

PENLEE HOUSE GALLERY & MUSEUM

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

SECTION 1 Child Protection Policy Statement

Penlee House Gallery & Museum accepts that the welfare of children visiting these premises is paramount (Children Act 2004) and all possible measures shall be put in place to ensure that this is a safe place for children to be. We recognise that our duty is take such care as is in all the circumstances reasonable to ensure that they will be reasonably safe in using the premises for the purpose for which they are permitted to be here (Occupier's Liability Act 1957). We are also aware that the standard of care expected in relation to children is higher than in relation to adults because staff must expect children to be less careful than adults.

The child's welfare refers to protection from accidents, alarm and abuse. To this end, guidelines as to good practice when dealing with children have been defined (see SECTION 2) and risk assessments for on-site activities have been completed. Appropriate procedures for dealing with situations and/or incidents have been defined and are available for staff to consult. This includes telephone numbers for the appropriate agency(ies) to be contacted.

The appointed Child Protection Officer is Jonathan Holmes, who will be responsible for ensuring that the policy is updated and adhered to.

Staff and volunteers are aware of this policy and expected to abide by it. Paid employees and volunteers with direct, regular access to children will be subject to a police Disclosure check. No member of staff will have pre-arranged, unsupervised access to groups of children or individuals. Children will not be allowed access to the museum unless accompanied by a parent or someone acting *in loco parentis* e.g. a teacher, workshop leader or relevant member of Penlee House staff. Accompanying adults are expected to stay with their charges at all times.

Procedures (see SECTION 3) have been identified to deal with:

- a) an emergency or unforeseen situation where unsupervised access occurs
 - b) any incident occurring that causes harm or distress to a child on the site
 - c) in the event of a child coming onto the site to seek assistance due to an occurrence off the site.
- Any identified staff training needs in matters of child protection guidelines or procedures will be implemented.

Any breaches of the policy will be dealt with immediately and responded to appropriately in accordance with legislation and with regard to policies and procedures of the local authority.

SECTION 2 Good Practice Guidelines for Organised Group Visits

Basic information about the responsibility of the supervising adult(s) should be sent to the school with booking confirmation to prevent mis-understandings during the visit about who has responsibility.

- a) Ensure adequate and regularly up-dated risk assessments for all activities done with children on-site.
- b) Ensure that all staff and volunteers on duty are informed when a group of children are due on site and that adequate cover is available to ensure that there is always the option of calling for an independent adult if necessary.
- c) Condensed information about Health and Safety and Child Protection Guidelines will be sent out to schools with their booking confirmation.
- d) Make sure that any stated requirements for supervision are adhered to e.g. child/adult ratios per school group or parental supervision of individual children.
- e) Inform all supervising adults (and/or children if required) of location of fire exits, call points and extinguishers.
- f) Supervising adults should be made aware of the requirements of them when they arrive, e.g. accompanying children to toilets, leading group work in public spaces, staying with the group at all times while on the premises.
- g) Children should be given basic safety information as soon as they arrive, for example, no running, staying with an adult at all times, who the responsible adults are, etc.
- h) Avoid being alone with a child. Never organise activities where this could be a possibility. Ensure there are always parents, school staff, colleagues or other responsible adults with the group/child.
- i) Avoid physical contact with a child.
- j) Where an activity requires some sort of physical interaction – you may need to guide a child's hands or position the head etc – always ensure another independent adult is with you.
- k) In a case where a child is distressed, always ensure that the parent or the adult *in loco parentis* (normally the teacher) deals with the situation.
- l) Never leave a child alone and unaccompanied in an activity – be aware of possible dangers from other members of the public.
- m) Never allow a child to leave a group activity on their own e.g. visiting the toilet – always ensure they are accompanied by a supervising adult - either a parent or school staff.
- n) Make sure a member of staff stays with the group at all times when using outside speakers/entertainers.
- o) Obligations under the DDA must be complied with to ensure all children feel equally safe and comfortable.

