

Child Protection Policy

June 2010

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the document is to outline child protection procedures to ensure the safety of all children and young people that come into contact with the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society and the Dorset County Museum.

It is also to inform Museum staff and volunteers working with or in contact with children that some children do get abused, and to advise them of the procedure to be carried out if abuse is disclosed to them, or if they suspect abuse. This will assist us in providing a secure environment to children.

2.1 POLICY STATEMENT

The Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and secure environment for all children and young people involved with the work of the Museum.

We will endeavour to this by:

- Following best practise procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers
- Adopting a child protection procedure for all staff and volunteers
- Providing effective management support for staff and volunteers
- Appointing a Designated Person for Child Protection who will co-ordinate all child protection and child welfare concerns

Our Designated Person with responsibility for child protection is:

**Dr Jon Murden, Director
Dorset County Museum
High West Street
Dorchester
DT1 1XA**

2.2 Who does this apply to

The document applies to all staff and volunteers responsible for the welfare and supervision of children or young people whilst working for the DCM either on or off-site.

All staff and volunteers, regardless of job title or job description, are expected to operate within the given procedures.

2.3 Context

In addition to the Child Protection Policy the DNHAS already has specific policies in place that support and complement child protection. These include:

Access and Equal Opportunities Policy 2009

Health and Safety Policy 2013

Fire Safety Policy 2007

Learning Policy 2009

3. DEFINITIONS

What is a child?

- The Children Act 1989 defines a child as a person under 18 for most purposes. These procedures also apply to vulnerable adults.

What is abuse?

- Physical abuse: may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm
- Neglect: the persistent failure to meet basic essential needs of a child whether physical, psychological or emotional, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's development; may also involve a failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger
- Emotional abuse: persistent ill treatment of child that causes harm by lack of love and affection, or threats, verbal attacks, taunting or shouting
- Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to participate in sexual activity that they do not fully comprehend, or to which they are unable to give informed consent, or which violate social taboos of family role; includes non-contact activities.

A child may suffer more than one category of abuse.

4. CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

Good practice measures are designed to protect children and young people. They are standards that aim to ensure that all children and young people that come into contact with the work of the DNHAS enjoy a safe environment.

Ensuring a safe environment

The DNHAS will ensure that Health and Safety legislation is adhered in order to provide a safe environment for users.

Interpersonal dealings

All children and young people participating in the work of the DNHAS will be treated with respect and dignity. Staff should use appropriate language and tone of voice and consider the effect of body language. Staff should avoid any inappropriate physical contact with children and young people.

Projects

All projects involving children will be planned in accordance with the procedures in place and risk will be monitored.

5. CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

5.1 Recruitment, Selection and Training

We ensure that everyone working with children is safe to do so. The Disclosure Service is administered in compliance with Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Code of Practice. This states that Enhanced Disclosures are required for all employees and volunteers where the post has substantial unsupervised access to children and/or vulnerable groups. Character references are requested for all new employees and volunteers.

DBS Disclosures may be considered portable, in that a DBS Disclosure obtained for a position in one organisation and can be later re-used for a position in a new organisation. DNHAS will exercise its discretion to accept such DBS Disclosures on a case by case and risk assessed basis (i.e. in conjunction with other evidence presented).

DNHAS complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of disclosures and disclosure information. DBS disclosure information is passed only to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties, ie. Those whose jobs deem it essential. Information disclosed as part of a DBS check will be treated as confidential. It is an offence for information in a Disclosure to be passed to anyone who does not need it in the course of his/her duties. DNHAS maintains a record of those to whom disclosures or disclosure information has been revealed. The photocopying of any Disclosure is strictly forbidden by the DBS.

5.2 School visits

All visiting schools are required to carry out Risk Assessments.

We ensure that children are appropriately supervised by adults. Our recommended ratios for organised group visits are:

Age	2-3 years	1:4
	3-8 years	1:8
	8-11 years	1:10
	11 and over	1:15

School children are accompanied by school staff and/or DNHAS staff at all times during their visit whether held in a secure space or in the public areas of the museum. Guardianship and responsibility for the children remains with the school.

5.3 Museum Events and Activities

With the exception of Museum Club events, all children must be accompanied by an adult while they are in the Museum.

Publicity for all Museum Club events states the start and finish time for each activity. Parents and carers are requested to collect children promptly at the end of the activity. The Museum has contact details for all parents/guardians. Events last for no more than two hours.

