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**Arkenstall Village Centre**  
(Registered Charity No. 300394)  
**7 Station Road, Haddenham, Ely, Cambs CB6 3XD**

e-mail: [safeguarding@arkenstallcentre.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@arkenstallcentre.org.uk)

## **Safeguarding Those at Risk Policy and Procedures**

### **1. Introduction**

The Arkenstall Village Centre (AVC) is a charity run by a Management Committee of Trustees for the benefit of the local community. Its aim is to provide high-standard facilities for local groups to meet in and to act as a focus for the village's many social and recreational activities. Every local organisation is entitled to have a representative on the Management Committee. This way, the running of the facilities is guaranteed to be in the best interests of the local community.

One of the main events each year is the local pantomime which acts to bring together over 100 local people (including between 30 – 40 young people) as performers and backstage crew, to raise money for the running of the Centre and other charities, and to provide entertainment for the 1,000 audience members who come each year. The running of the pantomime is managed by a production team, at least one of whose members is on the AVC's Management Committee.

While the pantomime is the Centre's main fundraiser and is the single event which has by far the highest volunteer involvement, the Centre also involves volunteers in other ways, and it is inevitable that any or all of these events may involve children (anyone under the age of 18) or adults who may be at risk of abuse or neglect (defined in Section 42 of the Care Act, 2014 as someone who has care and support needs; is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; or as a result of their care and support needs is unable to protect himself or herself against abuse or neglect or the risk of it).

The Arkenstall Village Centre Management Committee and its sub-committees are committed to working with all its volunteers in a safe and secure environment, and will follow the procedures below in relation to safeguarding those at risk.

### **Safeguarding those at risk is the responsibility of everyone**

### **2. Policy Statement**

The Children Act, 1989 defines a child as being up to the age of 18 years old. Extensions of this exist for children who have special needs and for those in local authority care settings. The Children Act makes it clear that the welfare of the child is paramount and it gives everyone involved in the care of children a responsibility for the protection of those children.

Streamlined and simplified regulations, the Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014 came into force on 6 February 2015. These affect the annual pantomime and the requirements in respect of applications for, and the conditions that apply to, licences issued by local authorities in England under section 37 of the 1963 Act for performances and similar activities.

The AVC is committed to provide a safe environment for all children, employees, volunteers and visitors and to promote a climate where children and adults alike will feel confident about

sharing any concerns that they may have about their own safety or the well-being of others.

The AVC believes that all children, regardless of age and background, and all vulnerable adults have at all times and in all situations, the right to enjoy all activities at the Centre in a happy, safe and secure environment. The AVC will ensure that this is the case by rigorously implementing this policy.

### **3. Contact with young people and vulnerable adults**

#### **3.1 Volunteers and employees coming into contact through their work should:**

- Report through the appropriate channels any concerns about individuals or practices in the AVC (or any of the activities run by the sub-committees), regarding child abuse, if necessary.
- Keep up to date with child protection issues and adhere to best practice at all times. (Useful contact is NSPCC website: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk))
- Plan their work in such a way as to minimise possible claims of abuse (for example by avoiding high risk situations).
- Be watchful of one another. Children's activity leaders should be Enhanced DBS checked.
- No employee or volunteer should ever be left alone with a child.
- Volunteers should always have a DBS checked activity leader with them and should complete a voluntary disclosure form where possible.
- Make sure that if parents and/or carers are not present, Child Consent Forms or their equivalent are provided.
- Formal permission from parents/carers should be obtained before taking photographs, videos, etc.
- No personal contact should be made online or on social media without formal parent/carer permission.

#### **3.2 Volunteers and employees coming into contact through their work should never:**

- Engage in rough physical activities, even when playing.
- Engage in sexually provocative activities.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language.
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or vulnerable adult.
- Let a child's allegation go either unchallenged and/or unrecorded.
- Do things of a personal nature for a child or vulnerable adult.

If you do have to do things of a personal nature for anyone, e.g. take to the toilet, support or lift, particularly if they are very young or have additional needs, then you should obtain the full consent of their parents or carers and permission from the person in charge. In an emergency situation, which requires this type of help, parents/carers and the person in charge, should be fully informed as soon as is practicable.

- Reduce anyone to tears as a form of control.
- Undertake any tasks for which they feel inadequately trained or have concerns about.

#### 4. Types of Abuse

Abuse is generally divided into four categories

##### a. **Physical Abuse**

- Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm.
- Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to, someone whom they are looking after. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through caring for someone who is sick.
- Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act of commission can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

##### b. **Emotional and Psychological Abuse**

- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve making them feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Psychological abuse can include imposing expectations on a child or vulnerable adult that is inappropriate to their age or development. Psychological abuse can also include the radicalization of a child or vulnerable adult and cyberbullying.