- p) Ensure First Aid arrangements are adequate. All staff will be aware of the whereabouts of first aid boxes and equipment and the identity of First Aiders. All first aid equipment is suitable, well maintained and in its designated place.
- q) Only administer first aid in emergency situations, and always ensure another adult is present.
- r) Always enter accidents or the administering of first aid into the Accident Book.
- s) Staff should be aware that in law they are only entitled to use reasonable force in order to:
 - Remove a trespasser
 - To prevent accident or injury
 - In self defence

Where one of these situations arises (and they may) get the names of witnesses to the event and write an immediate account of the event. Inform the police service immediately if anything serious of this nature occurs. In the event of a minor incident – e.g. grabbing a child’s hand and pulling them back from a potential accident – it may not be necessary to inform the police as long as a supervising adult is present and able to witness the incident. It is still advisable to write and keep an account of the incident with witness names in case of later come-back. Reports should be kept in an Incident Book which will be held by the Child Protection Officer.

SECTION 3 Procedures (dealing with a lone child)

In the event of an emergency or unforeseen circumstances, it is possible that a member of staff will find themselves alone with a child – possibly in a distressed state. For example, this may occur if a child has lost a parent or wandered away from a group, during a fire drill or a child wandering unaccompanied into the museum from outside. If this happens the following procedure should be followed.

- a) If possible tell someone else where you are going, what you are doing and why.
- b) Direct the child (verbally) and supervise them back to their group if nearby. Do not guide the child physically.
- c) If the child is seriously distressed or hysterical you may have to make physical contact so make sure that you take the child directly to a place where there are other independent adults around – preferably their parents or from the school party.
- d) If you cannot identify to which group or family the child belongs and you need to find out information from a child – their name, phone number or address - always try to ensure that another known adult is present.
- e) In the case of a child who comes into the premises alone looking for assistance, always ensure that you remain in public areas preferably with another independent adult.

SECTION 4 Procedures (in the event of an incident or accusation)

- a) If a child hurts themselves it should always be entered into the accident book, no-matter how minor it is.
- b) Remember that it is the responsibility of the parent or person *in loco parentis* to decide what should happen to the child if they are hurt.
- c) In a serious case where a parent or *in loco parentis* supervising adult cannot be found, phone the emergency services for medical advice. Inform the Social Services Children's Service.
- d) If a child comes in to the museum from outside, alone and in distress, immediately contact Social Services Children's Service to ask their advice before trying to deal with the situation. Do not allow them to leave the museum alone again. You have a moral obligation to care for them once they have approached you for help. Only ask for information about name, address and phone number in the presence of another adult.
- e) In the event of a child making an accusation of abuse against someone (whether part of your organisation or not), the Cornwall Child Protection Team and the police **HAVE** to be informed immediately and they will direct your actions.
- f) If an accusation against anyone is made – whether from the museum, a member of the public or any other person – **DO NOT START TRYING TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED UNTIL YOU HAVE CONTACTED THE SOCIAL SERVICES CHILDREN'S SERVICE** since asking the wrong questions could jeopardise the accuracy of the information, make the truth difficult to ascertain and ultimately lead to either a wrong conviction of an innocent person, or prevent the conviction of a guilty one.
- g) You should note down any information volunteered by the child along with witness names, time, date, evidence of distress etc in the Incident Book.
- h) Do not interrupt, prompt or ask questions.
- i) Do not promise to keep the information secret. You must be able to pass the information to the authorities without betraying the child's confidence or this may impede further investigation.
- j) In the event of any suspicion falling on a member of staff or volunteer, inform the appropriate authorities and follow accepted guidelines as stated in the Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Inter-agency Child Protection Procedures. (Yellow Book). The Cornwall Joint Consultancy Team will give you any advice you need.

SECTION 5 Contact Numbers

Social Services Children's Service – Penzance Office 01736 365714

Joint Consultancy Team – 01872 241735