



Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

Offord Village Hall comprises a main hall, a committee room, a kitchen, toilets, storeroom, small outdoor community garden area and car park. It is for use by local groups for regular hiring, for one-off events such as weddings and fundraising events by the management committee. The hall is managed by a management committee, comprising of both elected trustees and those representing groups that regularly use the hall. Its physical upkeep is maintained by a part-time paid caretaker. There are no other hall staff and so the hall is unmanned in between bookings, apart from when the caretaker is working. Hirers for public events/activities are therefore required to have carried out their own risk assessments and, where appropriate, have their own safeguarding policies and procedures in place.

This safeguarding document is for all trustees, other volunteers, any employees and hirers of the hall. It is reviewed biennially and is on display in the village hall itself.

The appointed safeguarding representative for the hall is: **Rebecca Davis-Marsh**.

Safeguarding position

The majority of activities and events that take place at the hall are organised and run by members of the public. However, the committee do organise and run fundraising activities throughout the year. Both types of activities may include children and/or vulnerable adults, whether known or unknown. The Management Committee therefore recognises that all trustees, staff, volunteers and hirers have a duty to safeguard vulnerable users of the hall, and its premises, and those who may come into contact with vulnerable users. They should respond to any concerns they may have regarding the physical, sexual, emotional or psychological safety, or concerns relating to discriminatory or financial violation or exploitation, of a vulnerable person in relation to hall use. This policy is in place to protect all vulnerable persons regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, religion or faith.

Definitions

Children and Young People

Children and young people are defined as those persons aged under 18 years old. This policy will apply to all staff, contractors 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, vulnerable adult 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 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.

Persons affected by this policy

- All trustees, volunteers, and staff.
- All those attending any activity or service that is being delivered from the village hall charity property.
- All visitors and contractors.

Principles

The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount and is the responsibility of everyone. All children and vulnerable adults, without exception, have the right to protection from abuse, whether physical, verbal, sexual, bullying, exclusion or neglect. Bullying, shouting, physical violence, sexism and racism towards any person using the hall, will not be permitted or tolerated.

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 1998. 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.

Offord Village Hall charity has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and recognises that 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.

Offord Village Hall charity is committed to promoting wellbeing, harm prevention and to responding effectively if concerns are raised. As a charity it is also aware of the work of their local safeguarding Board/Partnership 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 that it may occur.

The Village Hall Committee 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 professional 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.

Policy Statement

1. Any organised clubs, events or regulated activities, run by either volunteers, staff or committee members, involving vulnerable persons, will not be permitted to take place without first considering the safeguarding implications and making the appropriate provision (eg, risk assessments, policy changes, introductory training, safe recruitment procedures).
2. Organisers of activities knowingly involving children and/or vulnerable adults are advised to carry out safer recruitment processes when it comes to volunteers or staff. Safeguarding training and/or DBS checks should be considered and carried out if deemed appropriate.

3. The Management Committee will keep the premises safe for use by children and vulnerable adults. The Committee recognises that a higher standard of safety is required where small children, those who cannot read safety notices and physically disabled adults, use the hall. Users of the hall organising activities for these groups will be made aware of areas of concern in this regard when being shown the hall and will be expected to risk assess for these and mitigate accordingly.
4. Hirers must be aware of their obligations under the Licensing Act 2003 to ensure that alcohol is not sold to those under the age of 18. Furthermore, no children may be admitted to films when they are below the age classification for the film or show. No gambling or entertainment of an adult or sexual nature shall be permitted on the premises.
5. All suspicions or allegations of abuse against any child or adult on hall premises will be taken seriously and dealt with speedily and appropriately, either directly by the Management Committee and/or by the relevant user group. Any suspicions or allegations of abuse involving a child or vulnerable adult made evident (either by disclosure or otherwise) during hall activities, but occurring externally to hall activities will be referred to the relevant bodies.
6. An allegation may relate to a person who works with children or adults at risk who has:
 - a. Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or adult at risk or may have harmed a child or adult at risk.
 - b. Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child or adult at risk; or
 - c. 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.
7. Hirers of public events and activities will need to declare the relevant body in their own safeguarding policies and detail their own referral procedures. Members of the committee will report any such incidents to the safeguarding representative who will then make the necessary referrals to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board (<https://safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/concerned/>). Advice on how to handle disclosures from a child or vulnerable adult can be found at the end of this document.
8. All Trustees, hall employees, volunteers and hirers are to be made aware of this policy. Should anyone require further information or guidance, this will be



obtained from either CambsACRE or the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board.