##### c. **Sexual Abuse**

- Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child, young person or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of, or consent to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as rape, buggery or oral sex or non-penetrative acts such as fondling.
- Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children or vulnerable adults in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- Anyone can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by young people. This includes people from all different walks of life.

##### d. **Neglect**

- 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 their health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect someone in their care from physical harm or danger, or the failure to 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.

#### 5. Signs of Abuse

The signs listed below do not necessarily mean that someone is being abused. Similarly there may not be any signs; you may just feel something is wrong. If you are worried report it to the designated person. It is not your responsibility to decide if it is abuse but it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it by reporting.

##### a. **Signs of Physical Abuse:**

- Unexplained injuries or burns

- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Untreated injuries
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Bald patches
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Arms and legs covered in hot weather
- Fear of returning home
- Fear of medical help
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Running away

b. **Signs of Emotional Abuse:**

- Physical, mental and/or emotional development slows down
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Neurotic behaviour e.g. thumb sucking, hair twisting, etc.
- Self-mutilation
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Substance misuse
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing, scavenging

c. **Signs of Sexual Abuse:**

- Lack of trust in adults and/or fear of a particular individual[s]
- Over familiarity with adults or provocative behaviour
- Withdrawal and introversion / problems with peer relationships
- Running away from home / sudden behaviour changes e.g. falling standards, truancy, stealing etc.
- Low self esteem
- Substance misuse
- Displaying sexual knowledge beyond age group
- Involvement in prostitution
- Over-sexed behaviour
- Sleeplessness, nightmares, fear of the dark
- Bruises, scratches, bite marks
- Depression, suicide attempts
- Anorexia nervosa / eating disorder or a change in eating habits
- Pregnancy, particularly when reluctant to name the father
- Recurring urinary tract problems / vaginal infections

d. **Signs of Neglect:**

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciated
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
- Untreated medical problems
- Destructive tendencies
- Low self esteem
- Neurotic behaviour
- No social relationships
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging

**6. Responding to disclosures of abuse**

It is not the responsibility of employees/volunteers to deal with suspected abuse but it is their responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate person. It is important that all employees/volunteers should be aware of their responsibilities if abuse of a child or vulnerable adult is suspected.

If you notice any social changes in the behaviour of a child or vulnerable adult, worrying marks or bruises or hear anyone talking about things which give cause for concern, then your first responsibility is to the child or vulnerable adult. It is not safe to assume that someone else will take action. As an adult you have a duty to take appropriate action. Recognising and coping with abuse is very stressful and the person reporting the concern will not have to cope alone.

**7. What to do if a child or vulnerable adult spontaneously talks of experiences which give cause for concern.**

Employees and volunteers at the AVC should:

- Explain to the person that if he/she discloses information which leads you to believe they are being abused, you will be unable to keep it confidential.
- Listen to the person without questioning him/her. Be aware of your own reactions, as showing disapproval may stop the person from continuing with their disclosure.
- Do not try to stop the person from recalling events. Make a note of what is said, in what context, the setting, the timing and which people were present.
- Reassure the person; tell them that they are right to tell you (do not promise to keep it a secret as it is your responsibility to inform others).
- Stay calm – ensure the person is safe and feels safe.
- Accept what you have been told. (This should not be seen as believing or disbelieving what you have been told.)
- Reassure the person and stress that they are not to blame.
- Tell the person that you will offer support but you will have to pass the information on.
- Do not question the person and/or rush into details that may be inappropriate.
- Monitor the individuals concerned; encourage them to continue to take part in the organisation's activities.

- Do not make promises you cannot keep.
- Do not approach or contact the alleged abuser(s).
- Do not attempt to investigate the alleged abuse yourself.

## **8. Reporting Procedures**

- a. Record the concern or incident on the Incident Record Form, including, date and time of what has occurred and the time the disclosure was made. Record the names of the people involved and what was said and done by whom and any action taken.
- b. Inform the appropriate designated AVC Trustee, the Safeguarding Officer, immediately. Remember that confidentiality is of the utmost importance.
- c. If this is not possible, contact the Chair or any other member of the Management Committee.
- d. If the matter is urgent and none of the above can be contacted, then contact social services or the police.
- e. The designated Safeguarding Officer, will contact the appropriate authorities including the Duty Social Worker in the area where the child lives as soon as possible but within 24 hours.
- f. Concerns would normally be shared with parents / carers as soon as possible. However, there could be circumstances when this might put the child or vulnerable adult at greater risk or there may be concerns that parents / carers will not respond appropriately.
- g. Every effort will be made by Social Services to respect the anonymity, if requested, of the person reporting the abuse, however, if allegations result in court proceedings this may not be possible.
- h. If an allegation of abuse is made against an employee or volunteer, Social Services will follow the same procedure as they do to investigate allegations of abuse for a family.

