

## Haltwhistle Film Project Safeguarding Policy

(N.B.: This policy has been reviewed externally, and by the HFP Board and altered in accordance with the recent Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 Updates 4th August 2021)

**Approved by HFP Board: 02.12.21**

### Aims

Everyone at Haltwhistle Film Project (HFP) shares an objective to help keep children and vulnerable adults safe by contributing to:

- providing a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults to learn in
- identifying children and vulnerable adults who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and at Haltwhistle Film Project.
- Maintaining an atmosphere in which a vulnerable adult or child feels safe to disclose an issue. Safeguarding exists to protect children and vulnerable adults, and is not an end in itself.

### Achieving this objective requires systems designed to:

- prevent unsuitable people working with children and vulnerable adults;
- promote safe practice and challenge poor and unsafe practice;
- identify instances in which there are grounds for concern about a child's or vulnerable adult's welfare, and initiate or take appropriate actions to contribute to effective partnership working between all those involved with providing services for children and vulnerable adults.

### Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of **everyone who works at or for Haltwhistle Film Project** to keep children and vulnerable adults safe and to support volunteers, visitors and work experience students and others to adhere to the safe practices of Haltwhistle Film Project.

**Marc McKiernan** and **Vicky Jones** are the **designated contacts for Safeguarding** and as such are responsible for ensuring that the relevant agencies are notified and involved. Anyone wishing to contact agencies directly should either report the issue to the Police: 01661 872555 (or 999 in an emergency) or Social Services: 01670 536400

**Marc McKiernan** is additionally responsible for ensuring that policies and practices are fully implemented and followed by all freelancers and volunteers, and that they feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice with regards to children and vulnerable adults, and that such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner.

**The Board of Directors** is accountable for ensuring their establishment has effective policies and procedures in place and for monitoring the organisation's compliance with them. They should ensure that:

- Policies and procedures are in place and comply with national guidance

- HFP operates safer recruitment procedures and that DBS checks are carried out. References are checked.
- HFP has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff (NB 'staff' in the context of HFP refers mainly to freelancers on contracts) or volunteers
- They meet annually with the school's designated person to monitor all matters related to safeguarding.
- All site/location users are appropriately trained, informed and adhere to good safeguarding practices
- Appropriate training has been undertaken
- They annually review policies and practices

The policy is available to view on the Film Project website at [www.haltwhistlefp.co.uk](http://www.haltwhistlefp.co.uk)  
There is a hard copy on display in the Film Project office.

### **Recruitment and Selection**

HFP follows all safer recruitment practices in line with the Local Authority policies on safer recruitment. This means that:

- All appointments are subject to a full enhanced disclosure
- Checks are carried out on the identity and qualifications of staff
- Checks are carried out on the identity of volunteers
- Candidates are subject to questions at interview to ascertain their understanding of safeguarding issues
- An induction for new staff will be carried out to ensure their suitability to work with children

### **DBS checks**

All staff (freelancers in this context) at Haltwhistle Film Project are subject to a full enhanced disclosure.

- All students must have undertaken enhanced disclosure checking and volunteers who work regularly in schools and other similar environments must also be checked.
- Volunteers who help occasionally need not be checked but no adult should be unsupervised who has not been subject to full enhanced disclosure.
- Board members will undergo DBS clearance if working with children or young adults.

### **Procedures for reporting children and vulnerable adults who may be at risk of serious harm.**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is defined as:

- protecting children and vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children and vulnerable adults are living in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and undertaking that role so as to enable these people to have optimum life chances.

Should someone working for HFP suspect that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk they should report their concerns in writing and verbally as soon as possible to one of the named people above.

Should a child or vulnerable adult make a disclosure of abuse then it is essential that this is reported immediately to one of the name people above.

- If a child or vulnerable adult makes a disclosure of abuse:
- Listen carefully. Give assurance that they are being taken seriously.
- Do not promise the child or vulnerable adult confidentiality but explain to them that you will have to inform other people or organisations, and in the first instance either **Vicky Jones** or **Marc McKiernan (07807 887783 /07531 384987 / 01434320360 )** In the event of an allegation against either of these people the matter should be referred to the designated Member of the Board: **Alison Dale 07709 448340**
- Reassure the child or vulnerable adult that they are right to tell and that it is not their fault
- Do not discuss the allegations with other staff or with parents or carers. It is essential that confidentiality is maintained throughout the process, and afterwards. This applies to everyone.

Where you are concerned about a child or vulnerable adult refer to Marc McKiernan or Vicky Jones in the first instance.

All staff are responsible for reporting but the responsibility for referring the case to social services/care organisation, or police or for speaking to the parents lies with Marc McKiernan or Vicky Jones.

Factors that **may** indicate a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm:

- Domestic violence
- Drug dependent parents
- Tiredness, hunger
- Lateness at the beginning and end of the day, poor attendance
- Lack of engagement from parents
- Extremely emotional children, clingy children
- Extremely withdrawn children/ vulnerable adult
- Where one parent is in prison or is known to be violent
- Sexualized behavior
- Children or vulnerable adults who regularly soil themselves

HFP is also aware that language, and the use of certain words can be both a form of abuse, and an indication of a child's attitude to others.

#### **Online abuse:**

HFP is an IT/digitally-based organisation. Adults should be aware of both common forms of online abuse, and how it occurs. Volunteers and short contract workers are shown our film about cybercrime, made for the Police and Crime Commissioner, Cumbria.

All of these are indicators but it is very important that staff do not jump to conclusions. If a member of staff is aware that a child or vulnerable adult is living in circumstances or is exhibiting behavior that causes concern, this should be reported to **Marc McKiernan** or **Vicky Jones**.

### **Emotional support.**

It is essential that staff are able to seek support and reassurance when dealing with safeguarding issues and they should be aware that Marc McKiernan or Vicky Jones are always ready to discuss, listen and offer advice about the welfare of any child or vulnerable adult.

### **Keeping children and vulnerable adults safe**

A friendly environment where children and vulnerable adults know that they are listened to and respected supports them to feel safe.

It is well known that many children and vulnerable adults do not report abuse because they do not have a language in which to talk about it and they do not know who to tell. At Haltwhistle Film Project we ensure that all staff are approachable, and that opportunities for discussion of all issues are promoted. Additionally safety is an element of all joint planning meetings with members of FilmAble. Key workers are used to working with people who have communication difficulties.

Good relationships with parents and carers also support vulnerable children and vulnerable adults. Parents who know staff and like them are more likely to approach HFP for help so it is essential that all staff maintain good relationships with parents and carers. This is also the case when HFP is working in other organisations.





Where a group is split into several rooms, the doors will be kept open when individual staff or volunteers are working with children or vulnerable adults. When working on location each site will be viewed, and where possible previewed with a particular focus on safeguarding. Safeguarding will form part of the briefing for each site visit.

When vulnerable adults are part of the volunteer/staff team themselves they will be briefed on particulars of safeguarding as they apply to their understanding and the site being visited.

Our premises are not currently let to any other group for occasional use.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is essential in all safeguarding and any freelancers who disclose or discuss aspects of safeguarding are unlikely to be recontracted.

### **Visitors**

Visitors to the HFP premises are frequent, and members of vulnerable groups are not left in a position where they have to deal with them alone. The front door (opening into the ground floor office) is bolted if children or vulnerable adults are working there, to prevent the sudden intrusion of other people. Users are briefed not to open the door themselves.

### **Allegations against other staff**

Any allegations or concerns about the conduct of staff towards children and vulnerable adults should be reported immediately to **Marc McKiernan** or **Vicky Jones** who will carry out an investigation of the allegation. Should the allegation be made against **Marc McKiernan** or **Vicky Jones** then the Board of Directors should be informed immediately: **Ms. Alison Dale <contact details>**

It is unrealistic that staff never touch children or vulnerable adults but any touch should be appropriate and minimal, with regard to the necessity to carry out a task.

In order that false allegations are minimized staff should adhere to the following guidance:

- Staff should will only be alone with one child or vulnerable adult for any sustained length of time with the knowledge of that person's carer or family.
- Children should not be hugged, picked up, cuddled unless they initiate that behavior.
- HFP has one toilet which is for one person at a time, and the door should be locked when in use.

- Where children or vulnerable adults require changing this will be the responsibility of the carer with that child or vulnerable adult.
- Children should not be shouted at, humiliated or made to feel singled out.
- Restraint or physical force should be used as a last resort.
- Staff should immediately send for help if they require to use force or if a child or vulnerable adults is endangering others.

### **Vulnerable Groups**

Research tells us that children with disability are more likely to be subject to abuse so it is important that staff who work with these groups are aware that the child or vulnerable adults may lack the communication skills to explain themselves.

HFP works extensively with groups and individuals with disabilities, and new staff or volunteers who present to HFP are given a long period of co-working with someone experienced before their suitability for this kind of work is agreed. HFP emphasises in particular during this training that sometimes it is the people with learning disabilities who appear at first meeting the most capable who are often the most vulnerable in unsupported situations.

### **Training**

**Marc McKiernan** or **Vicky Jones** will undergo Safeguarding training at intervals agreed with the Board (usually less than every three years, or after new legislation)

Volunteers and freelancers are inducted on an individual basis, depending on their previous experience of working with young and/or vulnerable people. They are shown this policy, and, depending on experience, different elements of it are explained or emphasised. The practicalities of reporting are explained to everyone. Everyone receives a copy of the policy.

### **Records**

All records are kept **Marc McKiernan** or **Vicky Jones** in the HFP office.

### **Review**

This policy to be reviewed annually at December HFP Board Meetings each year.