

MIDHURST GREEN VOLUNTEERS

SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN POLICY

1. Introduction.

The objects of the Midhurst Green Volunteers (MGV) are to provide a free service for cutting grass, trimming hedges, cleaning pavements and gutters and generally helping to maintain public areas within the town of Midhurst, and the surrounding villages, to an acceptable and safe standard.

Some of the Volunteers could be children. This document sets out the MGV's policy for safeguarding children against abuse.

2. Background.

The characteristics of child abuse can take a number of forms and cause victims to suffer pain, fear and distress reaching well beyond the time of the actual incident(s). Victims may be too afraid or embarrassed to raise any complaint. They may be reluctant to discuss their concerns with other people or unsure who to trust or approach with their worries.

There may be some situations where victims are unaware that they are being abused or have difficulty in communicating this information to others.

Safeguarding is everybody's business. Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone. The Trustees and Volunteers will work together to prevent abuse. If we have concerns that someone is being abused our responsibility to the vulnerable person comes before anything else – our group, other service users, our colleagues and the person's friends and family.

Our duty is not confined to our own activities and services. It is not necessary that abuse takes place during an MGV session, but could be suspected or noted by a Volunteer although perpetrated elsewhere.

Doing nothing is not an option. If we know or suspect that a child is being abused, we will do something about it and ensure our response is properly recorded.

3. Aim of Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety of children by outlining clear procedures and ensuring that all Trustees and Volunteers are clear about their responsibilities.

This policy recognises the provisions of the Government publications: 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2013) and 'What To Do If You're Worried a Child is Being Abused (2006)'. including the duty to cooperate with the Children's Social Care Services to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children who are in one way or another connected with MGV.

4. Definition

A Child is a person who has not yet reached their 18th birthday even if they are living independently.

5. What is abuse?

Children may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their daily lives. There are 4 main categories of abuse, which are sexual, physical, emotional abuse, and neglect.

6. Reporting Procedures

If an allegation or suspicion of abuse is discovered by a Volunteer then they should inform Kay Graetz, one of the Trustees, as soon as possible.

Kay, where appropriate with the support of the Volunteer, should make a written record of the allegation or suspicion of abuse (see appendix 1) and discuss the situation with the Safeguarding Officer, who will carry out a risk assessment and if considered necessary contact the Children's Social Care Services.

If a Volunteer has been told about the allegation of abuse in confidence, they should attempt to gain the consent of the person to make a referral to another agency. However, the gaining of the consent is not essential in order for information to be passed on. Consideration needs to be given to:

1. The scale of the abuse.
2. The risk of harm to others.
3. The capacity of the individual at risk to understand the issues of abuse and consent.

It is important to record the facts of the incident/allegation, as spoken by the victim, without asking prompting questions.

If there is any doubt about whether or not to report an issue to Children's Social Care Services then it should be reported.

In emergency situations (e.g. where there is the risk or occurrence of severe physical injury), where immediate action is needed to safeguard the health or safety of the individual or anyone else who may be at risk, the emergency services must be contacted.

Where a crime is taking place, has just occurred or is suspected, the police must be contacted immediately.

7. Responsibilities

All Trustees and Volunteers have a responsibility to be aware of this policy and to report any suspicions that they might have concerning child abuse.

The Safeguarding Officer responsible for Safeguarding and Child Protection is the Chairman.

8. Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks

Generally MGV operates as a group so it is not considered necessary for DBS checks to be undertaken by all Volunteers. It is not envisaged that there would be a time when a Volunteer is left alone with a child.

9. Contacts

Children's Social Care, Children's Access Point (CAP):
Contact - 01403 229900

Alternatively use the secure on-line form at: <https://www.westsussexscp.org.uk/>

10. Legislation

This policy is informed by, and adheres to the following legislation
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
Children Act 2004

This policy was formally approved by the Trustees of the Midhurst Green Volunteers on 9 April 2021 and will be reviewed in April 2023.

Midhurst Green Volunteers

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Incident Report Form

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Briefly describe what happened (include times and dates):

Names and contacts of witnesses:

Name of person completing form:

Date:

Name of Trustee responsible for investigation:

Date:

Action taken:

Safeguarding Officer signature:

Date: