

## Witham Town Council: Safeguarding Policy

### Introduction

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

### Definitions

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

Adults at risk have needs for care and support (whether or not the Local Authority is meeting those needs), is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs, is unable to protect themselves from the risk of or experience of abuse or neglect.

### Scope

This policy applies to:

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

### Promoting a Safe Environment

To promote a safe environment, Witham Town Council will:

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

### Use of Facilities by Groups

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

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

### Safe Working Practice

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

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

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

## Expectations of Behaviour

All users of Town Council facilities should:

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

## Allegations against Staff and Volunteers

- If an allegation is made, immediately inform the Town Clerk or Mayor of Witham.
- Follow the Southend, Essex & Thurrock (SET) Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures (2025) procedures for managing allegations against staff/volunteers.
- Do not attempt to investigate before consulting with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

## Whistleblowing

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

## Causes for Concern

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

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

## Training

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

## Useful Safeguarding Contact Details

Southend, Essex & Thurrock (SET) Safeguarding Children Board – 0345 603 7627

or <https://www.escb.co.uk/>

Essex Safeguarding Children Board – 0345 603 7627 or <https://www.escb.co.uk/>

**This policy was adopted by Witham Town Council on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

**Reviewed : 9<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

**Date for review: December 2026**