9. All members of the committee will sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office for trustees which includes a declaration that they have no convictions in relation to abuse.

Procedures

1. A copy of this policy will be displayed for the attention of all in the village hall and made available to hirers prior to their bookings being confirmed. New Trustees, volunteers and employees will be provided with a copy of this policy on appointment.
2. Any organisations or individuals hiring the hall for the purposes of holding activities where Ofsted registration is required, should show their registration and their own Child Protection Policy to the Hall Booking Secretary and Safeguarding representative. Ofsted registration is required if you work as a childminder, or provide day care for children under 8 years old for more than two hours each day you must register with Ofsted and be inspected regularly. These requirements cover playgroups, nurseries, after school clubs and holiday clubs, amongst others. It is best to check the Ofsted website for any changes to ensure your information is current and up to date. Safe recruitment processes should be used to appoint staff who will be working with children or vulnerable adults in any kind of activity.
3. Organisations/groups hiring the hall for activities specifically for children will be asked to submit their Child Protection/Safeguarding policy and procedure to the Bookings Secretary for approval by the safeguarding representative before the first booking commences. Organisations hiring the hall for activities specifically involving vulnerable adults will be asked to submit their Vulnerable Adults Protection/Safeguarding policy and procedures to the Bookings Secretary for approval by the safeguarding representative before the first booking commences.
4. The Committee will require hirers to report any damage, breakages or safety issues needing attention to the Booking Secretary, who will inform the appropriate people. These will be dealt with as soon as practicable, in the light of the circumstances, with provision to prevent access by children and vulnerable adults pending repair where appropriate.
5. A hiring agreement that includes appropriate clauses will be entered into for all hirings for licensable activities. The Committee will ensure that these provisions

are observed when holding any licensable activities itself. The Committee will give written instructions to those selling alcohol concerning the licensing offences that must be avoided.

6. Contractors engaged to carry out work at the premises must not be allowed unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults. All contractual work will be arranged outside of times when the hall will be being used by children or vulnerable adults. If this is unavoidable (eg in the case of an emergency repair) the hirer will be made aware and if necessary, should provide additional necessary supervision (for example, during trips to the toilets).
7. When one part of the hall is being used by an organisation/group/hirer involving vulnerable persons, no other part of the hall premises (eg Committee Room) will separately be available for hire at the same time.
8. Anyone undertaking a risk assessment on behalf of the Management Committee must take this policy and implications into account.

To be reviewed not less than biennially

Version 3 (2025) adopted by the Management Committee: Tuesday, 18 November 2025

Date for Next Review: Thursday, 18 November 2027

Advice on how to handle disclosures from a child or vulnerable adult:

Do treat any allegations extremely seriously and act at all times towards the child/vulnerable adult as if you believe what they are saying.

Do tell the person they are right to tell you.

Do reassure them that they are not to blame.

Do be honest about your own position, who you have to tell and why.

Do tell the person what you are doing and when and keep them up to date with what is happening.

Do take further action – you may be the only person in a position to prevent future abuse – tell your nominated person immediately.

Do write down everything said and what was done.

Do seek medical attention if necessary.

Do inform parents/carers/family members unless there is suspicion of their involvement.

Don't make promises you can't keep (for example you won't tell anyone else).

Don't interrogate the person – it is not your job to carry out an investigation – this will be up to the police and social services, who have experience in this.

Don't cast doubt on what the person has told you, don't interrupt or change the subject.

Don't say anything that makes the person feel responsible for the abuse.

Don't Do Nothing – make sure you tell your nominated child protection person immediately – they will know how to follow this up and where to go for further advice.