



Viney Hill Christian Adventure Centre Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy
Reviewed May 2021

Introduction

Viney Hill Christian Adventure Centre acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and is committed to ensuring that safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and the requirements of the Diocese of Gloucestershire.

The policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children and vulnerable adults are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, gender, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic background, all children and vulnerable adults.

- To provide protection for the children, young people and vulnerable adults who receive our services.
- To provide staff with guidance on procedures they should adopt if they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm, and to enable them to protect themselves from accusations.

Viney Hill Christian Adventure Centre acknowledges that some children and vulnerable adults, including disabled children and adults, or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in Viney Hill Christian Adventure Centre. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

This policy applies to all staff, including volunteers, Trustees and anyone working on behalf of VHCAC. We will endeavour to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults by:

- Valuing them, listening to them and respecting them.
- Recruiting staff safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Sharing information about safeguarding, child protection and good practice with children, parents, teachers and staff.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately.

Staff, volunteers and freelance instructors will be asked to read and sign a copy of this policy and to reread and sign after any updates or amendments.

Designated Safeguarding Officer

The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for the Centre is:

Jon Holden
Centre Manager
01594 516162
07794030024

When this person is not on site the Deputy Safeguarding Officer is:

Callum Pickersgill
Senior Instructor
01594 616162

The Trustee with safeguarding responsibility is: Barry Stevens

Role and responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Officer

The DSO or their Deputy is responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

The role of the designated person is to:

- know which outside protection agency to contact in the event of a protection concern coming to their attention
- provide information and advice on child and vulnerable adult protection within the Centre
- ensure that the appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing under confidential cover
- liaise with Social Care and other agencies, as appropriate
- keep relevant Centre staff and trustees informed about any action taken and any further action required, for example, disciplinary action against a member of staff
- advise Centre staff of any child or vulnerable adult protection needs

Role of the Safeguarding Trustee

The role of the Safeguarding Trustee will be to support and advise the DSO as necessary and to be involved in any investigations. Currently this is Barry Stevens

Monitoring

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every year, or in the following circumstances:

- changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- as required by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, as a result of any other significant change or event

Principles

We are committed to:

- promoting and prioritising the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
- establishing a safe and caring community and environment where there is a culture of 'informed vigilance' as to the dangers of abuse
- careful selection and training of all those with any responsibility for children and vulnerable adults within the organisation, in line with safer recruitment principles, including the use of Data and Barring Service checks and registration with the relevant vetting and barring schemes

- ensuring that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and vulnerable adults
- ensuring that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored
- responding without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, co-operating with the police and local authority in any investigation
- we will ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern
- challenging any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust
- following legislation, guidance and recognized good practice
- ensuring that robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation

Data and Barring Checks (DBS)

We follow recommended guidelines in that all staff that lead sessions with young people or vulnerable adults, whether permanent, temporary or Freelance, will be subject to a DBS check. This can be an online check where the person concerned has signed up to the updating service.

We will temporarily accept a DBS carried out by another agency if completed less than three years ago. We will however wish to carry out our own DBS as soon as possible.

The Centre will cover the cost of these and will monitor dates for renewal and rechecking every three years at least.

Those who are part of the updating service may be subject to more regular checks.

Key Values:

The following key values or approaches are regarded as important underpinning for our safeguarding practice:

- the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount
- prevention is vital
- transparency
- accountability
- partnership with statutory authorities
- use of independent specialist advice
- the active management of risk
- a culture of informed vigilance

Statutory definitions

Abuse of children and vulnerable adults has many forms. There are four identified categories of abuse described in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010*, from which the following definitions are taken.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children or vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger, for example via the internet. They may be abused by another adult or adults, or another child or children.

- **Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in, a child or vulnerable adult.
- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child or vulnerable adult is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children or vulnerable adults in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children or vulnerable adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child or vulnerable adult in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's or vulnerable adult's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child or vulnerable adult is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child or vulnerable adult from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's or vulnerable adult's basic emotional needs.
- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's or vulnerable adult's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child or vulnerable adult that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child or vulnerable adult opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ridiculing what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or vulnerable adults. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's or vulnerable adult's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child or vulnerable adult participating in normal social interaction. It may also involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another, for example in domestic violence situations; serious bullying (including cyber-bullying); causing children or vulnerable adults frequently to feel frightened or in danger; exploitation or corruption of children or vulnerable adults. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult but it may occur as the sole or main form of abuse.

