

Witnesham Village Hall

Policy for Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

1. Introduction and Context

- 1.1** Witnesham Village Hall provides a safe and secure venue for a range of services, activities and events. These can be accessed by all members of the local and neighbouring communities including Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults. The Committee recognises the importance of ensuring, and aims to secure, the safeguarding and welfare of all hall users.
- 1.2** This policy is made available to all adults who book the hall for any activities, covering expectations on those adults, including any Committee members who run events or activities on behalf of the Hall.
- 1.3** In most cases, children will be accompanied by an adult (a parent or carer), who will take responsibility for them. Young People, (defined as school age or above for the purposes of this policy), and Vulnerable Adults may attend activities independently and need additional protection accordingly.
- 1.4** This policy includes child and adult protection procedures (Section 2), recruitment and selection of paid staff and volunteers (Section 3), code of behaviour (Section 4) and monitoring (Section 5).
- 1.5** In addition to our own policies and procedures the Committee ensure that they are fully conversant with and following the Government and East Suffolk current expectations and recommendations for safeguarding.
- 1.6** At least one committee member will be named as Safeguarding Officer, (Tracey Hardy). The Committee have a responsibility for ensuring that safeguards are fully in place and that policies and procedures are current and fit for purpose.
- 1.7** For the purpose of this policy the relevant authority will be informed through Suffolk County Council's Customer First phone line 0808 800 4005
- 1.8** The policy covers two areas concerning Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults that all individuals involved with the Hall need to be aware of. The first is the need to ensure that all hall users are safe with all staff, volunteers and other users, (see 2.5/2.8). The second is that something which happens outside the scope of the Hall may be disclosed to a member of staff, a volunteer or other Hall user, (see 2.6/2.7/2,8).
- 1.9** Safeguarding policies are subject to annual review and the procedures are updated as and when necessary, (i.e. when regulations or recommendations change or in the light of any case reviews).

2. Procedures for Safeguarding

- 2.1** Any events/activities organised by the Village Hall Committee where unsupervised children, young people or vulnerable adults are present will have at least one committee member with appropriate experience and training for the purposes of safeguarding in attendance.
- 2.2** Groups and individuals hiring the hall are responsible for their own safeguarding arrangements, and are provided this policy for guidance.
- 2.3** Groups which serve the under 3, 3 - 5 and 5 - 11 age groups should follow the Ofsted guidelines for levels of supervision.
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supervision-of-activity-with-children>)
In addition, Suffolk County Council provide guidelines which will be followed to ensure that all activities are suitably supervised.
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/keeping-children-safe/>
- 2.4** If any member of the committee or a hall user has concerns about the behaviour or actions of anyone associated with the hall they should immediately inform the named Safeguarding officer or hall committee chairperson. Failure to share information could result in a ban from the hall. Anyone acting in a way inconsistent with this Safeguarding Policy will be subject to referral to the relevant authorities, (see 1.7), and a similar ban according to a decision made by at least 3 Committee Members.
- 2.5** If a disclosure is made to a hall user it will be recorded. Leading questions should not be asked but a clear factual record made of what has been disclosed. If a concern is noticed, (such as evidence of physical abuse, severe neglect or distress), this should be reported in the same way as for disclosures. All referrers should follow the summary guidance:
- Record the time and date
 - Don't promise to keep what you're told a secret
 - Tell the child or young person what you will do next
 - Don't make promises you cannot keep
- 2.6** All disclosures should be immediately reported to the named Safeguarding officer who will in turn inform relevant authorities, (see 1.7). Where appropriate, responsible adults (i.e. parents, guardians and carers), will be informed unless such a disclosure would cause significant distress or threat to the individual making it. This decision will be made by the relevant Safeguarding Officer.
- 2.7** Confidentiality cannot be promised in any case where an individual may be in danger of any form of abuse. Abuse can include physical, sexual, emotional or neglect. Staff and volunteers are expected to record and report any concerns and need to advise individuals that it is not appropriate to refrain from this. Referral is made to the relevant authorities, (see 1.7), with the adults responsible for the individual who has made a disclosure being notified if appropriate, (see 2.6).

3. Recruitment and Selection of Paid Staff and Volunteers

3.1 Currently the Hall only employs cleaning staff and, on an occasional basis, people to maintain the hall (Electricians, plumbers, decorators etc). Such people do not have contact with the groups or individuals using the hall and consequently do not need DBS checks. If conditions change for these or any future workers each post will be assessed and any checks carried out accordingly.

4. Code of Behaviour for Paid Staff and Volunteers

4.1 Safeguarding of all hall users is a shared responsibility for the Committee members, and hirers.

4.2 All committee members and hirers are expected to familiarise themselves with the hall's Safeguarding policy and procedures.

4.3 Any disclosures or concerns about the behaviour of anyone connected to the hall should be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Officer or a Committee Member.

4.4 All hall users are expected to be familiar with expectations of behaviour when working with Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults including:

- Respecting privacy and preserving dignity at all times.
- Having sufficient personnel so that there are no occasions where the worker is in an isolated situation with a child, young person or vulnerable adult other than in a public area.
- Fully understanding the expectations of staff working with that particular age group and having clear procedures for any intimate care, (such as changing nappies).
- Avoiding physical contact other than that necessary for the care of individuals and being aware of what is acceptable for them.
- Knowing that all forms of verbal abuse, aggression or manipulative behaviour are totally unacceptable, refraining from such acts and reporting any infringements.

5. Monitoring

This policy will be monitored at Village Hall Committee meetings and reviewed annually.

Reviewed October 2024. Next review - October 2025