

MERESIDE VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

Registered Charity Number 281945

Vulnerable adult and child protection policy

Policy and procedures

Mereside Village Hall is run by its Trustees and Members. It currently has 2 employees.

All Mereside Village Hall, Trustees and volunteers 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 of a vulnerable person or concerns relating to discriminatory or financial violation or exploitation of a vulnerable person.

This policy is in place to protect all vulnerable persons regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, religion or faith.

Vulnerable users could include:

- children
- young people
- adults with learning difficulties or physical disability
- frail, elderly people
- carers

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 children or vulnerable adults will not be permitted or tolerated.

The committee of Mereside Village Hall have a duty to safeguard children and vulnerable adults who utilise the hall and its facilities, and those who may come into contact with vulnerable users.

Definition of abuse

Abuse is described as “***a violation of an individual’s human or civil rights by any other person or persons***” (No Secrets, Department of Health, 2000).

Definition of a Vulnerable Adult

A vulnerable adult is defined as a person who “***may be in need of services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who may not be able to take care of him or herself, or is unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.***” (Who Decides, Lord Chancellor’s Department, 1997).

Policy statement

- All suspicions or allegations of abuse against a child or vulnerable adult will be taken seriously and dealt with speedily and appropriately. There is a named member of the committee to whom your suspicions or concerns should be reported. This person is Amy Edwards until March 2022. This person has the responsibility for reporting concerns that arise, as a matter of urgency, to the local Child Protection Agency.

- All committee members and volunteers will be required to become aware of child protection and vulnerable adult issues and relevant Acts and Department of Health Guidelines will be held by the committee as reference material for members.
- The committee will endeavour to keep the premises safe for use by children and vulnerable adults. The committee recognises that a higher standard of safety is required where use is made by small children and those who cannot read safety notices and physically disabled adults.
- It is the hirer's responsibility to obtain a copy of the Mereside Village Hall Health and safety Policy and to familiarise themselves with the contents. The hirer will be required to sign a hiring agreement as stated in section 3.5 in the Health and Safety Policy.
- The committee will ensure that the hirers are made aware of their obligations under the Licencing Act 2003 to ensure that alcohol is not sold to those under 18 years of age.
- The committee will ensure that hirers are aware that no children may be admitted to films when they are below the age classification for the film on show.
- Organisations hiring the hall for activities for children and/or vulnerable adults will be asked to show their Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Policy before the first booking commences. Individuals hiring the hall for activities for children and/or vulnerable adults will be made aware of this policy.
- In addition, any user hiring the hall to provide a facility for children (playgroups, football training, youth clubs for example) will be required to show their DBS disclosure certificate to the booking secretary and their disclosure number will be recorded. Any delegation of that hirer to other people to supervise the children is the responsibility of the hirer and the committee will not vet these delegates for DBS disclosure.
- The only exception to the above is when the hall is hired out for a children's party. The committee takes no action to vet the person(s) hiring the hall for these on-off events.

General points

Mereside Village hall committee do not supervise children or vulnerable adults as part of their function within the committee. DBS checks are not required by them unless they are to have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults. Should DBS checks become necessary they will be undertaken in compliance with The Protection of Children Act (1999), The Children's Act (2004) and part V of The Police Act (1997)

When the committee organise events to include children it is always stated that children must be accompanied by parents or guardians.

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis in April and / or when changes occur in National Legislation or Procedures. New committee members will be provided with an understanding of their responsibilities in line with this policy.

This policy was adopted by the committee at a meeting on 20th April 2016.

The policy was reviewed at a committee meeting on 27th January 2022.

Signed Chairperson 27th January 2022