What to do if you are worried a child or vulnerable adult is being abused

Everyone working with children and vulnerable adults should be familiar with local procedures and protocols for safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. Adults have a duty to report any concerns about the protection or welfare of a child or vulnerable adult to the DSO and/or report any concerns to the local social care office.

See procedures chart in Appendix 1 or on staff board.

Promoting safer practice

There are some key features of effective arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. These arrangements will help agencies to create and maintain an organisational culture that reflects the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. At an organisational or strategic level, these key features are:

- senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults
- clear policy stating the organisation's responsibilities towards children and vulnerable adults available for all staff and volunteers
- a clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults
- clear roles for staff and volunteers
- service development that takes account of the need to safeguard and promote welfare and that is informed, where appropriate, by the views of children, vulnerable adults and families
- safer recruitment procedures in place
- clear arrangements for supervision
- training for staff and volunteers on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults for all staff working with or in contact with children, vulnerable adults and families
- effective working with statutory and voluntary sector partners to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults
- effective information sharing

Positions of trust

All those who work with children and vulnerable adults or who have significant contact with them and their families on behalf of the Centre are in positions of trust. Staff handbooks, codes of safer working practice and contracts should make clear the importance of accepting the expectations of such work and the possible grounds for disciplinary action if they are not met:

- they will be seen as role models, by the children and vulnerable adults with whom they are in contact, at all times including when they are off duty
- all Centre workers should, therefore, conduct themselves in accordance with the reasonable expectations of someone who represents the Centre
- they should take care to observe appropriate boundaries between their work and their personal life. For example, they should ensure that all communications they may have with or about children or vulnerable adults are appropriate in their tone
- no staff, volunteers or freelance instructors will accept 'friend requests' or communicate with children or vulnerable adults electronically who have visited the Centre unless they are personally known to them outside of work
- No staff, volunteers or freelance instructors will use their own phones or cameras to take photos of children or vulnerable adults on the site; Centre equipment must always be used and appropriate permission sought
- they should seek advice immediately if they come across a child or vulnerable adult who may have been harmed (including self-harm) or a colleague whose conduct appears inappropriate
- they should not expose themselves or others to material which is sexually explicit, profane, obscene, harassing, fraudulent, racially offensive, politically inflammatory, defamatory, or in violation of any British, European or international law

Good Practice Guidelines Contents

It is possible to reduce the number of situations where abuse might occur and protect staff from false allegations by creating a positive culture and environment. The following are common sense examples of good practice when working with children:

- always work in an open environment
- always put the welfare of children or vulnerable adults first
- treat everyone equally, with respect and dignity
- keep relevant qualifications and training up to date
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given

You should never:

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- allow children or vulnerable adults to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child
- allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves
- enter children's or vulnerable adults changing rooms, without prior permission

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to your line manager who will record the incident and pass the information on to the DSO.

Parents will be contacted if deemed appropriate by the DSO:

- if you accidentally hurt a child or vulnerable adult
- if you have encountered a situation where you have been unable to follow good practice guidelines
- if a child or vulnerable adult makes an allegation of abuse

Managing allegations against centre workers

This section considers the situation when it is alleged that a staff member or volunteer at the Centre has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child or vulnerable adult
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child or vulnerable adult
- behaved in a way that indicates that he or she is unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults

Allegations that fall short of these criteria may nevertheless amount to inappropriate conduct, in which case the Centre will need to consider whether to handle this by way of advice, supervision and training, to use disciplinary processes, or a combination of these.

