

CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM

SUBJECT:	Safeguarding Children Policy for the County Council
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SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS:

In order to comply with the Children Act 2004 and associated Government Guidance and regulations the County Council is required to have an overarching policy for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. This applies to services that are directly provided and those commissioned by the County Council. This policy will underpin guidance and procedures that each directorate and schools are required to have in place and all contracts and service level agreements. It is consistent with the interagency procedures published by Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Management Team are asked to approve the this policy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Training costs:-

- raising awareness of staff
- recruitment and selection for managers and HR advisers
- specialist training for staff working closely with children, young people and parents

An analysis of training needs will be required to determine actual cost for each directorate.

WHAT OTHER SERVICES ARE INVOLVED AND WHO HAVE YOU CONSULTED?

Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board

BACKGROUND *list any previous relevant paperwork, government publications etc with http links where appropriate*

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 Guidance

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

Suffolk County Council recognises that, under the Children Act 2004, it has a statutory duty and responsibility for making arrangements to ensure all its functions are discharged having regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Suffolk – this includes all services directly provided and commissioned by the local authority.

“Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children” means:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of their health or development;
- ensuring that they grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- enabling them to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

Suffolk County Council aims to ensure that children in Suffolk achieve the five outcomes for children that are identified in the Children Act 2004 and has strategic priorities in the Suffolk Children and Young People’s Plan. These are:

- Be Healthy – physical and mental health and emotional well-being
- Stay Safe – prevention and protection from harm and neglect
- Enjoy and Achieve – education, training and recreation
- Make a positive contribution to society
- Achieve Economic and social Well-being.

Safeguarding policy

Suffolk County Council will ensure that:

1. All councillors, senior managers and the governing bodies of maintained and voluntary aided schools are committed to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children’s welfare, and that they demonstrate leadership and are informed about and take responsibility for the actions of staff that are providing services to children and their families at all levels.
 - This includes taking responsibility for monitoring the actions of county council and school based staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, ensuring that children and young people are listened to appropriately, and taking appropriate action regarding any concerns expressed about their welfare.

2. All members of staff and volunteers who are employed by or on behalf of the authority, and who have contact with children and/or families, have a clear understanding of the County Council's responsibilities for safeguarding.
 - A statement of the County Council's responsibilities towards children will be available to all staff, and this will include effective systems to ensure that complaints about non-compliance with safeguarding procedures and policies can be made by children, staff and other people - and that they receive an appropriate response.
3. The authority and each directorate have clear lines of accountability for work on safeguarding children and young people and delegated decision-making. The Director for Children and Young People has the statutory duty and accountability to ensure satisfactory arrangements are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Suffolk.
 - Constituent directorates, and schools will ensure that every member of staff knows how to seek advice and report any concern for a child. Individual responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children will be encompassed within relevant job descriptions and procedures.
4. All policies and services take account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and so far as possible will be informed by the views of children and families. This includes ensuring that services to children and families are provided safely and effectively, and are accessible.
5. The authority provides children and young people with a safe environment for children to learn and grow up in when they are in public care.
6. The authority in collaboration with its partners will provide a range of preventive and statutory services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and contribute to them achieving the five outcomes.
7. Staff who work or have contact with children and families have appropriate safeguarding and safe practice training consistent with their role and function. This training will reflect the necessity for effective multi-agency and inter-professional working – both within the County Council and with other organisations. The content and standard of this training will be approved by Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board.
8. Good interagency and multi-disciplinary working is promoted and maintained both within the County Council and with other organisations; and that standards of practice in work with children and families are as high as possible.
 - This includes ensuring the Safeguarding Children Board is established and provided with appropriate support to carry out its statutory duties in partnership other local organisations in Suffolk.
9. Information is shared efficiently and effectively in respect of issues that may affect the safety and welfare of children.
 - This includes ensuring that concerns are shared early in order to prevent serious problems from developing, and that clear protocols are in place and understood by staff to ensure that information is shared effectively, appropriately and as the law prescribes.
10. In particular the County Council will ensure that all staff in contact with children know what to do and how best to share information in order to ensure a child and family

receives necessary services - especially when they are concerned that a child may be suffering or at risk of suffering harm – and that all staff have access to support and appropriately expert advice in this context.

11. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to prevent unsuitable people from having contact with children and young people.
12. Safe practice is promoted and challenge poor and unsafe practice is challenged appropriately.
13. Allegations or concerns about staff are handled effectively and in accordance with agreed guidance, including that provided by Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board.
 - This includes that effective procedures are in place for sharing concerns about colleagues and other members of staff, and that there is a culture throughout the County Council that enables safeguarding issues to be addressed.
 - Suffolk County Council subscribes to the guidance and principles that are identified in statutory guidance regarding Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 as underpinning “work with individual children and their families” and “monitoring and inspection of arrangements to safeguard and promote welfare”. (These are detailed in statutory guidance – paragraphs 2.14 to 2.27)

This means that work with children and families will:

- Be child centred
- Be rooted in child development
- Support the achievement of best possible outcomes for children and improving their well-being
- Be holistic in approach
- Ensure equality of opportunity
- Actively involve of children and families
- Build on strengths as well as identifying and addressing difficulties
- Be multi/inter-agency in approach
- Be a continuing process rather than an event
- Be designed to identify and provide the service required, and to monitor the impact their provision has on a child’s developmental progress
- Be informed by evidence.

Suffolk County Council’s role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children will be as defined in Chapter 3 of the statutory guidance to the Children Act 2004, and as described in the Suffolk Children and Young People’s Plan (2006 – 2009).