

## **The Chislehurst Society Old Chapel CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY**

This statement of policy and procedures applies to users of and activities in the Old Chapel and any ancillary activities which are the responsibility of the Chislehurst Society.

All Chislehurst Society Executive Committee members, staff and volunteers have a duty to safeguard children (children are defined as anyone under the age of 18) and vulnerable adult users of the Old Chapel and its premises. They should respond to any concerns they may have regarding the physical, sexual, emotional or psychological safety of a child or vulnerable person; or concerns relating to discriminatory or financial violation or exploitation of a child or vulnerable person.

This policy is in place to protect all children and vulnerable persons regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, religion or faith. 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 persons will not be permitted or tolerated.

No member of the Executive Committee, staff or volunteers will have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults unless they have been through safe recruitment procedures. All suspicions or allegations of abuse against a child will be taken seriously and dealt with speedily and appropriately.

All Executive Committee Members, users and volunteers need to be aware of this policy on child protection, and vulnerable adult issues. The Executive Committee will take appropriate steps to make sure they are so aware.

Clear procedures will be established and regularly reviewed for dealing with reports of any incidents or suspected incidents. The Executive Committee recognises that a higher standard of safety is required where use is made by small children, those who cannot read safety notices and physically disabled adults.

Any organisations or individuals booking the Old Chapel will be made aware of this policy and where activities are involving primarily children or vulnerable adults they will be asked to certify that they have an appropriate policy and procedures in place. Access to the policy will be provided prior to commencement of the booking.

The Executive Committee will ensure that hirers are made aware:

- of their obligations under the Licensing Act 2003 to ensure that alcohol is not sold to those under the age of 18.
- that no children may be admitted to films when they are below the age classification for the film or show.
- that no gambling or entertainment of an adult or sexual nature shall be permitted on the premises.

A copy of the policy will be displayed for the attention of all in the Old Chapel and made available on request to hirers.

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## **Safeguarding Procedures**

1. Executive Committee members, key volunteers and staff will be made aware of this policy and associated key procedures.
2. The Secretary will ensure the policy statement is displayed in the Hall.
3. Executive Committee members and staff will be issued with the list of “do’s and don’ts” set out below.
4. Appropriate training on the topic will be arranged by the Executive Committee for its own benefit, for staff and hirers if necessary.
5. Organisations hiring the Old Chapel will be asked to certify that they have a child/vulnerable adult protection policy or that their activities do not require one. Where activities are for children (and where appropriate for vulnerable adults) hirers may be asked to supply or show their child protection policy to the Secretary before the first booking commences. Individuals hiring the Hall for activities for children will be made aware of this policy. Provisions to this effect will be incorporated into pre booking information and a hiring agreement.
6. Where there is damage or there are breakages or safety issues needing attention, these will be dealt with as soon as practicable, in the light of the circumstances, with provision in the meantime to prevent access by children and vulnerable adults pending repair where appropriate.
7. Appropriate clauses will be entered into for all hiring for licensable activities. The Committee will ensure that these provisions are observed when holding any licensable activities itself.
8. 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 if necessary.
9. Since the premises might be used by more than one hirer, the attention of hirers will be drawn to the need to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are supervised when using toilets or other appropriate arrangements made eg putting up a notice on the toilets to say they are for exclusive use by a specified group using the Old Chapel.

## **Reporting incidents**

1. Any incidents or suspected incidents should be reported immediately, initially to the Hall Manager who will inform the Chairman, the Secretary or the Treasurer, and if all of these officers are unavailable, any other member of the Executive Committee. Alternatively, they should be reported to any of these people directly.
2. All Executive Committee members will be provided with a proforma for initial recording of incidents, and should keep this safely so that it can be referred to if and when required.
3. As soon as possible, the Executive Committee member or member of staff involved should contact the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer (CAVAP) who will involve the local authority, police, helplines etc as appropriate; and may choose to have a confidential discussion with others in order to clear up any misunderstandings or to corroborate and support any suspicions before reporting a concern to the lead agency.
4. The Executive Committee Members and the CAVAP Officer will ensure that all is done to ensure the confidentiality, safety and security of all those involved in such an incident.

## **Safe Recruitment**

All staff, working directly for the Old Chapel must:

- complete an application form which shows their employment history
- provide at least two references and if working directly with children or young people or vulnerable adults then one of the references should come from

someone who has supervised them working with children, young people or vulnerable adults before

- if working directly with children or young people or vulnerable adults be checked under the Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure System and a copy of the CRB disclosure form kept by the Secretary.

Any volunteers working for the Chislehurst Society and having unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adult users may also be required to undergo these procedures.

### Guidelines for responding to abuse or suspicion of abuse

#### 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 – tell your nominated person immediately.

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 tell your nominated child protection person immediately – they will know how to follow this up and where to go for further advice.