



Moray Community Councils Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy

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Introduction

Community Councils are a statutory organisation, the purpose of a Community Council is to *"In addition to any other purpose which a Community Council may pursue, the general purpose of a Community Council shall be to ascertain, coordinate and express to the local authorities for its area, and to public authorities, the views of the community which it represents, in relation to matters for which those authorities are responsible, and to take such action in the interests of that community as appears to it to be expedient and practicable"*.

Principles

All persons, whether members of the Community Council or attendees are required to abide by the law of the land, including, with limitation, the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003; Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007, and Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The Community Council has a duty of care to ensure members and volunteers comply with such laws. The Community Council shall at all times seek to ensure that all persons, including vulnerable groups and children, shall be kept safe and free from harm and protected from physical, sexual, verbal and emotional abuse when involved with the Community Council. Community Councils shall require that all persons shall comply with this policy. To meet these obligations Community Council members have agreed this policy, and, under the direction of the Community Council members the Chair shall have overall management responsibility for ensuring compliance by all persons.

Underpinning principles

1. A child is recognised as someone under the age of 18.
2. A child has the right to relax, play and join in a wide range of activities.
3. The protection and wellbeing of all children and vulnerable adults in our care is everyone's responsibility.
4. A child or vulnerable adult, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse.
5. A child or vulnerable adult has the right to express views on all matters that affect them, should they wish to do so.
6. A child's or vulnerable adult rights, wishes and feelings should be respected and promoted.
7. The best way to promote the wellbeing, health and development of children and vulnerable adults is to work in partnership with the child/adult, parents/carers and other relevant organisations.

Promoting Good Practice

- Community Council members and volunteers will not be in a situation where they find themselves on their own with a child or vulnerable person.
- When a person has been identified as having additional needs or behaviour that is likely to require additional supervision, the Community Council will ensure that they will have adequate supervision in attendance with them.
- Members and volunteers should consider the individual needs of each participant, particularly where additional support has been brought to our attention.
- All members and volunteers, when working with young people, should demonstrate behaviours that promote the welfare of young people, to reduce the likelihood of allegations being made.
- Being an excellent role model which includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people when in the role of organiser.
- Always work in an open environment.
- Treat all persons equally, with respect and dignity, abiding by the Community Councils Code of Conduct.
- Be aware and respectful of people from different religions and cultures.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust.
- Respecting the personal space of participants and volunteers.
- If any physical contact is required, it should only be provided openly and with explanation.

Practices to be avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies:

- Avoid spending time alone with young people away from others.
- Avoid taking a role with responsibilities for which you are not appropriately trained. For example: physically handling disabled participants.
- Do not promise to keep secrets for a young person as this may be at the detriment of the young person's welfare.
- Do not give personal contact details to a young person. For example: Facebook, mobile number, email, etc.
- Do not use physical intervention to manage challenging behaviour.

If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable, it should be with the full knowledge and consent of the young person's teacher or parent/carer.

Practices Never to be sanctioned

- Physical punishment or the threat of such.
- Refusal to speak with or interact with a child.
- Verbal intimidation, ridicule, humiliation or reducing a young person to tears as a form of control.

- Engaging in rough or sexually provocative actions.
- Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a young person.
- Failing to act upon and record any concerns raised by a young person.
- Doing things of a personal nature for young people that they can do for themselves. For example: feeding them.
- Inviting or allowing young people to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

Use of Photographic Filming Equipment

Photographing and filming young people under the age of 18 is allowed only when a legal guardian has given prior consent and only if intended for the specified use.

It is the responsibility of the person in charge to obtain a signed permission slip. This also applies to any photos or videos used on the website or for the use of the media.

If you have Child Protection Concern contact:

Social Work Access Team - 01343 554370.

Social Work 'Out of Hours' Team - 08457 565656

Police - 101