



Visual Art at the heart of Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin

## Visual Art Network – Safeguarding Policy

For the purpose of this policy, safeguarding is defined as safe and effective care. It includes child protection, which protects children from significant harm. VAN is not an organisation that regularly comes into contact with children and vulnerable people, but as creativity is not limited to certain people, a policy is needed for when it does.

**Carrying out activities in public** – in the gallery, at Art Cafes, any public events that include stalls, tables, etc. Volunteers must be aware of the following:

- Location of first aid box, incident book, fire exits, areas of risk (sharp edges, damaged flooring, open windows, unsafe railings, etc)
- Electrical equipment, points, cables
- Cleaning and other chemicals
- Dangerous equipment (knives, solvents, heavy weights, moveable appliances, etc)
- Who to contact if help needed (e.g. shopping centre staff at gallery) and how to contact them

For VAN events taking place at locations other than the VAN gallery, organisers should check whether a first aid kit is available at the location and if not, one should be taken there.

**Number of volunteers** - this is to safeguard volunteers as well

- Volunteers should always be in pairs when working in the gallery, and preferably one female, one male when with children or vulnerable people
- Volunteers should never be alone with a child or vulnerable person, or anywhere they cannot be readily observed

### Physical contact

- Touching should be avoided where possible, though exceptions may arise where medical assistance is required
- Avoid any physical contact that could be construed as sexual
- Volunteers should take responsibility for monitoring each other regarding physical contact

### Transport

Written permission should be obtained from parents or carers before transporting children or vulnerable people. If it is an emergency, then two volunteers should go with them if possible.

## **Abuse**

This may happen anywhere, and can be physical, emotional or sexual. Evidence, such as bruising, may or may not be obvious. Concerns can be reported to the contacts listed below.

### **Responding to the disclosure of abuse**

- Listen. Allow the victim to speak in their own words - don't ask leading questions
- Be aware the victim will probably feel frightened or threatened
- Do say 'How did that happen?'
- Don't say 'Is everything ok?'
- Don't say 'That can't be right' or anything that suggests you don't believe them
- Reassure the victim but don't make false promises
- Find out who the victim is and how to contact them
- Make a written record of the conversation as soon as possible afterwards, and a more discreet record in the incident book
- Contact a VAN Trustee. Concerns can be reported to the following:

**Children's Services 0345 678 9021**  
**West Mercia Police Public Protection Unit 0300 333 3000**  
**NSPCC 0808 800 5000**  
**Childline 0800 1111**

**Volunteers will be made aware of this policy and *training given if appropriate.***

Last review date: March 2026

Next review date: March 2027

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