

EYNSFORD VILLAGE HALL – SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. Purpose

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk from abuse or neglect.

This policy defines how Eynsford Village Hall operates to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

We have 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. We also have a duty to safeguard and support our trustees, volunteers and staff.

2. Definitions

Children and young people are defined as those persons aged under 18 years old. This policy will apply to all trustees, staff, hall users and volunteers and will be used to support their work.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health and development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

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 2014:

- Has care and support needs
- Is experiencing, or 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.

Persons affected

- All trustees, volunteers and staff

- All those delivering or attending any activity or service in the village hall
- All visitors and contractors

3. Policy principles

There can be no excuses for not taking all reasonable action to protect children and adults at risk from abuse or neglect. All citizens of the United Kingdom have their rights enshrined within the Human Rights Act 1988. People who are eligible to receive health and community care services may be additionally vulnerable to the violation of these rights by reason of disability, impairment, age or illness.

Eynsford Village Hall has a zero tolerance approach to abuse and also recognises under the Care Act 2014, it has a duty for the care and protection of adults who are at risk of abuse. It also recognises its responsibilities for the safety and care of children under the Children Act 1989 and 2004.

Eynsford Village Hall is committed to promoting wellbeing, harm prevention and to responding effectively if concerns are raised.

Eynsford Village Hall is aware of the work of their local safeguarding Board/Partnership (Sevenoaks District Council) and other support organisations on the development and implementation of procedures for the protection of children and adults at risk. The policy is about stopping abuse where it is happening and preventing abuse where there is a risk it may occur.

Eynsford Village Hall is committed to the following principles:

- The welfare of the child, young person or adult at risk is paramount
- All children, young people and adults at risk have the right to protection from abuse
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; for services to be effective each individual and organisation should play their full part; and
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse must be properly reported to the relevant internal and external authorities and dealt with swiftly and appropriately

4. Safe Recruitment

Eynsford Village Hall must have thorough recruitment procedures in place to ensure adherence to safeguarding procedures. This will include self employed cleaners, letting secretary etc and may also include volunteers or anyone working for, or on behalf of, the village hall committee and having unsupervised access to vulnerable users e.g. organising a lunch for older people, running an activity for children or volunteers undertaking a task at the village hall.

Such processes must relate to the level of risk involved and a one-size-fits-all approach for all staff and volunteers may not be appropriate. The role and responsibilities of any person applying to become involved with the village hall must be assessed individually and appropriate procedures, depending upon their role, must be assessed.

Currently the hall does not employ staff. Both the cleaner and letting secretary are contractors and consequently do not need DBS checks. If conditions change for these, or any future, staff each post will be assessed and any necessary checks carried out accordingly.

Where the hall is employing staff who will work directly with children or adults at risk they must:

- Compete an application form which shows their employment history
- Provide at least two references:
 - a) One being the most recent/latest employer/school/college
 - b) If working directly with children or adults at risk, from someone who has supervised them working with children or adults at risk before. This should confirm that, in their opinion, they are suitable to work with children and/or adults at risk.

5. Procedures

- A. All Trustees will sign an Declaration of Acceptance of Office for Trustees which includes a declaration that they have no convictions in relation to abuse
- B. New Trustees, volunteers and staff must be given an induction to this policy and understand their responsibilities
- C. All Trustees will given information about safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and will be encouraged to undertake training where appropriate on safeguarding issues including whistleblowing where it is available and offered by their local safeguarding board/partnership or other local support organisation and ensure that they understand the principles set out in this policy at 3 above
- D. Trustees however, do not supervise users as part of their function and DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) checks are not required for Trustees unless they have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults.
- E. All Trustees will work together to promote a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting welfare to be addressed
- F. All Trustees, helpers and other volunteers will not have unsupervised access to children or adults at risk unless appropriately vetted
- G. The Trustees will follow safe recruiting practices (see Paragraph 4 above)
- H. A Trustee will be appointed as responsible for child and adult at risk safeguarding matters (the 'Safeguarding Lead'). This person will have responsibility for reporting concerns that arise, as a matter of urgency, to the relevant safeguarding agency
- I. The person is the Chairman until the review of this policy at the next AGM
- J. All suspicions or allegations of abuse against a child or adult at risk will be taken seriously and dealt with speedily and appropriately. The appointed person will know who to contact and where to go for support and advice in relation to an allegation, a concern about the quality of care or practice or a complaint. An allegation may relate to a person who works with children or adults at risk who has:
 - Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or adult at risk or may have harmed a child or adult at risk

- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child or adult at risk; or
 - Behaved towards a child (or children) or adult at risk in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children or adults at risk
- K. The Trustees will ensure that all hirers have signed, or have confirmed that they have read, the hiring terms and conditions. This will require all hirers who wish to use the hall for activities which include children and adults at risk, other than for hire 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 Service (DBS) when requested to do so or, confirm that they have understood and will adhere to the hall's principles and procedures with regard to safeguarding

6. Making referrals – reporting procedures

- If any Trustee is worried about a child or adult at risk, they must draw this to the attention of the member of the committee who has been appointed as responsible for child and adult at risk safeguarding matters, as long as it will not delay any potential referral or place someone at harm. Please see details in paragraphs 5 H, 5 I and 5 J above.
- If however the matter is urgent because a child or adult at risk of harm is in immediate danger, any trustee **MUST** phone 999 for the police.
- It is not a Trustee's responsibility to decide if abuse has happened – it is however a Trustee's responsibility to report it to the safeguarding lead and/or the appropriate authority.
- If a Trustee needs advice as to whether or not a referral is required, call the Sevenoaks District Council Safeguarding Group on 01732 227000 or email safeguarding@sevenoaks.gov.uk
- The Council has a duty to report safeguarding reports and concerns to the relevant investigative authority, which would be KCC Adult and Children Social Services or when immediate help is needed, the Police.
- **REMEMBER** – see it, recognise it, report it.

This policy will be reviewed annually at the AGM for Eynsford Village Hall.

Last Reviewed: 26th September 2024

Next Review: 2025 AGM