

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Policy number	26	Version	005
Drafted by	Kathleen Wiseman Reviewed by ZS/MB	Approved by Trustees on	20.05.23
Responsible person	Trustees	Scheduled review date	18.5.24

INTRODUCTION

Downham Market and District Heritage Society (DMDHS) provides a range of opportunities for a wide cross section of people. All these individuals have a right to equal protection from harm.

Children, vulnerable adults, volunteers and hirers may use the Centre as general visitors, while completing volunteer activities or attending a specifically planned event. Most vulnerable people visit with a teacher, parent or carer. They can be involved in a range of activities including a workshop, drama/storytelling event or handling session. These are normally run by volunteers of the Society and/or outside individuals such as an artist. This may also include hiring out the venue for other charities and organisations for their own events.

This Policy covers all these situations, in addition to any activity involving the society's volunteers that takes place outside of the Centre.

This policy is written to ensure that:

1. All children, vulnerable adults and volunteers are guaranteed appropriate and safe treatment in all circumstances within our service.
2. All workers, volunteers and hirers understand their legal and moral obligations to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation.
3. All hirers of the Centre will be provided with a copy of DMDHS's Safeguarding Policy and Procedure with their booking, and they will be deemed to have accepted and abide by this policy when proceeding with this booking.

AUTHORISATION

Date of Approval by Trustees20.05.2023.....

Signature of Trustee...Zowie Sweetland.....

Downham Market & District Heritage Society

Policies can be established or altered only by the Trustees:

Procedures may be altered by a designated person(s)

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy:

- To protect children, vulnerable adults and volunteers
- To provide volunteers with the overarching safeguarding principles that guide our approach to child and vulnerable adult protection.
- Provide volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt if they suspect a child or vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

This policy is mandatory for anybody working for or on behalf of DMDHS, and must be applied whenever there is a concern about a child or vulnerable adult or about the behaviour of an adult.

DMDHS believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or vulnerable adult to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

DMDHS recognises that:

- To protect children, vulnerable adults and volunteers
- The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount.
- All children and vulnerable adults regardless of vulnerability have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

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PROCEDURE

Downham Market & District Heritage Society' (DMDHS) will strive to create a healthy, positive and safe environment for all who visit.

We have a responsibility to ensure children and vulnerable adults' safety. Children and vulnerable adults will be protected from physical, emotional or sexual abuse, bullying and neglect.

1. Volunteering: we will follow appropriate procedures to ensure the suitability of volunteers who are to work directly with children and vulnerable adults. This will include Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks where necessary.
2. Training: All Volunteers will be made aware of the Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding guidelines at the volunteer meetings. All new volunteers will be provided with a copy (either digital or printed copy) of the safeguarding policy and procedure at induction. They will also be reminded that the policy can be found at reception.
3. Procedures are in place which would minimise any opportunity for abuse. This includes volunteers avoiding private or unobserved situations with children and vulnerable adults. The website will show the Centre's zero-tolerance to abuse in all its forms.
4. Risk assessments for events will include a Safeguarding assessment in addition to minimising risks of the activity itself.
5. Any suspected abuse will be reported to the Safeguarding Trustee or the Operational Safeguarding Lead and communicated to our partners. This could include physical or verbal evidence that a child or vulnerable adult has been abused.
6. DMDHS has nominated a designated trustee as a Safeguarding Trustee. The Safeguarding Trustee is Zowie Sweetland who may be contacted on learning@discoverdownham.org.uk or telephone the Centre on 01366 384428.. The Operational Safeguarding Lead is the person who is running the workshop, event or the centre at the time.

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GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

1. Always have another responsible adult present when working with children and vulnerable adults. Avoid situations where an individual child or vulnerable adult are completely unobserved.
2. Recognise that parents, teachers or carers should always be involved in the monitoring of children or vulnerable adults' behaviour or development and should be the first point of contact (except in cases of suspected abuse).
3. If you accidentally hurt a child or vulnerable adult and they seem distressed in any way, appear to be sexually aroused by your actions, or misunderstand or misinterpret something you have done, report any such incident as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Trustee or Operational Safeguarding Lead and record the details in the Safeguarding Register in the Office.
4. You should:
 - Never allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
 - Never allow allegations made by a child or vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
 - Never engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative play, including horseplay.
 - Never make sexually suggestive comments to a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun.
 - Never make comments that may offend people regarding their vulnerabilities.
 - Never do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults they can do for themselves.
 - Never be alone with a child or vulnerable adult in an unsupervised area.
5. It may sometimes be necessary to do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults, particularly if they are young or have disabilities. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents/carers/the person

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involved. There is a need to be responsive to a child or vulnerable adult's actions: If a child or vulnerable adult is fully dependent on you, talk with them about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This would include physical contact, lifting or assisting a child or vulnerable adult to carry out activities.

6. Everyone should be aware that as a rule it does not make sense to:
- Spend time with children or vulnerable adults away from others.
 - Take children or vulnerable adults alone on car journeys, however short.
 - Take children or vulnerable adults to where they will be alone with you.

RESPONDING TO SUSPICION OR ALLEGATION OF ABUSE

Discover Downham (DMDHS) personnel have a duty to report any suspicions, allegations or disclosures to the Safeguarding Trustee or Operational Safeguarding Lead. However, the first concern must be the reassurance of the child or vulnerable adult and their protection from any potential risk. During the reporting process the young person or vulnerable adult should be protected from further contact with the individual involved in the allegation.

We will always seek consent from a child or vulnerable adult to share information they have given about themselves or others. However, if consent is not given, we should still share information with relevant professionals if we believe we are protecting someone from significant harm.

REPORTING AND DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST VOLUNTEERS

The law does give you protection if you raise concerns or report a colleague for safeguarding issues if the report was not malicious or vexatious. The procedures apply to all volunteers.

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DMDHS recognises that an allegation of abuse made against a volunteer may be made for a variety of reasons and that the facts of the allegation may or may not be true. Those dealing with an allegation will therefore maintain an open mind and investigations will be carried out thoroughly, without delay and with due sensitivity and care.

RECEIVING AN ALLEGATION FROM A VULNERABLE ADULT

A volunteer who receives an allegation about another worker from a vulnerable adult will report immediately to the Safeguarding Trustee or the Operational Safeguarding Lead, unless this is the person against whom the allegation is made, in which case the report should be made to the Trustees.

The Safeguarding Trustee should:

- Obtain written details of the allegation from the person who received it. Details must be signed and dated (dd/mm/yyyy) the written details should be countersigned and dated by the Chair of Trustees.
- Record information about times, dates, locations and names of potential witnesses.

Any issues will be raised at Trustee meetings, minuted and acted upon. Safeguarding will be on every agenda at the Trustee meetings.

DATA PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

DMDHS is committed to the safe and secure management of confidential information. All personal information, including volunteer information, is kept locked and can only be accessed by those that require it to carry out their role. Only relevant information is kept, and this is regularly reviewed at Trustee Meetings and outdated information destroyed appropriately.

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