

MIDDLESBROUGH MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Middlesbrough Museums and Galleries provide a range of learning opportunities for a wide cross section of people regardless of age, background or ability.

The Service consists of Captain Cook Birthplace Museum, Dorman Museum, mima.

Children are involved in the venues as general visitors or come for a specific planned activity. Most children visit with a teacher, parent or carer. They can be involved in a range of activities including an adult-led tour, workshop, drama event, handling session, storytelling or family drop-in day. These are normally run by a member/members of the education team, and/or an outside professional such as an artist. This policy covers all of these situations, in addition to any activity that takes place outside the venues and which involves museums and galleries staff or volunteers.

This policy is written to ensure that all children and vulnerable adults are guaranteed appropriate and safe treatment in all circumstances within our Service.

2. POLICY

Middlesbrough Museums and Galleries will strive to create a healthy, positive and safe environment for all children who visit. We have a responsibility to ensure children's physical safety, which is covered by general Council safety policies and procedures. Children will be protected from physical, emotional or sexual abuse, bullying or neglect.

2i. Recruitment: We will carefully follow appropriate recruiting and selection procedures to ensure the suitability of staff, freelancers and volunteers who are applying to work directly with children. This will include Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks and careful checking of references.

2ii. Training: Staff will be made aware of child protection issues as appropriate.

2iii. Procedures will be established which would minimise any opportunity for abuse. This will include staff and volunteers avoiding private or unobserved situations with children.

2iv. Any suspected abuse will be reported. This could include physical or verbal evidence that a child has been abused, either before arrival at the Museum or during their visit, or allegations made by a child about abuse. Suspected cases of abuse should be reported via the appropriate channels.

3. CHILD PROTECTION – GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

3i. Always be publicly open when working with children. Avoid situations where staff and an individual child are completely unobserved.

3ii. Recognise that parents or teachers should always be involved in the monitoring of children's behaviour or development and should be the first point of contact (except in cases of suspected child abuse)

3iii. If you accidentally hurt a child, he/she seems distressed in any way, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, or misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incident as soon as possible to another colleague and make a brief written note about it.

3iv. You should never:

- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative play, including horseplay
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Do things of a personal nature for children they can do for themselves
- Be alone with a child in an unsupervised area

3v. It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or have disabilities. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents/carers and the children involved. There is a need to be responsive to a child's actions: if a child is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This would include physical contact or lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities.

3vi. If any form of manual support is required, it should be provided openly and according to advice from your supervisor/line manager. Parents' views should always be carefully considered.

3vii. Everyone should be aware that as a general rule it **does not make sense** to:

- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- Take children alone on car journeys, however short
- Take children to your home where they will be alone with you