

Alexandra Hall Action Group

Child Protection policy & CRB checks

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Introduction

The Alexandra Hall wants children and young people to enjoy their involvement with the Alexandra Hall and community facilities

Through this Policy we aim to adopt the highest possible standards and take all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of the children with whom we come into contact. The implementation of this policy will enable the Alexandra Hall and volunteers to undertake its work with children confident that it has taken all reasonable precautions to prevent harm occurring while being prepared to deal with an incident should it occur.

The Alexandra Hall applies this policy to all of its work with children and young people under the age of 16 years, whilst recognising that vulnerable people of all ages will benefit from similar safeguards.

Principles of working with children and young people

It is important to remember that staff and volunteers connected with the Alexandra Hall come into contact with children and young people in a wide range of situations. This could include children using recreation and holiday facilities, children attending shows or events and off site activities led by volunteers. It is important that this policy is applied and promoted and the guidelines followed in all situations in which volunteers and employees of the Alexandra Hall have contact with those under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults.

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Discussion of the issues

Open discussion of child protection should be encouraged since this helps to make staff more comfortable with the issues involved. Opportunities for discussion of Child Protection issues will be made available to all staff and volunteers.

What is the policy?

Who is responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy

The Alexandra Hall and volunteers who regularly supervise activities within and outside the Hall.

Who does the policy apply to?

The policy applies to all staff (including permanent, fixed term and casual appointments) and volunteers whose activities within and outside the Alexandra Hall bring them into contact with children e.g. contractors, franchisees, volunteers', members etc.

What are your responsibilities?

All those covered by the policy have a duty to do everything reasonable in their power to ensure the safety and welfare of children who come into contact with Alexandra Hall staff and volunteers and must act in accordance with these Guidelines.

Volunteers involved in activities unaccompanied by a parent or guardian

No Alexandra Hall member of staff or volunteer should be in sole charge of children or vulnerable adults.

Children under the age of 16 should be accompanied by a parent, guardian or teacher. However, in instances when this is not practical, at least two members of staff or volunteers should be present with the individual at all times.

In instances where a member of staff or volunteer is leading a group of children, at least one other volunteer, parent, guardian or teacher should also accompany them. All staff responsible for leading groups of children should undergo the necessary CRB checks. In instances of this nature it is also your responsibility to:

- 1. Assign clear tasks to any other members of staff and volunteers and ensure that procedures are followed.**
- 2. Maintain appropriate ratios of employees/volunteers to the number of children in the group.**

This must be the foundation upon which your main aim of providing an enjoyable and safe experience for children should be built.

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Volunteers in the Alexandra Hall

Offers of help whether from other members of staff or individuals are always welcome and should be encouraged.

When a volunteer is 'recruited' into the Alexandra Hall and is to work with children they must agree to work in accordance with our policy and guidelines, and as part of this, they must also undergo the necessary CRB check if appropriate.

Generally external volunteers must;

1. Be given a copy of our policy and guidelines and asked for their agreement to work in accordance with them.
2. Be accompanied at all times by at least one member of staff who has been through the necessary pre appointment checks to work with children.

Volunteers who have frequent, regular, or substantial contact with children

All volunteers who have regular or substantial contact with children will be subject to CRB checks aimed at assuring the Alexandra Hall of their suitability to work with children. These will include the applicant being asked to apply to The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), for a Disclosure.

For all post holders that will come into frequent, regular or substantial contact with children and/or vulnerable adults an Enhanced Disclosure will be required.

CRB checks will be completed **every three years.**

Disclosure Information

Any matters of concern, which are highlighted in a Disclosure, will be considered by the Alexandra Hall Action Group and the Activity Leader according to the requirements of the volunteer's position. The information of concern revealed in this Disclosure will then be risk assessed against set criteria, such as:

- The nature of the offence.
- The length of time since the offence was committed.
- Any history of offending.
- Whether it is likely to reoccur in the future.

The Disclosure and any related information will then be discussed with the candidate before any decision is made.

However, if it is deemed appropriate by the Alexandra Hall Action Group, once all factors have been taken into account, the volunteer's offer of assistance may be declined. The reasons for this decision will be put in writing to the candidate. The candidate will be provided with the opportunity to appeal the decision to the Alexandra Hall Action Group if they so wish.

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Appeals Process

Any volunteer, whose offer of assistance has been withdrawn by the Alexandra Hall Action Group due to an unsatisfactory Disclosure, may appeal against this decision.

