

BUXHALL VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

(Registered Charity No: 304724)

Mill Road, Buxhall, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 3DS

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define how the Buxhall Village Hall Management Committee operates to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

The Committee has a duty of care and are committed to the protection and safety of everyone who enters our premises including children, young people and adults at risk involved as visitors and/or as participants in all activities and events. The Committee also has a duty to safeguard and support our trustees and volunteers.

This policy ensures that all trustees and volunteers understand their duty of care, act in accordance with UK safeguarding legislation and guidance and create a safe, respectful environment where people are supported and able to thrive.

Scope

This policy applies to all trustees, volunteers and staff.

Definitions

Children and young people are defined as those persons aged under 18 years old.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care

Adult at risk of abuse or neglect, for the purposes of this policy adult at risk refers to someone over 18 years old who, according to section 42 of the Care Act 2024:

- Has care and support needs.
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect.
- As a result of their care and support needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

If someone has care and support needs but is not currently receiving care or support from a health or care service, they may still be an adult at risk.

Types of Abuse

There are four main types of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. It is important to note that self-neglect is part of neglect. Adults may also experience financial abuse.

Policy Statement

This policy will need to be read in conjunction with the following policies: Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult, Equal Opportunities, Data Protection, Complaints and any others deemed appropriate.

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The Buxhall Village Hall Committee are committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects our legal responsibilities, government guidance and Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership requirements. The committee recognises that it has responsibilities for the safety and care of children under the Children Act 1989 and 2004 and Working Together 2023. It recognises its responsibilities to safeguard Adults at Risk of Harm under the Care Act 2014.

The Buxhall Village Hall Committee has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and are committed to the following principles:

- Promoting wellbeing, harm prevention and to responding effectively if concerns are raised.
- There are no excuses for not taking all reasonable actions to protect children and adults at risk of abuse, exploitation, radicalisation and/or mistreatment.
- All children and adults at risk whatever their age, ability, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have equal rights to protection from abuse.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, the committee will ensure that trustees, volunteers and staff are aware of their responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and adults at risk of harm, to keep them safe and to practice in a way that protects them.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse must be properly reported to the relevant internal and external authorities, including any allegations of safeguarding concerns about trustees, volunteers or staff against a child using the Local Authority Designated Officer Process.
- To practice inter agency collaboration and information sharing to safeguard children and adults at risk of harm.
- To actively promote a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting welfare to be addressed and for volunteers and trustees to feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in fulfilling their safeguarding role.

Procedures and Responsibilities

- To accept the moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures, to provide a Duty of Care for children, young people and adults at risk of abuse, safeguard their wellbeing and protect them from abuse.
- To raise awareness of safeguarding to ensure that everyone can play their part in preventing and identifying and responding to abuse and neglect.
- To ensure that all trustees, volunteers and staff are familiar with the policy and any associated procedures.
- To work with other agencies within the framework of the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership.
- To act within its confidentiality policy and will usually gain permission from adults before sharing information about them with another agency. The safeguarding of a child or an adult who is at risk or if a crime has been committed will override any need for consent.
- To make a safeguarding referral to Suffolk County Council's Customer First as appropriate i.e. if there is an immediate danger or the child/adult is at risk of harm.

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- To ensure that all new trustees, volunteers and staff are provided with a copy of the safeguarding policy.
- To monitor and evaluate the policy annually or in the light of any changes to Government legislation and guidance.
- To ensure there is a designated lead person for safeguarding in the Buxhall Village Hall Management Committee.
- To ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that everyone is safe and secure in any facility or environment it provides or facilitates.
- To ensure records are kept of any referrals and any notes, records of conversations concerning that referral are kept in the folder and that it is stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people.
- To ensure that all hirers of the hall have signed a hiring agreement. This will require all hirers who wish to use the hall for activities which include children and adults at risk, other than for private parties arranged for invited friends and family, to either produce a copy of their Safeguarding Policy and evidence that they have carried out relevant checks through the Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) when requested to do so or, confirm that they have understood and will adhere to the Buxhall Village Hall Management Committees' principles and procedures with regard to safeguarding.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The designated safeguarding lead for Buxhall Village Hall Management Committee is Emily Byam, 07964 045373.

Responding to Abuse or an Allegation

- Reassure the person concerned.
- Listen to what they are saying.
- Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief.
- Comply with the Buxhall Village Hall Committee's Data Protection Policy.
- Tell them that the information will be treated seriously.
- Ask questions to ensure you gather the full facts but do not start to investigate or ask detailed probing questions.
- Don't promise to keep it a secret.
- Tell the child or adult at risk what you are going to do next to get help to keep him/her safe.

Recording an Allegation

- Use the adult at risk/child's words where possible.
- Record what they are saying.
- Record what you have been told/witnessed as soon as possible.

Reporting Abuse

This should be reported to the designated safeguarding lead. If appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead will consult with/make a referral to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer). The procedures for LADO referrals can be found on the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership website. <https://www.suffolksp.org.uk/local-authority-designated-officers-lado>

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Please dial 999 if the person is in immediate danger.

For Concerns About a Child

If you have a concern about a child or a young person, you will need to complete and submit a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) using the new secure Suffolk Children and Young People's Portal. The Children and Young People's Portal is an easy to use, secure space where you can complete and send forms directly to the right children's services team.

The first time you complete a form you will be asked to create a new portal account. It's quick and easy to register for an account. To make sure the information sent is secure, you will need to log into this account every time you access the portal. There are user guides and video guidance.

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Appendix A

Safeguarding Behaviours

Do

- Approach a child or adult at risk apparently in distress and ask if you can help and seek assistance from colleagues in order to minimise the amount of time you are alone with the person.
- Be professionally curious and be aware of the possible risks and question situations that you find suspicious.
- Keep any lost children in a public area where they can be clearly seen and take them to the designated area as quickly as possible.
- Actively contribute to an organisational culture where inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated.
- Ensure that whenever possible there is more than one adult present during activities with children and adults at risk, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others.
- If a child or adult at risk wishes to talk to you in confidence then try to find a quiet space in a public area where this is possible.
- Act professionally in all matters.
- Be aware of appearances and avoid any situations which might appear compromising.
- Report any allegation (even if this is just a suspicion) of abuse or inappropriate conduct immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- Be sensitive in your communication with people so that you avoid over familiarity

Do Not

- Make sexually suggestive comments.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind.
- Give out personal information, or share email, social network site details (e.g., Facebook), and mobile phone numbers with any child or adult at risk of abuse.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or adults at risk that they can do for themselves or that a parent / leader can do for them.

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Appendix B

How to respond when someone person wants to talk about abuse

General points

- Take seriously what they say
- Keep calm
- Make space to allow them time to open up tell their story
- Reflect back what they have told you
- Be honest and let them know you will need to tell someone else – don't promise secrecy
- Reassure them they are not to blame for the abuse
- Be aware that they may have been threatened
- Never push for information, you must not investigate
- Ask questions for clarification only; avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.

Helpful things to say or show

- Show acceptance of what the child/young person says
- "I am glad you have told me"
- "It's not your fault"
- "I will help you"

Concluding

- Reassure the person that they were right to tell you and that you take them seriously
- Let them know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what might happen
- Immediately report the matter, as per procedures

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