Museum activities specify the age group for which they are suitable. Children under 7 years old attending activities must be supervised by a responsible adult at all times. We are unable to accommodate any child under the minimum age of 5 years old.

5.4 Dealing with a lone child

Avoid being alone with a child and do not leave the child alone with anyone else.

Establish whether the child has permission from a parent or carer to visit the museum alone. Ask whether the child is waiting to be collected.

Consider:

- if the child exhibits signs of nervousness
- if the child understand the questions
- if the child seems physically capable
- if the child is clear about where he or she lives
- how far and how safe is the journey

If there is any doubt ask the child for details so that you can contact a parent or carer; alternatively try and contact a family friend or relative. Do not release the child into the care of anyone other than police or social services without the direct permission of the parent or carer.

5.5 WHEN ABUSE IS SUSPECTED OR REPORTED

If a situation gives you cause for concern you should:

Always inform the Designated Person of your concerns. They will speak to the teacher or helper responsible for the school group and discuss what steps need to be taken. If it is felt the child or young person is in imminent danger of significant harm the Designated Person may decide to contact Social Services and/or the Police straight away.

Make a brief written note of any incident, conversation, dates, times, names and other relevant information. Record later on incident form – and follow up. This should be passed immediately to the Designated Person, who will follow up the matter with the school/contact the relevant authorities.

Where emergency medical attention is necessary then this should, of course, be sought immediately and the Designated Person informed.

If a child volunteers information you should:

Listen to what they say. Communicate with the child in a way that is appropriate to their age and understanding.

Write brief notes about the incident, conversation, dates, times, names and other relevant information preferably while they are speaking or as soon as possible afterwards. It doesn't matter if these are rough notes, they will help you remember exactly what was said.

Do not ask leading questions (e.g. 'did he do X to you?') just ask 'what do you want to tell me?' or 'is there anything else you want to say?'

Do not promise to keep what is said a secret or confidential. If you are told about abuse you have a responsibility to contact someone who will take the appropriate action. Inform them that you will act in their best interest and that this may mean having to share the information with others. Explain that you will only tell people who absolutely have to know.

Inform the Designated Person about the incident. They will refer to the teacher or helper responsible for the group, unless they are the subject of the accusation. In this case they will contact the Children and Families Unit and/or the Police and discuss the situation with them.

The Designated Person will discuss with the teacher or helper whether any steps need to be taken to protect the child or young person. This may need to be discussed with the child or young person. If it is felt that the child or young person is in imminent danger of significant harm the Children and Families Unit and/or the Police should be contacted straight away.

If the child or young person is not with a group ask them what they want you to do - call the police, contact their social worker, phone their parents. Inform the Designated Person. Make sure to keep a record of any incident, noting down any action taken and the reasons for any decisions. Record later on incident form – and follow up. Keep all information confidential.

Allegations against staff

If staff are concerned about a colleague's inappropriate behaviour with regard to children or young people the matter must be referred to management. Any complaint involving allegations relating to child protection issues or vulnerable adults will be discussed with Social Services before any investigation takes place. Procedures are in place to protect the confidentiality and integrity of all parties.

If you are subject to an allegation you must inform your manager and the DP immediately. If an allegation is made about you to your manager or another member of staff, you will be informed of this as soon as possible but with due regard to protecting evidence and disclosure of information. An investigation into the allegation will be launched.

Sharing Information

Keeping children safe from harm requires information to be shared about any possible risks to the child. Where there are concerns that a child is, or may be at risk of significant harm, the needs of that child must come first and the overriding objective must be to safeguard the child. The safety of the child takes priority over issues of confidentiality, but the terms of the Data Protection Act still apply.

Record Keeping

It is important to keep detailed records of any incidents or information about child protection issues. This must be done carefully and keeping in mind confidentiality and data protection issues. The information recorded should use clear and straightforward language and be factually accurate.

6. CONTACTS

Dorset County Museum Designated Person: Dr Jon Murden (01305) 756821 07889 980412	
Local Offices with Child Care Teams	
Bridport The Grove Rax Lane DT6 3JL 01308 422234	Weymouth and Portland Jubilee Retail Park Jubilee Close Weymouth DT4 7BG 01305 760139
Ferndown Penny's Walk Ferndown BH22 9JY 01202 877445	Christchurch 32 Jumpers Road Christchurch BH23 2JT 01202 474106

7. Review

This policy is published in 2010. The policy will be monitored and changes in legislation will be acted upon. It will be reviewed and revised in full no later than 2014.