

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

Safeguarding Policy and forms

Updated: 10 September 2025 | Next review date: May 2028 | Last review date: 13 May 2026

Adopted: 11 September 2024

Purpose

Toller Porcorum Parish Council (TPPC) believes all children and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religious belief and sexual identity have a right to protection from harm or abuse. TPPC, including its members (councillors), employees and volunteers at facilities of, or at events and any other activity organised by TPPC, will endeavour to safeguard children and vulnerable adults by:

- a) Implementing the procedures and code of conduct of this policy
- b) Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and vulnerable adults, their parents, guardians and carers
- c) Sharing information about concerns with relevant agencies and involving parents, guardians, carers and children and vulnerable adults appropriately
- d) Following carefully the procedures for recruitment and selection of volunteers
- e) Provide effective management for members, employees and volunteers through supervision, support and training

For the purposes of this policy, a child is deemed to be any person under the age of eighteen years. For the purposes of this policy, a vulnerable adult is deemed to be any person over the age of eighteen years meeting the criteria as defined in The Police Act 1997 (Enhanced Criminal Record Certificates) (Protection of Vulnerable Adults) Regulations 2002.

TPPC is committed to reviewing this policy and good practice at regular intervals.

Section 1 – Definitions of Abuse

1.1 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or vulnerable adult.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described as factitious illness, fabricated or induced illness in children or 'Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy', after the person who first identified this situation. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through having a sick child.

Physical abuse, as well as being a result of a deliberate act, can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

1.2 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's or vulnerable adult's emotional development and/or state. It may involve making a child or vulnerable adult believe they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

Emotional abuse may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or vulnerable adults. It may also cause children or vulnerable adults to frequently feel frightened or in danger and may include the exploitation or corruption of a child or vulnerable adult.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child or vulnerable adult, though it may occur alone.

1.3 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child, a young person or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether the child, young person, or vulnerable adult is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as rape, buggery or oral sex or non-penetrative acts such as fondling.

Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children, young people, or vulnerable adults in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Males, females, adults and other young people can sexually abuse boys and girls. This includes people from all different walks of life.

1.4 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the or vulnerable adult's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, leaving a young child at home alone or the failure to ensure that a child or vulnerable adult receives adequate and appropriate medical care and treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's or vulnerable adult's basic emotional needs.

1.5 It is accepted that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse, and that some children and vulnerable adults are subjected to more than one form of abuse at any one time. These four definitions do not minimize other forms of maltreatment.

Recent inter-agency guidance draws attention to other sources of stress for children, vulnerable adults and families, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, and the mental illness of a parent or carer, or drug or alcohol abuse. All these areas may have a negative impact on a child's or vulnerable adult's health and development and may be noticed by an organisation caring for a child or vulnerable adult. If it is felt that a child's or vulnerable adult's well-being is adversely affected by any of these areas, the same procedures should be followed.

Section 2 – Procedure

2.1 It is the intention of TPPC that any child or vulnerable adult attending TPPC events or facilities is encouraged to inform the person in charge of the event or facility and/or another person present in an official capacity if they wish to confide an issue which concerns them personally, whether that issue involves an activity that took place within the parish council organisation or not.

The individual may be concerned, for instance, about bullying taking place within the confines of parish council activities or about a problem at school or at home. All TPPC members, employees and volunteers are therefore to be aware of the procedures that exist and be prepared to act accordingly should a child or vulnerable adult make an approach.

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

2.2 If a TPPC member, employee or volunteer is approached by a child or vulnerable adult expressing concerns about how they have been treated, either at a parish council event or elsewhere, the following procedures should be followed:

- a) Stay calm, tell and show the child or vulnerable adult that you have listened to them and have taken what they have told you seriously. If it is not possible to listen to them immediately, tell the child or vulnerable adult that you will listen to their concerns as soon as is practically possible and ensure you do this
- b) Keep questions to a minimum but make sure you have enough information to be clear about what the child or vulnerable adult is telling you
- c) Repeat facts that you have been told back to the child or vulnerable adult for clarification
- d) Reassure the child or vulnerable adult that what has occurred, or believed to have occurred, is not their fault and that they have done the right thing in telling you
- e) Emphasise you realise how difficult it has been to bring the matter to your attention
- f) Explain you will have to tell someone else who is better qualified than you about their situation. Explain that all information remains in strict confidence.
- g) As soon as possible you must inform the Designated Person whose name and contact details can be found in section 5.1 of this document. If this is not possible and you have concerns that by returning home or leaving the current environment the child or vulnerable adult would be in immediate danger, you should seek advice from Dorset Council's Children's Advice and Duty Service (ChAD), Social Services, the Police or the NSPCC as a matter of urgency. Contact numbers can be found in section 5.2 of this document.
- h) Record carefully what the child or vulnerable adult has told you and what action has been taken as a result on a Record of Concern form (found on page 6 of this document and available from the clerk).
- i) Return the completed Record of Concern to the TPPC Clerk

NOTE: It is important everyone in the organisation is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies following a referral to them of a concern about a child or vulnerable adult.