There may be up to three strands in the consideration of an allegation:

- police investigation of a possible criminal offence
- enquiries and assessment by social care about whether a child or vulnerable adult is in need of protection or in need of services
- consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual

All allegations of this kind must be reported to the local authority designated officer (LADO), up to date contact details can be found on the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Board website www.gscb.org.uk, and the Trustee responsible for Safeguarding. The LADO may arrange for an

investigation by the statutory authorities which may be in conjunction with a disciplinary investigation by the Centre. The LADO will work under the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), which should be consulted. Reporting to the LADO does not transfer responsibility from the Centre to take disciplinary action if appropriate. The LADO may convene one or more strategy meetings to plan the investigation; should attend. All relevant information should be shared with those at the Centre who have a legitimate need to know and with the statutory agencies. Confidentiality should be maintained outside this group.

For the purposes of this procedure it makes no difference whether the person is paid or a volunteer.

It should be noted that the Centre has the same duties to both paid staff and volunteers in respect of children and vulnerable adults for whom it is responsible.

Suspension

It may be necessary to suspend a Centre employee or volunteer as a precautionary measure, at the appropriate rate of pay for paid staff (usually full pay), pending further investigation and a hearing, if:

- their presence might impede a proper investigation
- their presence might cause an unacceptable risk until the matter has been resolved; this could be related to, for example, inappropriate conduct or a prima facie case of violence against a child or vulnerable adult

This suspension is a neutral act and in no way seeks to pre-empt the investigation and final decision-making. If the alleged misconduct involves sexual abuse or other allegations of abuse where there is a risk that the alleged perpetrator may destroy evidence it is essential that the police are consulted *before* the alleged perpetrator is informed about any suspension decision. The police must be given the opportunity to investigate first.

The Centre should consult the LADO; this can be undertaken by the Centre Manager or Trustee responsible for safeguarding on the Centre's behalf. In such cases it is essential that the line manager suspending the worker has the appropriate authority to suspend on behalf of the Centre or other employing body and that the procedure for serious misconduct or alleged serious misconduct for the particular staff group is followed. If there is any doubt about the course of action then professional advice should be sought.

It is important that the Centre keeps a clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made, details of how the allegations were followed up and resolved, and of any action taken, whether by the Centre or by statutory agencies, and decisions reached. These should be kept in a person's confidential personnel file and a copy should be given to the individual, apart from third party information for which permission for disclosure has not been given. Such information should be retained on file indefinitely. The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to *bona fide* enquiries or any future request for a reference. It will provide clarification in cases where a future DBS disclosure reveals information from the police that an allegation was made but did not result in a prosecution or a conviction. It will also prevent unnecessary re-investigation if, as sometimes happens, allegations resurface after a period of time.

A referral must be made to the DBS when the Centre withdraws permission for an individual to engage in work with children or vulnerable adults, or would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a position which does not involve working with children or vulnerable adults.

Charity Commission

As the Centre is a registered charity, when a referral is made to the DBS the Charity Commission should also be informed.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

All staff, volunteers and freelance instructors occupying a post that brings them into contact with children or vulnerable adults or who have access to personal information about children or vulnerable adults, will be subject to a check by the Disclosure and Barring Service to ascertain whether they have ever received a criminal conviction. Whether basic or enhanced will be decided by the DBS processing organisation according to the latest regulations.

For Staff and volunteers, the Centre will cover the cost of DBS checks and joining of the updating service. Freelance instructors will be encouraged to join the updating service at their own cost.

For those not in the updating service checks will be renewed every three years.

Trustees will now be subject to a basic DBS check unless they have regular contact with young people or lead sessions. In this case they will need an enhanced check.

The check will be in the possession of the employee/volunteer and any copies taken by the Centre for decision making purposes must not be kept more than six months and should be stored securely. For those on the updating service, the Centre Manager will check annually if there have been any changes with permission and knowledge of the person concerned.

Child Protection Training

All staff, volunteers and freelance instructors will be expected to complete the on-line e-learning package on safeguarding, available from the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Board. Staff will also be given the opportunity to attend a half day introduction to Safeguarding training/refresh session once every three years.

In addition to this the DSO and Trustee responsible for safeguarding will attend a multi-agency safeguarding training session at least every three years.

Latest Review: May 2021

Signed by Centre Manager:



Date Signed: May 2021