

Safeguarding Children Policy

Purpose

To ensure Walton Village Hall, Wetherby is able to keep children and young people with whom it works safe and to respond appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse.

Scope

The policy applies to all trustees and volunteers who act on behalf of the organisation and who come directly into contact with children. This does not normally occur, therefore any users of the Village Hall that come into contact with children should have their own Safeguarding policy. If not then this policy applies.

Every individual has a responsibility to inform the safeguarding lead or their deputy of concerns relating to safeguarding children. The safeguarding lead must decide if the concerns should be communicated to children's social care or the police.

Policy Statements

Walton Village Hall, Wetherby recognises that all children have a right to protection from abuse.

Walton Village Hall, Wetherby takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people.

We will:

- Respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and provide parents and children with the opportunity to voice their concerns;
- Have a system for dealing with concerns about possible abuse

Walton Village Hall, Wetherby recognises that some children and young people are the victims of neglect, and physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Accordingly, Walton Village Hall, Wetherby has adopted the policy contained in this document (hereafter "the policy"). The policy sets out agreed guidelines relating to responding to allegations of abuse, including those made against trustees and volunteers.

Policy Definitions

Child/young person

Any individual who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical abuse

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Is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

This is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities including child sexual exploitation (CSE), which may not necessarily involve a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

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Responsibilities

The board of trustees has ultimate responsibility for child protection.

The management committee and volunteers of Walton Village Hall, Wetherby do not work directly with children. It is therefore the responsibility of users of the hall who do have contact with children to provide adequate safeguarding training in order to carry out their role and responsibilities under their own policy, or this policy. However, individuals within the organisation need to be alert to the potential abuse of children both within the family and also from other sources.

Approved by the board of trustees of Walton Village Hall, Wetherby.

Date: 07.09.2023

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually