

Revision Date: 20 April 2026

SAFEGUARDING POLICY – CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK
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Bolnore Village Community Partnership – Operator of The Woodside Community Centre

Policy Owner: Bolnore Village Community Partnership Trustees

Policy Adopted: September 2024

Last Reviewed: April 2026

Next Review Date: April 2027

PURPOSE

All Trustees, helpers, volunteers, users and hirers of the Woodside Community Centre must confirm that they will comply with this policy. Where activities involve children or adults at risk, hirers may be required to provide evidence of their safeguarding procedures.

The Bolnore Village Community Partnership is committed to providing a safe environment for all users of the building. The trustees recognise their responsibility to safeguard children and adults at risk and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that safeguarding concerns are addressed appropriately.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- The welfare of children and adults at risk is paramount. All children and adults at risk have the right to protection from abuse and neglect. The Trustees of the Bolnore Village Community Partnership are committed to safeguarding all children and adults at risk who use the centre. We therefore believe that at all times and in all situations, they have a right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice that might lead to their being physically or psychologically damaged. This policy is our commitment to provide systems for recognising and reporting any such risk and outlines our duty of care to safeguard all children and adults at risk involved in activities at the centre. The Bolnore Village Community Partnership recognises that while hirers are responsible for supervising their own activities, the trustees have a duty to undertake reasonable due diligence to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are appropriate.

POLICY AIMS

- The aim of the Bolnore Village Community Partnership Safeguarding Policy is to promote good safeguarding practice and protect children and adults at risk from harm.
- Enable trustees, staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to safeguarding concerns.
- Safeguard children who are vulnerable to extremism – See Appendix B.

STAFF INVOLVEMENT & POLICY APPLICATION

Staff and Volunteers working directly with the Bolnore Village Community Partnership do not have regular or extensive involvement with children; the majority of contact is indirect through the use of the premises by external groups or clubs.

The Woodside Community Centre primarily provides premises for hire and does not normally run activities involving children or vulnerable adults directly. External organisations hiring the premises remain responsible for the safeguarding of participants during their activities.

This Safeguarding Policy applies to all Trustees, staff, volunteers, hirers and members of the public using the Woodside Community Centre premises.

It is the responsibility of all staff, paid and volunteers, Trustees, members and Centre users to follow the Bolnore Village Community Partnership Safeguarding Policy guidelines (See Addendum) and to work together to maximise the protection we can offer children who use our facilities.

Whilst all staff are aware of, and have agreed to comply with, this policy, there will be many events and activities at the centre where parents are present, and they must accept full responsibility for the activities and behaviour of their children.

The hirer of the premises is responsible for the supervision and safeguarding of participants during the period of the hire.

DEFINITIONS

- Child – Any person who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday.
- Young Person – Any person aged sixteen or seventeen.
- Child Abuse – Abuse or neglect of a child under the age of 18.
- Adult at Risk – A person aged 18 or over who has care and support needs and may be unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect (Care Act 2014).
- Safeguarding – The action taken to promote the welfare of children and adults at risk and protect them from harm.

Relevant legislation includes:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Care Act 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (latest guidance)

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

1. No member of the Trustees, helpers, volunteers or contractors working on behalf of the Bolnore Village Community Partnership will have unsupervised access to children or adults at risk unless appropriately vetted where required.
Procedure: All members of the trustees, helpers or other persons contracted (or volunteering) to provide occasional or temporary services will be made aware of this policy and the relevant vetting procedures. Should checks become necessary, they will be undertaken in compliance with the relevant law pertaining at the time.
2. All suspicions or allegations of abuse against a child or adult at risk will be taken seriously.
Procedure: A Trustee will be appointed as the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be responsible for responding to safeguarding concern. Safeguarding concerns will be reported to the West Sussex Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or the police where appropriate.
3. All trustees and volunteers will familiarise themselves with safeguarding responsibilities and undertake safeguarding awareness training where appropriate.

Procedure: Copies of the relevant Acts and Department of Health guidelines will, if necessary, be held by the Trustees as reference material for volunteers. Relevant safeguarding training for Trustees will be encouraged.

4. The policies and procedures will be regularly reviewed.
Procedure: An annual review will take place following the AGM to allow for any required update of policies and procedures. New trustees and volunteers will be provided with an understanding of their responsibilities in matters of safeguarding.

5. Members of the local community, hirers and members of the public who use the facilities provided by the Bolnore Village Community Partnership should be aware of the Safeguarding policy adopted by Bolnore Village Community Partnership.
Procedure: All hirers who wish to use the Centre for activities involving children or adults at risk, other than for hire for private parties arranged for invited friends and family only, may be asked to provide a copy of their safeguarding policy and confirm that appropriate DBS checks have been carried out where required and confirm that appropriate supervision arrangements are in place for activities involving children or adults at risk. This may include evidence of DBS checks, safeguarding policies, insurance certificates and appropriate qualifications where relevant. Hirers remain responsible for the supervision and safeguarding of participants during the period of hire. A copy of the Woodside policy will be available in the Policy folder kept in the Office and on the Woodside website.

Full guidance is contained in the addendum following this policy document.

CONTACT NUMBERS

Designated Safeguarding Lead/SPOC (Prevent Duty)	Anne Boutrup
Trustee Board Safeguarding Lead	Samantha Larby
BVCP/Woodside Safeguarding Number	07356 260771
BVCP/Woodside Safeguarding Email	safeguarding@bolnorewoodside.org.uk
Chairperson	Anne Boutrup anne@bolnorewoodside.org.uk
Safeguarding Board (Central Access Point)	01403 229900 mash@westsussex.gcsx.gov.uk Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, 4th Floor, County Hall North (Parkside), Chart Way, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 1XH.
Emergency – Police/Ambulance	999
Social Services Emergency out of hours	03302 226664
Childline	0800 1111
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000
Police (Non-Emergency)	101

Approved by Trustee Board April 2026

Safeguarding Expectations for Hirers

Hirers running activities involving children or adults at risk are responsible for ensuring appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place. This includes adequate supervision, appropriate DBS checks where required, and clear procedures for reporting safeguarding

concerns. Any safeguarding concern arising during a hire must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the appropriate safeguarding authority.

Good Practice Guidelines (Appendix A)

GOOD PRACTICE MEANS

- Always working in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication.
- Treating children and adults at risk equally with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each child or adult at risk first.
- Making activities fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering children to share in decision making.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Securing parental consent in writing, in case the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given. (This should be recorded in the accident book within the First Aid box located in the kitchen).
- Requesting written parental consent if officials are required to transport young people in their cars (though this should be avoided).

PRACTICES TO BE AVOIDED

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If a case arises where these situations are unavoidable (e.g. the child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session), it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge of the group or the child's parents.

Otherwise, avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Taking or dropping off a child to an event or activity, without written parental consent.

PRACTICES NEVER TO BE SANCTIONED

The following should never be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Share a room with a child.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- 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.

- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

USE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC/FILMING EQUIPMENT

Evidence suggests that some people have used some activities as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of children and adults at risk in vulnerable positions. All clubs should be vigilant, and any concerns should be reported to the group leader.

Imaging devices (including mobile phones/tablets) should only be used with prior consent from the parents/carers of all those being photographed. The use of any photos showing children should be made clear while obtaining that consent. Parents taking photographs of their own children can only be for personal use and they are not to post them on social media sites if they contain images of other people's children.

Video as a training aid: there is no intention to prevent appropriate groups using video equipment as a legitimate training/teaching aid. However, children and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is part of the programme and give written consent. Such films should be stored safely.

The Centre may operate CCTV in communal areas for safety and security purposes. CCTV footage is recorded and accessed only by authorised persons in accordance with the Centre's Data Protection Policy.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and discussed on a need-to-know basis only (with need being defined as need to 'have access in the course of their duties'). This includes the following people:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services or Police
- The BVCP Chairperson
- The Trustee Board Safeguarding Lead

No confidentiality agreement should be offered to children in a disclosure situation.

MANAGING INCIDENTS

If any of the following occur, you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parent/carer of the child is informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a child
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner
- If a child or vulnerable person appears distressed or uncomfortable as a result of your actions
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in the Bolnore Village Community Partnership, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. Contact should be made with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will support you in following the reporting procedures.

The Bolnore Village Community Partnership assures all staff/volunteers; that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports his/her concern that a centre user is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A Criminal investigation
- A Child Protection investigation
- A Disciplinary or Misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

Hirers or centre users must call an ambulance if a child requires emergency medical treatment and informs the Duty Social Worker at the Social Services Department, immediately if there is any suspicion that the injury is non-accidental. Staff or volunteers should not transport children or adults at risk in their own vehicles unless this forms part of the hirer's own safeguarding procedures. Parents/carers must be contacted immediately if possible. A written consent form for emergency medical treatment should have been completed when the child started using the provision. Parents/carers should be informed of the specific symptoms or injuries which make it urgent that the child sees a doctor, but not that abuse is suspected. Bolnore Village Community Partnership requests that the Designated Safeguarding Lead is informed of the incident as soon as possible.