## **9. Review**

The AVC will ensure that safeguarding issues receive continuous attention and will regularly review the way that it operates to support this principle. The Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually and when there are any changes in legislation.

## **10. Licensing rules and chaperones**

- Any performance where admission is charged, whether for charity or by an amateur company, requires a licence if it involves children up to the last Friday in June in the school year in which they have their 16th birthday.
- It is a legal requirement to seek a licence when one is required and any person who causes or procures any child to do anything in contravention of the licensing requirement commits an offence and may be subject to a fine, imprisonment or both.
- If any child performing in an AVC pantomime or other event has performed for more than four days in the preceding six months the AVC will apply to the local authority for an individual licence.
- If children performing in an AVC pantomime or other event have not performed for more than four days in the preceding six months the AVC will apply to the local authority for a Body of Persons approval (BOPA) at least twenty one days before a performance period.
- Where a performance is taking place under the auspices of a BOPA, the legislation does

not require that the child be supervised by a chaperone approved by the local authority. However the AVC believes that good practice should be followed and will pay for the training, including a successful DBS check, of a minimum of one local authority approved chaperone to every twelve children in its productions.

- No child will be left unsupervised and arrangements will be made for segregated changing areas and toilet facilities.
- Supervision getting to and from the stage area will be ensured.
- No chaperone will undertake any other duties whilst children are on site.
- The AVC will maintain detailed and complete records of children involved in any performances including emergency contact details, attendance and medical notes. Parents will be asked to sign a statement of fitness for each child. All records must be kept in confidence for six months and will then be destroyed.
- The AVC will ensure suitable arrangements are made for first aid.
- The AVC will allow any authorised officer of the local authority unrestricted access to any rehearsal, technical rehearsal or performance.

#### **11. Creating a Safe and Caring Environment:**

- Risk Assessments should be undertaken prior to any offsite visits or new types of activities.
- Volunteers or employees working with children or vulnerable adults should be appropriately trained and qualified to ensure the safe provision of services, use of equipment, activities undertaken, etc.
- Volunteers or employees working with children or vulnerable adults should carefully plan activity sessions with care and safety as their main concern including the use of activities at an appropriate age and ability level.
- Wherever possible the AVC will encourage an 'open environment' e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and discouraging the keeping of secrets. This especially includes volunteers or employees being alone with a child or vulnerable adult at any time. When this is unavoidable, it should be done with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge of the event and / or the person's parents / carers.
- Volunteers and employees must treat everyone with respect.
- Volunteers and employees must not make racist, sexist or any other remarks which upset or humiliate.
- Volunteers and employees must take care to avoid showing any favouritism.
- Arrangements for parents / carers dropping off and collecting children and vulnerable adults from activities need to be clearly stated and agreed by parents / carers, the persons concerned and the responsible volunteers or employees.

#### **12. Bullying**

- It is the responsibility of volunteers and employees to prevent the abuse of children and vulnerable adults through bullying, cruelty or any other forms of humiliation.
- Anyone who thinks they are being bullied or who has witnessed bullying, including cyberbullying, should report it to a registered chaperone, the person in charge of the performance or event, or a member of the Management Committee.
- No-one should bully others or join in with bullying behaviour.
- Parents/carers who are concerned that their child or a vulnerable adult might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child might be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact

the person in charge of the performance or event.

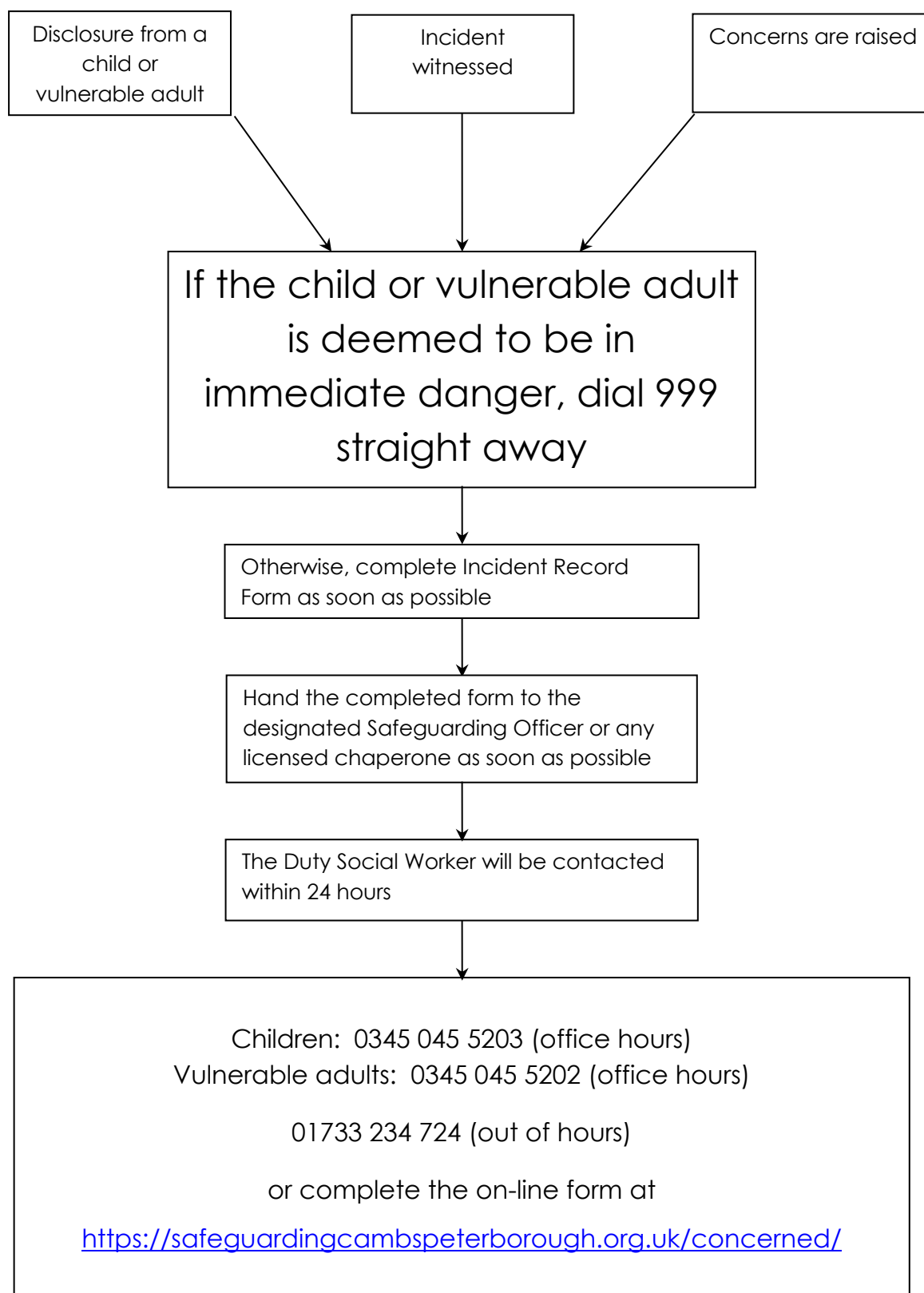
- Parents and carers, too, have a responsibility to support the anti-bullying policy and to actively encourage those for whom they care to be positive members of the group.
- Where bullying has happened, the parents / carers of both victims and perpetrators will be informed and if possible, the people involved will be reconciled but in very serious cases, exclusion from the event will be considered.
- After the incident(s) have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

### **13. Behaviour guidelines for employees and volunteers**

- Safety of participants, volunteers and employees is a prime consideration at all times. All accidents involving anyone should be recorded in the AVC's Accident Book – which can be found in the kitchen in the First Aid cupboard on the right hand wall above the hot cupboard – immediately or as soon as practicably possible.
- Volunteers and employees/ are responsible for familiarising themselves with safety issues relating to the AVC, such as, fire procedures, location of emergency exits, location of emergency telephones and first aid equipment.
- Volunteers and employees are responsible for reporting suspected cases of abuse of children or vulnerable adults to the appropriate individuals and/or agencies.
- Appropriate employees and volunteers should have access to any parental consent or emergency consent forms for all children and vulnerable adults taking part in any activities in which they are involved (this information should be confidential).
- Volunteers and employees should ensure that activities in which they are involved start and end on time.
- Volunteers and employees are expected to promote, demonstrate and incorporate the values of fair play, trust and ethics throughout their activities.
- Volunteers and employees will be expected to keep an attendance register for all organised sessions for which they are responsible.
- Volunteers and employees should ensure that they are adequately insured, to protect against claims of negligence, through the AVC, their organisation or their own personal insurance if acting as a self-employed agent.



## 14. Reporting Procedure





## **Arkenstall Village Centre: Safeguarding Those At Risk – Policy and Procedures**

Declaration

I have read and understood the Arkenstall Village Centre Safeguarding Policy and I understand how to register my concerns if I suspect a child or vulnerable adult is being abused.

Signature

Name:..... Date:.....