

# COLN VALLEY VILLAGE HALL

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### **A. Introduction**

The Coln Valley Village Hall Charity Trustees want children to enjoy their involvement with the Village Hall and it is important that we inform, educate and enthuse children about the facilities we have. This policy is aimed at the Trustees of the charity, employees of the charity, Village Hall volunteers and leaders of organisations using the Village Hall.

#### **Through this Policy we aim to:**

- adopt the highest possible standards and
- take all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of the children who come into contact with the Village Hall and the activities that take place within it.

It is impossible to ensure that no child ever comes to any harm while in contact with the Village Hall. However implementing this policy and following the guidelines will enable you to undertake your work with children confident that you have taken all reasonable precautions to prevent harm occurring while being prepared to deal with an incident should it occur.

The Coln Valley Village Hall Charity expects you to apply this policy to all of your work with children and young people under the age of 18 years or under 25 years when learning difficulties are involved. You should apply similar safeguards when dealing with vulnerable people of all ages. All references to child or children throughout this Policy and Guidelines should be taken to refer to those referred to above.

It is important to remember that you may come into contact with children in a wide range of situations.

#### **In addition to visitors to the Village Hall, these will include:**

- children using recreation facilities.
- children attending events.
- children attending as members of organisations using the Village Hall.
- young volunteers.

It is important that this policy is seen to apply and the guidelines followed in all situations in which you have contact with children, young people and vulnerable people of all ages.

#### **To whom does this policy apply?**

The policy applies to:

- all employees (including permanent, fixed term and short term temporary appointments)
- all members of organisations using the Village Hall
- volunteers
- any other person working at the Coln Valley Village Hall who a member of the public might reasonably assume was an employee or volunteer.
- Contractors
- Trustees

All those covered by the policy have a duty to do everything reasonable in their power to ensure the safety and welfare of children while they are in contact with the Village Hall and to act in accordance with this Policy.

## **B. Duties**

You are expected to:

- Respect the wishes of a child as you would an adult, you must not impose yourself on them.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of any child in contact with the Coln Valley Village Hall.
- Remember that children regard adults as role models and ensure your behaviour, language, gestures etc. are appropriate and above reproach.
- Be aware of Child Protection issues in relation to the work you do and do not become complacent and believe 'it could never happen to me'.
- Prevent any other member of staff from putting any child in a situation in which there is a significant risk to their health and safety. Take appropriate action if you become aware of anyone physically, emotionally or sexually abusing a child.
- Report any evidence or reasonable suspicion that a child has been physically, emotionally or sexually abused whether by an adult or another child to a trustee.
- Not physically, emotionally or sexually abuse any child or young or vulnerable person.

Each organisation or user group that involves interaction with children while at the Village Hall must have a nominated child protection officer.

## **C. Responsibilities**

### **Activities where anyone eg parent, teacher or other group leader accompanies a child or leads a group.**

Where children are accompanied by an adult, primary responsibility for the children remains with that person. Trustees, employees or volunteers of the Village Hall charity should nonetheless use the Child Protection Policy and Guidelines as the basis for their action and any advice they offer. They should not agree to anything which contravenes the Policy and is not in line with the Guidelines.

If, due to illness or another unexpected event a representative of the Village Hall is left in charge of a child or group then they should act in accordance with this Policy and Guidelines.

### **Activities where children are unaccompanied**

In most instances the children you come into contact with will be accompanied by a leader of an organisation or parent. However should you be left in charge of an unaccompanied group then it is your responsibility to:

- make decisions during the event following the principles set out in these Policy and Guidelines.

Occasional assistance provided by a member of staff who has not been through the Disclosure process. Any person associated with the Village Hall may assist in activities with children on an occasional basis. They may do so only if the group is led by a parent, teacher or other group leader or member of staff who has been appointed following the necessary pre-appointment checks. The person leading the activities must be the one to allocate tasks and make relevant decisions.

## **D. Golden Rule - Safety in numbers**

In as many situations as possible we should aim to ensure that no adult is in a one to one situation with a child. Safety in numbers should be the golden rule, whether the numbers are other children or adults. If for any reason a one to one situation is unavoidable eg work placement then additional safeguards should be put in place.

## **E. Disclosure**

### **Appointments**

All individuals appointed to posts which involve regular, substantial or unaccompanied contact with children while using the Village Hall will be required to show evidence of Standard or Enhanced Disclosure via the Disclosure and Barring Service. For most posts a Standard Disclosure will be appropriate. However if the post involves:

- regularly managing events with unaccompanied children;
- contact with children over a series of events;
- work experience involving one to one contact;

then evidence of an Enhanced Disclosure should be sought. Such individuals will only proceed to use the Village Hall if: they show proof of Disclosure and the Disclosure provides no cause for concern as to their suitability to work with children. If the Disclosure provides concern then the matter will be discussed by the Trustees and appropriate action taken.

Individuals awaiting receipt of Disclosure

Any person who is awaiting receipt of Disclosure must be accompanied when they are dealing with children until the Disclosure has been received.

#### **F. Allegation of abuse**

It is to be hoped that you will never have to deal with an alleged incident of child abuse. But it is sensible that you are prepared to do so if necessary and this will be assisted if you have discussed the issue locally. There are four likely scenarios which you should be aware of and be prepared to deal with if necessary. These are;

- There is suspicion or evidence that a child is being abused by a person associated with the Village Hall.
- A child accuses a person associated with the Village Hall of abusing them.
- Abuse takes place or is suspected on Village Hall land or at a Village Hall event by individual unrelated to the Village Hall.
- A child discloses abuse happening elsewhere e.g. at home

#### **In all cases you must:**

- Be prompt, calm, assured and professional
- Keep any details strictly confidential and share only on a 'need to know' basis.
- Report the issues as soon as possible to a trustee or to the local Police.

#### **G. Allegations against adults**

Though our focus must be on safeguarding children you must also be aware that allegations of abuse made by children about adults do occasionally happen. Some prove mistaken or, very rarely, malicious. The Policy and Guidelines are there to help you to avoid situations in which well-intentioned actions could be misinterpreted and ensure that you do not find yourself in a situation where an allegation by a child, young or vulnerable person can be made.

#### **H. Use of Information relating to children**

Information about children eg names and addresses, obtained during activities at the Village Hall must be treated confidentially. It must be kept securely by the group leader, stored only as long as necessary and disposed of in a way which maintains their confidentiality.

#### **I. Discussion of the issues**

Open discussion of child protection should be encouraged since this helps to make people more comfortable with the issues involved. Do not keep it 'under wraps' for fear of upsetting or embarrassing people.

#### **J. Nominated child protection officer**

The nominated child protection officer of the Coln Valley Village Hall Charity is Jacky Penning-RowSELL.