

Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

Organization: Hindu Samaj Northstowe (CIO - 16936118)

Lead Safeguarding Officer: Mrs. Aparna Nigam-Saxena (DBS Update Service Verified)

Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Mrs. Vindhya Desai

Effective Date: January 2026 (Annual Review)

1. Statement of Intent

Hindu Samaj Northstowe (HSN) is committed to a "safety-first" culture. With years of experience running workshops and classes, we ensure that every child and vulnerable adult participating in our activities is protected from harm. We follow the principles of the **Equality Act 2010** and local safeguarding board guidelines.

2. Safer Recruitment and DBS Vetting

We implement a rigorous recruitment process for all volunteers and staff working with children and young people:

- **Formal Application:** All applicants must complete a detailed application form.
- **Interview:** Candidates undergo a face-to-face interview to assess suitability and values.
- **References:** Two independent professional or character references are taken and verified before any activity begins.
- **DBS Vetting:** All personnel in "regulated activity" must hold a satisfactory **Enhanced DBS check**. The Lead Safeguarding Officer maintains oversight via the DBS Update Service.

3. Operational Safeguarding (Classes & Workshops)

- **Ratios:** We strictly adhere to recommended adult-to-child ratios to ensure adequate supervision at all times.
- **Attendance Management:** Robust sign-in/sign-out sheets are used for every session to ensure a secure handover of children to parents or guardians.
- **Medical Information:** We collect essential medical and allergy information for all participants. To ensure safety, HSN does not administer medication; parents or guardians retain responsibility for any clinical needs.
- **Vulnerable Adults:** To provide the highest level of tailored support, vulnerable adults participate in our programs alongside their own designated responsible adult or carer.

4. Digital, Photographic & Communication

- **Consent:** Written consent for photography/videography is obtained from parents/guardians during registration.
- **Publicity:** For larger events (e.g., Northstowe Holi Mela), clear disclaimer posters and entrance notices inform attendees that media capture is in progress.
- **Communication:** All digital communication with parents and youth is conducted via official channels (email and moderated WhatsApp groups) for transparency and record-keeping.

5. Reporting Procedure

HSN operates a clear and immediate reporting line. If a volunteer or participant has a concern:

1. **Observe:** Identify the concern or disclosure.
2. **Record:** Document the facts as stated or observed.
3. **Report:** Immediately notify the **Lead Safeguarding Officer (Mrs. Aparna Nigam-Saxena)** or the Deputy in her absence.
4. **Refer:** The Lead Officer will determine if a referral to the **Cambridgeshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** is required.

6. Confidentiality and Governance

- **Records:** All safeguarding records are kept strictly confidential, stored in a **locked cabinet**, and mirrored in **password-protected** digital files.
- **External Links:** HSN maintains awareness of local authority protocols and contacts, ensuring we can act swiftly in coordination with Cambridgeshire County Council when necessary.