaten, harass, discriminate against, sexually harass or deliberately harm others.
- Do not bring weapons, illegal drugs or alcohol to youth activities.
- Do not intentionally damage Council or others' property.
- Use phones and digital devices responsibly and comply with session rules on recording or sharing images.

## 19.2 Staff response

- Use calm verbal redirection and explain the impact of behaviour.
- Offer space, de-escalation or a change of activity where appropriate.
- Use restorative discussion and proportionate consequences linked to the behaviour.
- Involve parents/carers where behaviour is serious, persistent or creates safeguarding concerns.
- Use temporary suspension or exclusion only when necessary to protect safety or effective service delivery and with management oversight.
- Treat behaviour that may indicate abuse, exploitation, trauma, disability or unmet need as a potential safeguarding matter, not simply misconduct.
- Never use degrading treatment, corporal punishment, collective punishment, threats of abandonment or withholding essential needs.

### 19.3 Physical intervention

Physical intervention should only be used as a last resort where necessary and proportionate to prevent immediate harm. It must use the minimum force for the shortest time, never as punishment. Any incident must be recorded, management informed, parents/carers notified where appropriate, and the child's welfare reviewed. Staff expected to use restrictive intervention as part of their role must receive appropriate training and guidance.

## 20. Anti-bullying

Bullying can be physical, verbal, relational, sexual, discriminatory or online. It may relate to race, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, appearance, care status, family circumstances or other difference. All reports will be taken seriously.

- Listen separately to those involved and avoid forcing face-to-face reconciliation where this may be unsafe or inappropriate.
- Record significant or repeated incidents.
- Consider safeguarding referral where bullying is severe, sexual, discriminatory, coercive, violent or linked to exploitation.
- Provide support to the child harmed and appropriate intervention for the child displaying harmful behaviour.
- Engage parents/carers where appropriate and review session/group dynamics.

## 21. Drugs, alcohol, smoking and vaping

Illegal drug use, supply, possession of weapons, alcohol use by children, smoking and vaping are not permitted during Council youth sessions or activities. Staff and volunteers must not work while impaired and must not supply tobacco, vapes, nicotine products, alcohol or illegal substances to children.

A child affected by substances will be treated first as a welfare and safety matter. Staff should consider immediate medical risk, safe supervision, parent/carer contact and safeguarding/exploitation concerns. Suspected drugs or paraphernalia must be handled in accordance with the Council's health and safety arrangements and police advice; staff should not handle needles or unknown substances without appropriate equipment and training.

## 22. Health, safety, first aid and accidents

- Activities will be risk assessed and premises/equipment maintained so far as reasonably practicable.
- Adequate first-aid arrangements will be available and staff will know how to summon emergency assistance.
- Attendance/register systems will support evacuation and accountability.
- Accidents and serious incidents will be recorded and reported under Council procedures, including RIDDOR where legally applicable.
- Fire, evacuation, lockdown or other emergency procedures will be proportionate to the venue and activity.
- Safeguarding implications arising from an accident or unexplained injury must be considered separately from the accident record.

## 23. Equality, diversity and additional vulnerabilities

CSNPC will not discriminate unlawfully and will make reasonable adjustments where required. Some children may face increased barriers to recognition or disclosure of abuse, including disabled children, children with communication needs, children in care or kinship care, LGBTQ+ children, young carers, children experiencing poverty, children from minoritised communities, children affected by domestic abuse and children already known to services.

Staff must avoid assumptions that behaviour, injury or communication difficulty is simply explained by a disability or diagnosis. Where a child requires communication support, this should be considered when seeking their views or arranging safeguarding discussions.

## 24. Parental consent, attendance and emergency information

- Appropriate registration/contact information will be obtained for regular youth provision.
- Parents/carers will be provided with clear information about the nature of sessions and whether the provision is open-access or requires collection/sign-out.
- Explicit consent will be obtained for trips, off-site activities and other activities where the Council determines consent is required.
- Current emergency contacts, allergies, relevant medical information and support needs should be collected proportionately.
- Consent does not remove the Council's safeguarding responsibilities and is not required before sharing information where lawful and necessary to protect a child.

## 25. Risk assessment and staffing

Risk assessments must reflect the activity, venue, age and needs of children, environment, travel, equipment, weather, online elements and foreseeable safeguarding risks. There is no single statutory adult-to-child ratio that fits every youth activity; staffing must be adequate for the identified risks, age, needs, venue and ability to respond to an emergency without leaving other children unsupervised.

New or higher-risk activities must be specifically assessed. Dynamic changes during a session should be recorded when they materially affect safety or safeguarding.

# 26. Volunteers and work experience

Volunteers and work-experience placements will have a defined role, induction, supervision and appropriate safeguarding checks. DBS checks will be based on legal eligibility and the actual activity undertaken. Unchecked individuals must not be given unsupervised responsibility for children where the role requires regulated activity or where the Council's risk assessment determines that supervision is necessary.

Volunteers are subject to the same safeguarding reporting requirements and professional boundaries as employees.

# 27. Youth participation and voice

Children and young people will be encouraged to contribute to the design and evaluation of youth provision in ways that are safe, inclusive and meaningful. Their views will not be treated as a substitute for adult safeguarding responsibility. Children should know how to raise concerns, make complaints and speak to a trusted adult.

# 28. Session cancellation and closure

Where a session must be cancelled or closed unexpectedly, staff will take reasonable steps to notify staff/volunteers, children and parents/carers using agreed communication channels and, where appropriate, venue notices. Decisions will consider whether any child may be left without safe arrangements because of the cancellation.

