

SOCIETY FOR LINCOLNSHIRE HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Policy on the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults

1. Introduction

1.1 The SLHA aims to adopt the highest possible standards and take all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

1.2 This policy applies to all staff and volunteers who may be working with children (i.e. those aged under 16), young persons (i.e. those aged 16 to 18) and vulnerable adults (i.e. those persons aged over 18 who by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness are or may be unable to take care of themselves or are or may be unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation) whom the Society encounters through its events and other activities.

1.3 This policy does not seek to discourage such activities. Instead, this policy seeks to support these activities and to offer assurances to both staff and volunteers that, through its implementation, the Society seeks to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults and to keep them safe from harm when in contact with staff, volunteers and other members.

2. Aims and objectives

2.1 The Society wishes to ensure that it maintains the highest possible standards to meet its social, moral and legal responsibilities to protect and safeguard the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom the its work brings it into contact, whilst recognising that it cannot act “in loco parentis”. Ultimate responsibility will continue to rest with parents and guardians.

2.2 While it is impossible to ensure that a child, young person or vulnerable adult would never come to any harm, the adoption of this policy and associated guidelines aims to facilitate the management of the risk associated with the duty to protect such individuals.

2.3 The aim of this policy is to highlight the four areas which form the basis of the DPST’s approach to safeguarding the well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults (“the Cornerstones”) and to set out a code of practice (see Appendix) for all staff and volunteers who may work with them.

3. The Cornerstones

Risk assessment

3.1 All staff and volunteers who intend to, or may be put in the position of, working with children, young people or vulnerable adults should ensure that they understand the implications of this policy before commencing any event, visit or other activity.

3.2 A designated individual should complete a risk assessment before any new or changed event, visit or any other activity involving children, young people or vulnerable adults, or before admitting an under-18.

3.3 All those involved in the risk assessment process should understand that the risk assessment is not only a way to mitigate or remove any potential risks but may also be a prompt to consider alternative working practices.

Recruitment, selection and employment procedures

3.4 The Society will take all appropriate steps to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

3.5 Where the risk assessment has identified that staff or volunteers are likely to have regular contact with or encounter children, young people or vulnerable adults (which might include regular processing of information), rigorous checks into their eligibility will be required. Such processes will be compliant with Society's Equality and Diversity policy.

3.6 The Society is not registered with the Disclosure and Barring Service (previously CRB) and will use an Umbrella Body (such as VAEL) to ensure that any member of staff or any volunteer who will have substantial one-to-one contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults will be checked for relevant criminal convictions.

Dealing with suspicions or allegations of abuse

3.7 Concerns for the safety and well being of children, young persons or vulnerable adults could arise in a variety of ways and in a range of different settings. For example, a child may report or display signs of abuse; someone may hint that a child is at risk or that a colleague is an abuser; an individual may witness or hear about abuse in another organisation. It is essential to act quickly and professionally in all cases of suspected abuse.

3.8 Any allegation by a child, young person or vulnerable adult against a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported immediately to the relevant designated individual who has responsibility under this policy. In dealing with

any such allegation the Society has a duty of care both to the child, young person or vulnerable adult concerned and to the member of staff or volunteer against whom the allegation is made.

Training and support

3.9 The Society will provide appropriate guidance and training on this policy.

4. Responsibility

4.1 Guidelines will be issued to implement this policy and designated individuals will be appointed to undertake risk assessments.

4.2 The Executive Committee will be responsible for reviewing and updating this policy and staff and volunteers are encouraged to discuss any concerns about this policy with the Secretary in the first instance.

4.3 Allegations or suspicions of abuse should be reported to the Secretary.

Appendix

Code of Practice

The following code of practice applies to all staff and volunteers working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, whether acting in a paid or unpaid capacity:

Avoid unnecessary physical contact.

Avoid taking a child, young person or vulnerable adult alone in a vehicle on journeys, however short.

Unless circumstances make it impossible to comply, do not take a child or vulnerable adult to the toilet unless either (a) another adult is present or (b) another adult is aware (this may include a parent or group leader).

If you find you are in a situation where you are alone with a child, young person or vulnerable adult, wherever practicable make sure that others can clearly observe you.

Avoid close personal relationships with a child, young person or vulnerable adult in relation to whom you are in a position of trust.

Do not make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child, young person or vulnerable adult, even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted.

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult accuses anyone of abuse or inappropriate behaviour, you should report this immediately to the relevant person.

The duty to report applies equally to complaints or accusations of historic, and not just recent, abuse/inappropriate behaviour.

If you are the recipient of any complaint or accusation from a child, young person or vulnerable adult, it is important to listen without making or implying any judgement as to the truth of the complaint or accusation.

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult makes a complaint, or if there are other reasons for suspecting abuse, you should not attempt to investigate this yourself, but should report your concerns to the designated individual.

Participate in the training available to you to support you in your work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Remember that those who abuse children, young people and vulnerable adults can be of any age (even other children and vulnerable adults), gender, ethnic background or class, and it is important not to allow personal preconceptions about people to prevent appropriate action taking place.

Good practice includes valuing and respecting children, young people and vulnerable adults as individuals, and the adult modelling of appropriate conduct – which would exclude bullying, aggressive behaviour and discrimination in any form.

Those dealing with any allegations of abuse or misconduct should adhere to the principles set out in the policy. Any information received should be acted upon sensitively, effectively and efficiently. Wherever possible, those making allegations should be given information about the outcome.

Although allegations should be reported only on a “need to know” basis, staff and students making allegations need not be concerned that they will be breaching confidentiality or the Data Protection Act, as complying with the policy overrides such obligations. If the person making the allegation feels they need counselling or other appropriate support, they are encouraged to seek it.

Version and Review

This document: Version 1, date 6th February 2014

Review five yearly.