Once this decision has been received by the candidate, they must lodge their appeal in writing to the Chairman, Alexandra Hall Action Group within 14 days, outlining the grounds for this appeal. The Chairman, Alexandra Hall Action Group will then consider the grounds for this appeal and will respond with his/her decision, within a further 14 days. The Chairman, Alexandra Hall Action Group decision is final.

What happens if a volunteer commits an offence since their last CRB check?

It should also be noted that if a volunteer commits an offence since their last CRB check, which affects their position, it is **their** responsibility to inform the Alexandra Hall Action Group via their Activity Leader of this. The Alexandra Hall Action Group will then seek the volunteer's authorisation to seek a further disclosure, if this is deemed appropriate.

Use of Information relating to children

Information regarding children e.g. names and addresses must be treated confidentially. Information of this nature must be kept securely by the appropriate group/activity leader and stored and disposed of in accordance with Data Protection principles.

Procedure in the event of an incident or accident.

Any volunteer that deals regularly with children and has satisfied the necessary disclosure checks should have an agreed contingency plan for dealing with a lost or injured child. All appropriate volunteers should be made aware of the contents of the plan.

Allegations against volunteers of Alexandra Hall

Though our focus must be on safeguarding children, volunteers must also be aware that allegations of abuse made by children about adults do happen. Some prove mistaken or, very rarely, malicious. The Policy and Code of Practice on How to Behave with Children is there to help you to avoid situations in which well-intentioned actions can be misinterpreted, or where false allegations may be made.

However, if an allegation of abuse is made against you, it should be reported as soon as possible to the Activity Leader who will then contact the Chairman, Alexandra Hall Action Group. This will be treated in strict confidence.

First Aid

The principles of this policy apply when giving first aid to a child. I.e. a member or volunteer of the Alexandra Hall **should not be alone** when giving first aid to a child.

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Definitions

Definitions of Abuse	Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or institutional setting, by those known to them, or more rarely by a stranger.
Physical Abuse	May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scolding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to the child. Physical harm may be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child whom they are looking after.
Emotional	The persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
Sexual abuse	Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activity, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
Neglect	Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health and development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

What happens if a Volunteer has a criminal record?

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar anyone from volunteering to work at the Alexandra Hall. Each applicant with a criminal record will be judged individually and any decision as to whether to employ any applicant will depend on the nature of the position applied for and the circumstances and background of the offences.

In the event that a Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check for an existing volunteer reveals a criminal record that has not been disclosed at the time of their volunteering each such volunteer will be evaluated according to the nature of their position and the circumstances and background of the offences.

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Policy statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders

As an organisation using the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service to assess applicants' suitability of trust, the Alexandra Hall Action Group complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

The Alexandra Hall Action Group is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff, volunteers or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical / mental disability or offending background.

We have a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders, which is made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.

We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applicants from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

We make every subject of a CRB Disclosure aware of the existence of the CRB Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar anyone from working with us. Employment will depend on the nature of the circumstances and the background of the offences.

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Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) Disclosures

Risk Assessment for volunteers with offences disclosed.

Name:			
Volunteer			
Offences Disclosed:			
Date of Interview:			
Assessed risk of offences affecting visitors / other staff:			
Action Agreed (e.g. warning, precautions)			
Interview conducted by			

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A Code of Practice

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Behaviour with children

This code of practice is an accompanying document to the Alexandra Hall Action Group Child Protection Policy. The code provides volunteers with guidelines on how to behave when coming into contact with children and what standards of conduct are expected of them.

You are expected to:

1. Take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of any child in contact with Alexandra Hall.
2. Respect the wishes of a child as you would an adult, you must not impose yourself on them.
3. Remember that children regard adults as role models, and as such, ensure your behaviour, language, gestures etc. are appropriate and above reproach
4. Prevent any other member of staff, volunteer or member of the public from putting any child in a situation in which there is a significant risk to their health and safety.
5. Prevent any other member of staff, volunteer or member of the public from physically, emotionally or sexually abusing any child.
6. Report any evidence or reasonable suspicion that a child has been physically, emotionally or sexually abused whether by an adult or another child.
7. Not physically, emotionally or sexually abuse any child or young person.

Whilst respecting the need for privacy and confidentiality, **never be alone** with a young person and never touch a young person in a way that could be misunderstood.

- Make sure that helpers do not take children out of sight of the registered leaders (registered leaders are those employees who have had a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau check).
- Parents and participants should be told who the volunteer leaders are.
- Observe the correct ratio of adults to children.
- Do not think, "It could never happen to me".
- Do not rely on your good name to protect you.