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Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

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1. Aims and Definitions

This statement of policy and procedures applies to activities that take place in Eastwell Village Hall and its premises which are the responsibility of the Trustees and Management Committee.

A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18. A vulnerable adult is someone aged 18 or over who is, or may be, in need of community services due to age, illness or a mental or physical disability and who is, or may be, unable to take care of himself/herself, or unable to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation.

The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount and the responsibility of everyone. All children and vulnerable adults, without exception, have the right to protection from abuse, whether physical, verbal, financial, sexual, bullying, exclusion or neglect.

The Management Committee's main aim is to keep the premises safe for use by children and vulnerable adults. This policy is in place to protect all children and vulnerable persons who use the hall and its premises, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, religion or faith.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Management Committee.

A copy of the current policy is included in the Village Hall Information Pack located in the Kitchen.

2. Duties and Responsibilities

The Trustees, Management Committee and activity organisers have a duty to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. They will respond promptly to any concerns they may have regarding the physical, sexual, emotional or psychological safety, or any concerns related to discrimination or exploitation of a child or vulnerable person. All suspicions or allegations of abuse against a child will be taken seriously and dealt with speedily and appropriately.

Any volunteers working for or representing Eastwell Village Hall and having unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults will be scrutinised as deemed appropriate by the Management Committee. This may include a check being made under the Disclosure and Barring Service. A copy of the disclosure form will be kept on file by the Secretary.

The Management Committee will ensure that the Trustees, Committee members and activity organisers are familiar with this policy and the procedures for dealing with reports of any incidents or suspected incidents. All volunteers will also be made aware of the list of "dos and don'ts" listed below.

It is particularly important that:

- bullying, shouting, physical violence, sexism and racism towards children or vulnerable persons must not be permitted or tolerated
- extra care is required where there are small children and others who cannot read safety notices
- alcohol must not be sold to those under the age of 18
- no children may be admitted to films if they are below the age classification for the film or show
- no entertainment of an adult or sexual nature will be permitted on the premises.

Where there is damage or breakages or safety issues needing attention, these will be dealt with as soon as practicable with provision in the meantime to prevent access by children and vulnerable adults pending safe repair. Contractors engaged to carry out work at the premises must not be allowed unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults. Appropriate supervision will be arranged as necessary.

3. Reporting Incidents

The Trustees, Management Committee and general membership will ensure that everything possible is done to ensure the confidentiality, safety and security of all those involved in any reported incident.

The reporting procedure is as follows:

1. Any incidents or suspected incidents should be reported immediately to the Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer who will inform other members of the Management Committee.
2. Full details of the incident must be recorded by one of the above Officers and the information must be kept securely and accessible for future reference. This record must be promptly updated with any subsequent developments.
3. Before reporting an incident the Committee may elect to discuss the matter confidentially with others in order to clear up any misunderstandings or to corroborate and support any suspicions.
4. If it is then decided to report the incident, one of the Officers (or if they are not available, any member of the Management Committee) must contact Children's Social Care Enquiries on 0116 305 0005 or the Police on 0116 222 2222.

This procedure will be kept under regular review by the Management Committee.

4. External Groups

The responsibilities of external users are defined in the Terms and Conditions of Hire to which every Hirer agrees prior to hiring the hall.

Hirers are asked whether their activities involve children or vulnerable adults and, if this is the case, they must confirm that their own relevant policy and procedures are in place. Where appropriate a copy of these may need to be provided prior to commencement of the booking.

Eastwell Village Hall accepts no responsibility for any incidents or reported incidents that occur during the period of hire. Any such incidents or suspected incidents must be dealt with by the Hirer or other responsible person in line with the hire group's policy and procedures.

Guidelines for responding to abuse or suspicion of abuse – some DOs and DON'Ts

DO

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

Do tell the child 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 child 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.

Do write down everything said and what was done.

Do seek medical attention if necessary.

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

DON'T

Don't make promises you can't keep.

Don't interrogate the child – 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 child has told you, don't interrupt or change the subject.

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

Don't Do Nothing – make sure you take the next step.