



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

Introduction The West House & Heath Robinson Museum Trust and The William Heath Robinson Trust (the Trusts) are committed to ensuring access to the premises and the museum collections for children and vulnerable adults and that whilst undertaking activities, everyone should be safe and protected from harm.

The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting them from abuse. This Policy is based on the following principles:

1. With regards to children and vulnerable adults, their welfare is the primary concern.
2. Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults means protecting them from physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse.
3. All children and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, gender, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religion, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status or gender reassignment have the right to protection from abuse.
4. It is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns they may have regarding abuse.
5. All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
6. All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Definitions:

7. A child, as defined in the Children's Acts 1989 and 2004, is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'children and young people' throughout.
8. A vulnerable adult, is defined as a person over the age of 18 who is or who may be in need of community care services because of age, illness, physical or learning disability, or someone who is unable to take care of or protect themselves against harm or exploitation (including those who have difficulty in communication and may need additional help e.g. individuals for whom English is an additional language).

Responsibilities: The Trusts will:

9. Ensure all employees and volunteers working for the Trusts endeavour to keep their behaviour appropriate and that they recognise the position of trust in which they have been placed.
10. Ensure all employees and volunteers working for the Trusts, wherever possible, look out for each other to ensure that they are not behaving in ways which could be misinterpreted.

11. Promote the health and welfare of children and vulnerable adults by providing opportunities for them safely to take part in activities.
12. Respect and promote the rights, and feelings of children and vulnerable adults.
13. Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and vulnerable adults and protect them from abuse.
14. Recruit, train, support and supervise staff and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse and to minimise risk to themselves.
15. Require staff and volunteers to adopt and abide by this Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adult Policy and any accompanying procedures.
16. Ensuring any accompanying individuals (parents, guardians, school teachers etc.) are aware of their own responsibilities in relation to safeguarding
17. Respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children and vulnerable adults in line with this Policy as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant investigation, disciplinary and appeals procedures.
18. Review and evaluate this Policy and its Procedures on a regular basis.

Recruitment and Employment of Staff and Volunteers:All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and vulnerable adults. All employees and volunteers will be briefed on this policy, asked to sign that they have read it and agree to implement it. All employees and volunteers likely to come into regular contact with children and vulnerable adults will have an enhanced DBS check.

Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults:This code of conduct details the types of practice required by all Members of the group when in contact with children or vulnerable adults. The types of practice are categorised into:

19. Good practice,
20. Practice to be avoided, and
21. Practice never to be sanctioned.

Details of these are listed below.

Suspensions or allegations of non-compliance of the Code by a member will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Procedure for misconduct.

Good practice:All employees and volunteers of the trusts must:

22. Be briefed on this policy and asked to sign that they have read it and agreed to implement it.
23. Always plan and prepare a detailed programme of activities and ensure copies are available for other members and parents/guardians in advance.
24. If it is necessary to provide transport or take children or vulnerable adults away from their home or the group's meeting place the following good practice must be followed:

Transporting children or vulnerable adults: Except in an emergency, obtain written parental/guardian consent, before transporting children or vulnerable adults. Always tell another employee that you are transporting a child (preferably the Museum Manager or Learning Officer), give details of the route and the anticipated length of the journey. Ensure, to the best of your knowledge, that all vehicles are correctly insured and in a roadworthy condition. Ensure all reasonable safety measures are taken, e.g. children in the back seat, seatbelts are worn.

Practices to be avoided: All employees and volunteers must avoid the following:

25. Having 'favourites' - this could lead to resentment and jealousy by other children or vulnerable adults and could lead to false allegations.
26. Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children or vulnerable adults away from others.
27. Taking children or vulnerable adults to your home.
28. Where possible, doing things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves.

Important Note: It may sometimes be necessary for employees/volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults, particularly if they are very young. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the child or vulnerable adult and where possible their parents/guardians. These tasks, where possible should be carried out by the parents/guardians and not by employees/volunteers. It is important to respect the views of the child/vulnerable adult. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with them about what you are doing and give choices where possible, particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child or vulnerable adult to carry out particular activities. Do not take on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

Practices never to be sanctioned: All employees and volunteers must never:

29. Engage in sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
30. Engage in rough or physical contact except as permitted within the rules of the game or competition.
31. Form intimate emotional or physical relationships with children or vulnerable adults.
32. Allow or engage in touching a child and vulnerable adult in a sexually suggestive manner.
33. Allow children or vulnerable adults to swear or use sexualised language unchallenged.
34. Make sexually suggestive comments to a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun.
35. Reduce a child or vulnerable adult to tears as a form of control.
36. Allow allegations made by a child or vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
37. Arrange meetings with children or vulnerable adults outside of working hours
38. Invite or allow children or vulnerable adults to stay with them at their home.

Photographing, Videoing and Filming of Children and Vulnerable Adults: There is evidence that some people have used activities as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of children and vulnerable adults.

The following is required for any activities or events where children or vulnerable adults are participating:

39. Consent from the parent/guardian for photographing, videoing and/or filming of a child or vulnerable adult must be obtained prior to the event or activity.
40. Where possible anyone wishing to use photographic/film/video equipment at a venue must obtain written approval.
41. No unsupervised access or one-to-one sessions are to be permitted unless this has been approved in advance by the child or vulnerable adult, parent/guardian and the organisation, and appropriate vetting has occurred.

42. The Trust reserves the right at all times to prohibit the use of photography, film or video at any event or activity with which it is associated.

Reporting: If anyone has concerns about an incident involving a child or vulnerable adult that seems untoward or unusual, they must report their concerns as soon as possible.

Employees/volunteers should report, record and inform if any of the following occur:

43. They accidentally hurt a child or vulnerable adult.

44. If a child or vulnerable adult seems distressed in any manner.

45. If a child or vulnerable adult misunderstands or misinterprets something they have said or done

46. If a child or vulnerable adult appears to be sexually aroused by their actions.

47. If a child or vulnerable adult needs to be restrained.

48. If a child or vulnerable adult mentions abuse or mistreatment that has occurred at any time, even if away from the premises. Any suspicions that a child or vulnerable adult is being subjected to abuse or mistreatment, even if away from the premises should not be ignored.

False or Malicious Allegations: False or malicious allegations will be dealt with by the most appropriate body.

Sharing concerns with Parents, Guardians or Carers:

a) Where it is not abuse: There is always a commitment to work in partnership with parents/guardians/carers where there are concerns about a child/children or vulnerable adult. Therefore in most situations, not involving the possibility of the abuse of a child or vulnerable adult, it would be important to talk to parents/guardians/carers to help clarify any initial concerns.

b) Where there are allegations of abuse: There are circumstances in which a child or children and vulnerable adult might be placed at even greater risk if concerns are shared e.g. where a parent/guardian/carer may be responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately. In all cases of suspected or alleged abuse, advice and guidance must first be sought from the local Social Services Department or the Police as to who contacts the parents.