2.3 A completed Record of Concern form is passed to the TPPC clerk who will send it to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), via lado@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, within 1 working day. The LADO is available to discuss concerns and to assist the clerk in deciding whether they need to make a referral and take any immediate action to protect a child or vulnerable adult.

Section 3 – Code of Conduct

3.1 Positive Actions

TPPC members, employees and volunteers must observe the following;

- a) All children and vulnerable adults must to be treated with respect
- b) Your own behaviour and conduct must set an example that you wish others to follow

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

- c) At all times more than one person must be present during activities involving children and vulnerable adults or that any one TPPC member, employee or volunteer is within sight and/or hearing of others
- d) A child's and a vulnerable adult's right to personal privacy is to be respected
- e) Children and vulnerable adults should be encouraged to feel comfortable in each other's company in order they do not feel inhibited about reporting attitudes or behaviour that they find unacceptable or objectionable
- f) Be aware that your intentions and/or actions might be misrepresented, no matter how well intentioned
- g) Be aware that any physical contact with a child or vulnerable adult may be misinterpreted
- h) Take special caution when discussing sensitive issues with children and vulnerable adults
- i) Instances of unacceptable behaviour are to be challenged and all allegations/suspensions of abuse are to be reported.

3.2 Negative Actions

TPPC members, employees and volunteers must avoid the following:

- a) Inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or vulnerable adults
- b) Being drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour or make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or vulnerable adults
- c) Jumping to conclusion without checking facts
- d) Exaggerating or trivializing issues of child or vulnerable adult abuse
- e) Showing favouritism to any individual within a group
- f) Reliance on the good name of TPPC for protection in the event of unseemly behaviour or actions
- g) Taking a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach.

Section 4 – Safe Recruitment

4.1 Recruitment Policy

All TPPC volunteers are subject to careful selection by the following means:

- a) All volunteers are required to complete a Volunteering form (found on page 8 this document and available from the clerk), a requirement of which is to read this Safeguarding Policy and to sign indicating understanding and acceptance of this policy and commitment to follow procedures detailed herein. References provided will be sought at the discretion of TPPC.
- b) Any volunteers under the age of 18 years must be supervised by an adult and should not be involved in any disclosures/claims made by children or vulnerable adults.

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

Section 5 – Designated Person

5.1 The Designated Person referred to within this policy is the chair of TPPC. At the time of writing the person occupying this role and therefore the Designated Person, is:

Neil Farmer, email: neilfarmertollerpc@gmail.com

If Neil Farmer is not available contact the TPPC clerk: clerk@tollerporcorumparish.org

5.2 If you are unable to contact the above and/or have serious concerns, you should contact one of the agencies listed below for direct advice:

Dorset Council's Children's Advice and Duty Service (ChAD): 01305 228866

Social Services: 01305 251034

Dorchester Police Station: 01305 251212

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

RECORD OF CONCERN

Complete each section to the best of your ability. Once complete return this form to the clerk of Toller Porcorum Parish Council (TPPC), c/o 3 The Briars, Wool, Wareham, Dorset BH20 6NA or clerk@tollerporcorumparish.org

The information provided on this form is CONFIDENTIAL and will only be shared with relevant authorities as described in TPPC's Safeguarding Policy. Information will be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Name of child or vulnerable adult:

Age and/or date of birth:

First language:

Ethnicity:

Religion:

Disability

Any special factors:

Name(s) of parent/guardian/carer:

Home address:

Telephone number:

What is said to have happened or what was seen?

When and where did the incident occur?

Who else, if anyone, was involved and how?

Was the incident disclosed by an affected child or vulnerable adult or by a third party?

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

What was said by those involved?

Were there any obvious signs e.g. bruising, bleeding, changed behaviour patterns?

Was the child or vulnerable adult able to say what happened? If so, how did the child describe it?

Who has been told about the incident and when?

As far as you are aware, do the parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s) know of the incident?

Any further information not included above?

Full name (printed):

Signed: Date:

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

VOLUNTEERING FORM

Complete each section and return this form to the clerk of Toller Porcorum Parish Council (TPPC), c/o 3 The Briars, Wool, Wareham, Dorset BH20 6NA or clerk@tollerporcorumparish.org.

The information provided on this form is CONFIDENTIAL and will only be shared with relevant authorities as described in TPPC's Safeguarding Policy. Information will be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Full name:

Date of birth:

Place of birth:

Home address:

Telephone number:

Email address:

Any other surname previously known by? If yes, list below:

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or of a Bound over Order?

You are advised that under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (UK wide) (1974) (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendments) Order 1986 (UK wide) you should declare all convictions, including 'spent' convictions.

Yes

No

If Yes, please state below the date(s) and nature of the offence(s)

Please provide details of a person who can be contacted for a reference.

Please note: references will be sought at the discretion of TPPC, in verbal or written form.

Full name:

Relationship:

Home address:

Telephone number:

Email address:

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

Declaration:

I have been given and have read a copy of the TPPC's Safeguarding Policy. I understand and accept the policy and commit to following procedures detailed therein when working as a volunteer for TPPC.

Signed:

Date: