



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

June 2025

Definitions

Vale Musical Society (VMS): An amateur dramatic musical society which meets to prepare, rehearse, produce and perform productions. The Society also meets and organises social events for its members, potential members and friends and family.

Child: Any person aged 18 years or under.

Vulnerable Adult: s. 2 of the The Police Act 1997 (Enhanced Criminal Record Certificates) (Protection of Vulnerable Adults) Regulations 2002 provides a legal definition. For the purposes of this policy the term is paraphrased as being any person over 18 years who is in need of care and support as they are at risk of experiencing abuse or neglect as they cannot protect themselves from harm or exploitation.

Policy statement and aims

Vale Musical Society, an amateur dramatic society, is committed to providing a safe and secure environment in which everyone can come together voluntarily to create drama, and to promoting a climate where everyone will feel confident about sharing any concerns which they may have about their own safety or the well-being of others.

This policy applies to all official activities which are organised and approved by the committee. Such activities can easily be identified as they will be promoted through Vale Musical Society's mailing list, by our membership secretary and/or social media via our publicity officer.

We aim to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by working with their parents, guardians or support workers, and vulnerable adults by working with their parents, guardians or support workers, to:

- protect them from discrimination or maltreatment.
- ensure they can engage in enjoyable, creative and collaborative activity in an environment consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

All members of VMS should make it a priority to safeguard any children and vulnerable adults involved in our productions.

There is a legislative requirement in certain circumstances for children and young people to have a licence to perform if cast in a VMS production. The requirement is set out in Appendix 2. If you are directing a play where children are to be performing you should speak to the committee's safeguarding officer immediately before casting (contact details can be obtained from any committee member).

Guidance when working with children and young people

The guidance given here is of particular relevance for all directors, production managers and organisers of VMS's events, although each and every member of the society should make themselves aware of what the following guidance includes and report any concerns to the safeguarding officer.

We should ensure that:

- A minimum of two adults are present during sessions with children or vulnerable adults.
- Wherever possible, a parent or guardian or support worker is present.
- Work takes place in an open environment (e.g. a hall, rather than a smaller room or someone's home)
- We treat all children, and vulnerable adults with equal respect as any other member of VMS
- We give positive and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- We model appropriate conduct, excluding any bullying, shouting, racism, sexism or sectarianism

Things not to do include:

- Working with any child or vulnerable adult in a one-on-one situation
- Using any physical chastisement (except if there is risk of imminent harm to anyone present)
- Driving one child or young person home on your own

Safeguarding Officer

The current safeguarding officer designated annually by the committee will be the first contact point for the children and young people, parents/carers or any other adults who have questions, concerns. The safeguarding officer cannot be a parent, guardian or carer of any child or vulnerable adult to whom this policy relates.

It is this officer's responsibility, not to make a judgement, but always to take action following any concerns reported in good faith by, in the first instance, contacting the appropriate authorities for advice as necessary. (A concern regarding a child must be reported to the Children's Services Department of the borough in which he/she lives).

It is also this officer's responsibility to inform the parents/carers of the child or young person, unless that will increase the risk of harm to the child or young person, or unless advised not to by Children's Services personnel.

Police Checks

As a voluntary organisation we do not come under any recognized body for registration, however where possible we prefer those working primarily with children and young people to be subject to an enhanced DBS check either from their employment or from another voluntary organisation.

Photography and the Internet

There have been increasing concerns about the risks posed by the Internet to children, vulnerable adults and young people through the use of social media and photographs on websites. To reduce this risk we ensure:

- If someone in this group is named, avoid using their photograph
- If a photograph of someone in this group is used, avoid using the full name of the actor
- Written parent/carers and personal consent is always obtained prior to use or publication of images

Making a disclosure of possible abuse

Advice to adults on the appropriate response to a child or young person :

1. Stay calm.
2. Listen to what is said.
3. Find an appropriate opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared – do not promise to keep secrets.
4. Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid questions that suggest a particular answer.
5. Give reassurance that the right thing has been done by telling.
6. Explain what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.
7. Record in writing what was said as soon as possible, in the exact words used, – note the date and time, to whom the information was given – and ensure the record is signed and dated.

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of possible abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional Safeguarding agencies (Children's Social Care), following a referral from the Designated Safeguarding (child protection) Officer.

Government guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-performance-and-activities-licensing-legislation>

Data Protection & Confidentiality

All written records, will be stored securely, with limited access, by the VMS committee.

Any photographs or video will be used purely to publicise VMS's productions and events and not shared with other organisations without further consent of the persons involved and the parent/carer and subject of the material.

Agreed by Committee

June 2025

Agreed at AGM

August 2025

To be reviewed

January 2026