

THE COUNTY ARTS CLUB

Child/Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

For the benefit of this policy, a child will be considered as any young person under the age of 18 and a vulnerable adult will be considered as a person aged 18 or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Section 1

The County Arts Club wants children and vulnerable adults to enjoy their involvement with the club. This policy aims to adopt the highest possible standards and take all responsible steps to ensure the safety and welfare of those with whom we come into contact.

We do this by:

- a) Carefully selecting staff and carrying out CRB checks on all volunteers who carry out direct work with children or vulnerable adults
- b) Ensuring that all club members at The County Arts Club are aware of our Child/Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy.
- c) Providing interested parties with information about The County Arts Club Child/Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy.

This policy applies to all club members and contractors working for The County Arts Club in any way which brings them into contact with children or vulnerable adults.

Key Principles:

- All children and vulnerable adults have the right to protection from abuse;
- All allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately; all staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report concerns.
- That club members are aware of best practice to ensure that children in their care are protected and that they do not place themselves in an unnecessarily vulnerable position.

Section 2:

Practical guidance for club members working with young people and/or vulnerable adults

General conduct when working with young people

- Club members should demonstrate exemplary behaviour. Stated below are the standards required of club members in order to fulfil their roles, ensure that a positive culture and climate is created during all activities and protect themselves from allegations of abuse.
- You are expected to:
 - Take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of any child or vulnerable adult who comes in contact with The County Arts Club.
 - Be aware of Child protection/vulnerable adult issues in relation to the work you do - do not become complacent and believe 'it could never happen to me'
 - Prevent any other club member from putting any child/vulnerable adult in a situation in which there is a significant risk to their health and safety. Take appropriate action if you become aware of anyone physically, emotionally or sexually abusing a child/vulnerable adult.
 - Report any evidence or reasonable suspicion that a child/vulnerable adult has been physically, emotionally or sexually abused whether by an adult or another child/vulnerable adult to an independent club member.
- Ensure your behaviour, language, gestures etc. are appropriate and above reproach
- Treat all children/vulnerable adults equally and with respect and dignity
- Ensure that no adult is in a one to one situation with a child/vulnerable adult. Safety in numbers should be the golden rule, whether the numbers are other children or adults
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance from young people
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism

Note:

It is not appropriate for club members to establish a close relationship with any of the children/vulnerable adults with whom they work.

Section 3: Unacceptable Practices

The following should never be sanctioned:

- Spending long periods of time alone with children/vulnerable adults away from others.
- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games.
- Entering a toilet alone with children/vulnerable adults unless another adult is present or gives permission.
 - Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate physical contact.
 - Allowing children/vulnerable adult to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
 - Making sexually suggestive comments to, or within the hearing of, children/vulnerable adult, even in fun.
- Reducing a child/vulnerable adult to tears as a form of control.
- Allowing allegations made by a child/vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Doing things of a personal nature for children/vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves.
- Physically restraining a young person unless the restraint is to:
 - prevent the physical injury of the child/vulnerable adult /visitors or staff/yourself;
 - prevent damage to any property;
 - prevent or stop the commission of a criminal offence.

Section 4: Responding to complaints or allegations of abuse

The following guidelines should be used when an allegation is disclosed by a child/vulnerable adult to a club member.

. Listen and reassure

- Maintain confidentiality but do not make promises you cannot keep. You must explain that the information will have to be passed on to a member of staff
- Be calm
- Be reassuring and make it clear that you are glad that they have told you
- Show that you are taking the child/vulnerable adult seriously and that you understand and believe them
- Keep questions to a minimum; if you have to ask questions keep them open and not leading e.g. do not ask 'did 'x' do this to you?'

Important points to remember when dealing with a disclosure:

- Try not to display any sign of shock or disapproval when the child/vulnerable adult is making a disclosure
- Do not jump to conclusions
- The child/vulnerable adult may not regard the experience as either bad or painful; they may not feel guilty or angry
- Be aware of your own feelings which may be different to those of the child/vulnerable adult
- Take care of yourself by making sure that you have an opportunity to discuss your feelings with someone at a later stage
- Do not destroy any evidence as it may be useful in a court of law
- Initial disclosure, even if retracted, must still be referred to an independent member of staff

Recording Information

It is essential that the details of the alleged abuse be recorded correctly and legibly, as this will be critical later on in the proceedings.

A disclosure form is available (see appendix 1) as a guide to show the type of information that should be recorded. This should be done immediately and certainly within 24 hours.

Informing the appropriate authorities.

If abuse has been disclosed to you or you suspect that it is happening, you must inform the member of staff in charge of the event as soon as possible. You must then complete a disclosure form and ensure that the procedure set out overleaf is followed.

The Press

If the press become aware of the complaint and contact you, do not discuss the matter in any way. Refer them to The Management Committee. Be aware that there is no such thing as 'off the record' and discussions on the telephone are likely to be recorded by the press as a matter of course. This advice is not intended to maintain security about the event, but to ensure that the response is considered and accurate.

Section 5: Procedure for club members dealing with allegations of abuse

1. A disclosure of abuse is received (or abuse is suspected) by a club member.
2. The recipient of the information informs the child/vulnerable adult and parent(s) if present, involved of the action to be taken.
3. The club member in charge of the event is informed immediately and a 'disclosure of information' form is completed by the original recipient of the information.
4. The club member leading the event immediately informs the Child Protection/Vulnerable adult officer. They will then inform the management committee of the disclosure.

Important points to note:

- It is not the responsibility of club members to determine if abuse is occurring but to report their concerns.
- If an allegation of abuse is made against a club member these will be fully investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedure.

Section 6. Photography

This section sets out good practice on the use of photographs and video images for publicity purposes. Whilst it is not illegal to take photographs of children/vulnerable adults participating in activities, photographs and video images of children/vulnerable adults are classed as personal data under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998. Therefore, using such images for publicity purposes will require the consent of either the individual concerned, or in the case of young people, their legal guardians. This means that The County Arts Club will not display images on websites, in publications or elsewhere without such consent. If photographs do need to be taken a consent form will be compiled before the commencement of the event. Alternatively this can be incorporated within the parental consent form if one is needed for the event.

The County Arts Club will ensure:

If the photograph is used, avoid naming the young person;

- If the young person is named, avoid using their photograph;
- Images are securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so.

All club members should exercise vigilance when supervising children/vulnerable adults and not allow any photographs or video footage to be taken of any children in their care unless the above consent has been given. This includes other parents and other family members.

Section 7: Procedures for investigating an allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer

1. A member of the management committee will be immediately informed of the allegation.
2. Child Protection/Vulnerable adult officer or designated person ensures that no evidence is destroyed and that names of witnesses are taken.
3. Designated person informs the member of staff or volunteer that an allegation has been made and relieves them from duty with that group.
4. If the allegation results in a police investigation The County Arts Club will assist with that investigation in every possible way.

Appendix 1: The County Arts Club: Disclosure of information

When completing this form record what the child/vulnerable adult has said and/or your concerns legibly and accurately.

Child's Surname

Forename(s).....

Address.....

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Date of Birth.....

Child's account of what happened (if given).....

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Your Observations.....

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Please note that you must inform the child/vulnerable adult of the action that you propose to take.

Action that you took as a result of this disclosure

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Your Signature..... Date.....

Please ensure that this form has been filled out correctly, because in the event of a disclosure being made, it is the person to whom the disclosure is made that the relevant authorities will come for an account of what was said.