# 29. External providers, contractors and partner organisations

Before an external organisation delivers activity as part of CSNPC youth provision, the Council will obtain proportionate assurance relevant to the activity. Depending on the risk and role this may include:

- Named responsible person and contact details;
- Public liability and other relevant insurance;
- Activity-specific risk assessment and emergency arrangements;
- Safeguarding policy or safeguarding statement;
- Confirmation that staff/volunteers have appropriate safeguarding training;
- Confirmation that required DBS and barred-list checks have been completed where legally eligible and applicable;
- Qualifications, licences or governing-body affiliation where relevant.

CSNPC should not routinely collect or retain full DBS certificate numbers for every external worker where assurance can be obtained in a less intrusive and more proportionate way. The commissioning/hiring arrangement should identify who is responsible for safeguarding and how concerns will be reported.

# 30. Whistleblowing and professional challenge

Anyone who believes safeguarding concerns are not being addressed appropriately should raise this with the Parish Clerk/DSL, Council Chair or through the Council's whistleblowing arrangements as appropriate. Where a child may remain at risk, staff may contact Children and Families Contact Swindon, LADO or police directly. No one will be penalised for raising a genuine safeguarding concern in good faith.

# 31. Recording requirements

Safeguarding records should be factual, timely and distinguish observation, allegation, professional judgement and third-party information. Records should include:

- Child's name and identifying details needed for the concern;
- Date/time and location of incident/disclosure;
- Exact words used by the child where significant;
- Observed injuries or behaviour without speculation;
- People present and source of information;
- Actions taken, advice obtained and referrals made;
- Parent/carer involvement or reason for not informing them;
- Outcome/next action and review date where applicable.

# 32. Policy review and assurance

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where there is a material change to legislation, statutory guidance, Swindon safeguarding procedures, Council youth provision or lessons from a safeguarding incident. The annual review must include verification of local telephone numbers, email addresses, named/role safeguarding arrangements, DBS processes and staff training status.

# Appendix 1 - Current safeguarding contacts

| Service | When to use | Contact |
|---|---|---|
| Emergency services | Immediate danger, serious injury or crime in progress | 999 |
| Children and Families Contact Swindon / MASH | Child welfare or safeguarding concerns during office hours | 01793 464646 (option 2 where prompted) contactchildrenandfamilies@swindon.gov.uk |
| Emergency Duty Service | Urgent safeguarding outside normal office hours | 01793 445500, option 4 |
| Swindon LADO / Allegation Management Team | Allegations/concerns about an adult who works with children | 01793 463854 LADO@swindon.gov.uk |
| Police non-emergency | Non-emergency police matter | 101 |
| CSNPC Designated Safeguarding Lead | Internal safeguarding lead | Parish Clerk - use current Council internal contact details |

Local contact details should be verified at every policy review. If a published local number changes, staff should use the current Swindon Borough Council / Swindon Safeguarding Partnership safeguarding pages rather than delay a referral.

# Appendix 2 - Immediate safeguarding decision guide

| Situation | Action | Who to tell |
|---|---|---|
| Child in immediate danger / urgent medical need | Call 999; secure immediate safety | DSL as soon as practicable |
| Concern child may be suffering harm | Record and report immediately; seek MASH advice/referral | DSL / Contact Swindon |
| Unclear threshold but concerned | Do not wait for proof; consult DSL or Contact Swindon | DSL / Contact Swindon |
| Allegation about employee/volunteer/contractor | Do not investigate first; report immediately | DSL/Clerk; LADO advice |
| Concern about DSL/Parish Clerk | Report outside normal line management | Council Chair/nominated senior person; LADO |
| Radicalisation concern | Treat as safeguarding; seek local Prevent/safeguarding advice | DSL / local pathway |
| Child missing during session | Follow section 18; police without delay where risk indicates | Session lead, parent/carer, DSL, police as appropriate |

# Appendix 3 - Safeguarding concern record template

**Child/young person name**

_____

_____

**Date of birth / age (if known)**

_____

_____

**Date and time of concern/disclosure**

_____

_____

**Location**

_____

_____

**Person recording concern and role**

_____

_____

**What was seen/heard/disclosed (use child's own words where possible)**

_____

_____

**Immediate safety action taken**

_____

_____

**Was parent/carer informed? If not, why not?**

_____

_____

**Who was the concern reported to and when?**

_____

_____

**External advice/referral (service, date/time, reference if provided)**

_____

_____

**Outcome / next action**

_____

_____

**Signature and date**

_____

_____

# Appendix 4 - Staff/volunteer safeguarding declaration

I confirm that I have received/read the current CSNPC Youth Safeguarding and Welfare Policy, understand how to report a safeguarding concern and know who the Council's Designated Safeguarding Lead is. I understand that safeguarding concerns must be reported promptly and that I must not promise confidentiality to a child or investigate concerns myself.

**Name:** _____

**Role:** _____

**Signature:** _____

**Date:** _____

# Appendix 5 - Reference sources for annual review

- Department for Education - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- Department for Education - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 (in force until 31 August 2026) and 2026 edition (from 1 September 2026), used only where relevant as good practice for youth-service safeguarding.
- Home Office - Prevent Duty Guidance: England and Wales (2023), in force from 31 December 2023.
- Disclosure and Barring Service - current guidance on regulated activity with children and barring referrals.
- Swindon Safeguarding Partnership - Right Help at the Right Time guidance (updated April 2026), referral procedures and allegation management/LADO procedures.
- Swindon Borough Council - Children and Families Contact Swindon / MASH contact arrangements.

| Name | Signed | Date |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |