



HALE PARISH COUNCIL & VILLAGE HALL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE / VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY Adopted 16th September 2024

HALE PARISH COUNCIL & VILLAGE HALL OPERATES ITS OWN SAFEGUARDING POLICY AS SET OUT BELOW AND ALSO IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND CODES OF CONDUCT PROVIDED BY HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Hale Parish Council & Village Hall provides a safe venue for people to come and participate in community activities including social and other events. In so doing, their employed personnel may come into contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults. The purpose of this Safeguarding Policy is:

- i. To provide protection for anyone who visits Hale village Hall or takes part in activities organised by Hale Parish Council and/or Hale Village Hall
- ii. To provide all Hale Parish Council & Village Hall representatives dealing with children, young people and vulnerable adults with good practise guidelines
- iii. To provide all Hale Parish Council & Village Hall representatives with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they have concerns that a person may be experiencing, or be at risk from, some form of abuse
- iv. To guide Hale Parish Council & Village Hall representatives on responding appropriately to, and reporting, safeguarding concerns

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO:

All staff coaches, trustees, councillors and volunteers and associated persons such as those employed under a contract for services and will be referred to as Hale Parish Council & Village Hall representatives throughout this policy. All Hale Parish Council & Village Hall representatives will be made aware of this policy.

TRUSTEES

In accordance with the Charity Commission guidelines, there are four clear expectations of trustees

- 1) Provide a safe and trusted environment
- 2) Set an organisational culture that prioritises safeguarding

- 3) Have adequate policies and procedures and measures to protect people
- 4) Handle incidents as they arise and report promptly to the relevant authorities

POLICY STATEMENT

Hale Parish Council & Village Hall provides services, activities and events for children: young people and vulnerable adults and has a duty of care towards all who visit the facility

HALE PARISH COUNCIL & VILLAGE HALL RECOGNISES

- a) The welfare of all is paramount
- b) All children, young people and vulnerable adults without exception have the right to protection from all types of harm and abuse
- c) All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- d) All Hale Parish Council & Village Hall representatives have a responsibility to report concerns

RECRUITMENT OF PARISH COUNCIL & VILLAGE HALL REPRESENTATIVES

Good practice recommends that all representatives who have contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults should undergo DBS Checks. If the result of the DBS Check and or references raise doubts about the suitability of the individual, they shall not be appointed. Hale Parish Council offers to cover the cost of standard DBS checks for people who are working on behalf of the organisation and wish to be checked.

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

All Hale Parish Council & Village Hall representatives will conduct themselves in a way that promotes best practice.

Good practice can reduce the risk of behaviour being misinterpreted or individuals leaving themselves vulnerable to allegations of abuse

Representatives should adopt a common sense approach when dealing with children, young people and vulnerable adults. For example, there may be times when representatives are required to carry out first aid and the following guidelines should be followed wherever possible

- a) Treat all visitors equally with respect and dignity

- b) Challenge Inappropriate language or behaviour when used by colleagues or visitors
- c) Ensure that individuals do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children, young people and vulnerable adults whilst away from others
- d) If an individual is alone in a room with a child, young person or adult, they should leave the door ajar and make others aware of the situation
- e) No photographs or video footage should be taken or published without parental consent or the consent of the individuals concerned
- f) Where possible, Hale Parish Council & Village Hall representatives should not touch children, young people or vulnerable adults, but if it is essential, they should obtain the individuals permission before they touch them. They should provide a commentary of what they are doing and why. If a person is unconscious, a commentary should still be given to any colleagues or bystanders present

RECOGNISING ABUSE AND RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS AND SUSPICIONS

A child, young person or vulnerable adult may tell a representative or a third party about abuse they have suffered

Representatives may also have concerns if:

- a) An individual has suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, especially in unusual areas such as cheeks or torso
- b) An individual uses inappropriate or explicit language or displays sexually explicit behaviour
- c) An individual displays sudden or erratic changes of behaviour
- d) An individual displays a distrust of adults, especially with those who they would be expected to have a close relationship with

THE ABOVE LIST IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE

The presence of one or more of the above is not proof that abuse has occurred as there may be other reasons. It is important not to overreact. Children, young people and vulnerable adults can often have bruises and it can be difficult to differentiate from the norm.

Should a representative be concerned, it is not their responsibility to decide if there is evidence of abuse, but it is their duty to act upon concerns and if in doubt, report it to the designated Safeguarding Officer / Assistant Officer as soon possible.

REPORTING PROCEDURE & CONFIDENTIALITY

Should a child, young person or vulnerable adult confide in a representative that they are being abused, the representative should:

- a) Keep Calm
- b) Tell the person concerned that they cannot keep the information secret, if they believe the person has been harmed
- c) Reassure the person that they were right to inform them and make it clear that they are not in any way to blame for what has happened
- d) Take what is said seriously
- e) Keep questions to a minimum
- f) Make a full written report of the conversation as soon as possible
- g) Pass the report on to the Safeguarding / Assistant Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible

Once the Safeguarding Officer or Assistant Officer has received the report, they will decide upon what action to take by following local authority, multi -agency safeguarding procedures. The Safeguarding Officer / Assistant Officer may liaise with the chair of the Village Hall Management Committee or Parish Council if considered necessary and follow up with a report and letter confirming that the matter has been referred to the appropriate agency. A note should be made of the action taken and filed with the report.

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A HALE PARISH COUNCIL OR VILLAGE HALL REPRESENTATIVE

If an allegation of abuse is made against a Hale Parish Council or Village Hall representative, this should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer immediately. The officer will then liaise with the chair of the Hale Village Hall Management Committee and the Chair of Hale Parish Council as soon as possible to decide if the matter should be referred to the appropriate agency and or Police

The Chair of the Hale Village Hall Management Committee and the Chair of Hale Parish Council will then decide between them what action to take and whether and how they will be informed of the allegations.

REVIEW OF THE POLICY

This policy shall be reviewed on an annual basis and updated as necessary.

Adopted by Hale Parish Council

The Safeguarding Officer is: Clerk to Hale Parish Council