CONCERNS ABOUT SUSPECTED ABUSE

Any suspicion that a child or adult at risk has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will refer the allegation to the Social Services Department, which may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.

The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Social Services Department.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also notify the Woodside /BVCP Chairperson who will deal with any media enquiries.

If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Trustee Board Safeguarding Lead, who will refer the allegation to social services.

DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

In cases where a child makes a disclosure of abuse or where there is strong suspicion of abuse, the procedure is slightly different: **STAFF MUST NOT TRY TO INVESTIGATE THE MATTER THEMSELVES** or question a child for further information. All safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or directly to the appropriate safeguarding authority. This is a specialist task and is the responsibility of the Social Services

Department who work in conjunction with the Police Child Protection Team. Inappropriate questioning, i.e. asking leading questions, can lead to vital evidence being inadmissible in court. It is also essential that where a child's clothing may be used as evidence, it is not tampered with, and that any evidence, such as a child's drawing, is not discarded.

The centre user must immediately report the concerns/incident to the Duty Social Worker at the Social Services Department who will decide what action to take. In cases where the parents/carers are the alleged abusers, the centre user/group leader must not inform parents/carers before reporting it to the Duty Social Worker.

Bolnore Village Community Partnership request that the Designated Safeguarding Lead is informed of the incident as soon as possible.

ACTION IF BULLYING IS SUSPECTED

Where bullying occurs within a hirer's activity, the hirer or group leader is responsible for managing the situation in line with their own safeguarding procedures. If bullying is suspected, the following procedure should be followed:

- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Inform the bully(ies)'s parents.
- Provide support for the victim and their parent/carers.
- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.
- Inform all organisation members of action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.

Prevent Duty 2015

Children and Young People may be vulnerable to radicalisation by others, whether in the family or outside and display concerning behaviour. Staff must take action when they observe behaviour of concern. By informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Radicalisation is recognised as a safeguarding concern and should be reported through safeguarding procedures.

FGM – Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in the UK and is recognised as a form of child abuse. The BVCP believe that all our users should be kept safe from harm. Female Genital Mutilation affects girls particularly from North African countries, including Egypt, Sudan, Somalia and Sierra Leone. While the risk within our organisation is considered low, we will continue to remain vigilant and review this policy annually. If you are concerned inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead

Appendix B

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN WHO ARE VULNERABLE TO EXTREMISM

Since 2010, when the Government published the Prevent Strategy, there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism. There have been several occasions both locally and nationally in which extremist groups have attempted to radicalise vulnerable children and young people to hold extreme views including

views justifying political, religious, sexist or racist violence, or to steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity and leaves them vulnerable to future radicalisation.

At Bolnore Village Community Partnership we value freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs / ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. All Trustees, helpers, volunteers, users and hirers of the Bolnore Village Community Partnership have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, freedom comes with responsibility and free speech that is designed to manipulate the vulnerable or that leads to violence and harm of others goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion.

The current threat from terrorism in the United Kingdom may include the exploitation of vulnerable people, to involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism. The normalisation of extreme views may also make children and young people vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation. The Trustees of the Bolnore Village Community Partnership are clear that this exploitation and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern.

The Trustees of the Bolnore Village Community Partnership seeks to protect children and young people against the messages of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to, those linked to Islamist ideology, or to Far Right / Neo Nazi / White Supremacist ideology, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups, and extremist Animal Rights movements.

Risk reduction

The Trustees and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will assess the level of risk within the centre and put actions in place to reduce that risk. Risk assessment may include consideration of the users and other issues specific to the Woodside Community Centre, community and philosophy.

Response: The Trustees of the Bolnore Village Community Partnership, like all others, are required to identify a Prevent Single Point of Contact (SPOC) who will be the lead within the organisation for safeguarding in relation to protecting individuals from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism: this will normally be the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The SPOC for the Trustees of the Community Centre is named in the contacts list above.

When any member of staff has concerns that a child may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they should speak with the SPOC and to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if this is not the same person.

Numerous factors can contribute to and influence the range of behaviours that are defined as violent extremism, but most young people do not become involved in extremist action. For this reason the appropriate interventions in any particular case may not have any specific connection to the threat of radicalisation, for example they may address mental health, relationship or drug/alcohol issues.

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Signed on behalf of Bolnore Village Community Partnership Trustees:



The Bolnore Village Community Partnership

The Woodside Pavilion, 120 Middle Village, Bolnore, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 4GJ

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