

Reviewing Your Policy

Reviewing your safeguarding policy is an important process for trustees to undertake. Government recommendations suggest an annual review and you may want to make small changes and checks annually. A more thorough review in conjunction with Designated Safeguarding Officer(s), education volunteers or those working with children and/or vulnerable people at the museum should be done every 3 years.

You should also review and change your policy if regulations change. You may want to review your policy if your museum expands its work with children and/or vulnerable people. This should be done prior to children or vulnerable adults being on site. Finally, it will also be important to review your policy in the event of safeguarding incidents at the Museum (or locally) or if concerns are raised by staff or volunteers.

Before you start, trustees will need to work with your Designated Safeguarding Officer to find out about new ideas and/or regulations in safeguarding. This web link provides you with an overview of safeguarding children and young people:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-young-people/safeguarding-children-and-young-people>

Trustees should understand important core principles of safeguarding such as 'safeguarding is everyone's responsibility'. Trustees should also broaden their knowledge of safeguarding and read the below documents prior to reviewing a policy:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2#>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charities-how-to-protect-vulnerable-groups-including-children>

The NSPCC website contains a lot of useful information on how to write a policy, and how you can better protect children. These web links will help you when writing your policy:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/safeguarding/writing-a-safeguarding-policy/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/>

Your safeguarding policy will need to be understood by all staff and volunteers. Ensure that you have robust methods of disseminating your policy. This may be via email initially but it is recommended that any changes to policy or practice are discussed within a training session.

All education volunteers and other volunteers who are regularly in contact with children and/or vulnerable adults should have the opportunity to discuss the policy in person.

Guidance for Museums

The below is a checklist of useful pointers when reviewing your policy:

- Policy documents should apply to your museum and reflect the kinds of work you do, whether that be school visits, student placements or reminiscence work.
- Ensure that children and vulnerable peoples' safety is central to your policy and its processes.
- Ensure that all volunteers (including young volunteers) approach their work professionally and adopt policy principles and practice.
- Have checks in place to make sure that you are monitoring different volunteers within the museum, especially young volunteers who may need support in adopting museum best practice, including safeguarding.
- You might want to have a one or two-page document with basic principles and very practical information for volunteers. This might be kept on the front desk, or in a volunteer space/staff area. This can be a useful reminder and regularly referred to.

Include information on these areas of museum activity:

- Ratios of adults to children when groups (including schools) are in the museum
- Whether volunteers are undertaking regulated activity and what the museum does to protect children and vulnerable adults.
- Whether volunteers are working on behalf of the museum in other sites, such as schools, and what sort of checks and monitoring is in place.
- Situations when photography might be allowed and how records are kept
- The fact that personal information shouldn't be shared between volunteers and children and/or vulnerable people.
- The fact that it is unacceptable to try and be alone with children and/or vulnerable people. This includes in a vehicle or in a confined space with the museum.
- Details of how social media is written, shared and by whom. (It is recommended that museums have their own tablets or phones. Volunteers and/or young people should not use personal devices when performing social media tasks for museums.)
- Lost and found children procedures such as: if a lost child is reported and you can't find them within 20 minutes, especially if they are young and/or vulnerable, please phone 999 as an emergency.

Inductions, training and procedures

- Make sure all inductions include safeguarding. You may have different levels of training, inductions and checks for different volunteers.
- Consider the different volunteers in the museum and make sure training is appropriate to the different groups/roles.
- Make sure that procedures for dealing with accusations are robust and explain the rights of children, vulnerable people, volunteers and staff.
- Ensure that procedures dealing with safeguarding incidents and disclosures are robust and explain the rights of children, vulnerable people, volunteers and staff.

Before Accepting Young Volunteers

Before the placement:

- It's recommended that young volunteers should be 16 or older. Volunteers who are 16 years and older can work alongside other adult volunteers and staff without the need for additional criminal checks.
- If you would like to accept young volunteers who are under 16 years, it is recommended that the museum speaks to the school and parents to discuss working practices and legal obligations of all concerned.
- Make sure you have contact details of parents and also contact details of a named person from the relevant school or college.
- Make sure the young volunteer signs in and out of the building, and ensure you are aware of their whereabouts during the volunteering placement.
- Make sure that there is one named contact for the young person at the museum. That person will need to be on-site when the young person is at the museum. Make sure this person is suitable (you may want to check references).
- Make sure you provide young volunteers with a full induction and collect all necessary information, including next of kin details to ensure safe working.
- Try and get two students who can work together and suggest tasks that they can do in pairs.

During the placement:

- Maintain a professional relationship with students and expect volunteers to take a similar approach.
- Keep an eye on young volunteers' use of social media and computers. If you're concerned about something in your search engine history or someone that has happened on museum social media sites, contact their school immediately.
- Try not to be alone with students, and plan for them to work in spaces that are public or have more than one person working.
- Keep an eye on students and make sure you're in regular contact. Check in on students every hour just to see how things are going.
- Don't offer students a lift home or suggest meeting out of work time.

If you have any concerns about your young person contact their school and speak to their parents. You may also want to contact children's services:

<https://www.devonchildrenandfamiliespartnership.org.uk/>

0345 155 1071 Out of hours 0845 6000 388

Make notes about any incident straight away and write down the date, time and describe what happened and where.

If a young volunteer under the age of 18 is reported missing, you will need to contact their next of kin immediately. If you are concerned about the safety of a young person you may want to phone 999 as an emergency.

Top Tips for Young People

As a person under 18 you have the rights of a child but as someone over 16 you also have some of the responsibilities of being an adult too!

You might think a lot of this is common sense but it's important to remember the below.

When you volunteer at the museum you need to be aware that some things are quite different to your school environment:

- Whilst all schools have checked all the adults who work within them, other organisations don't. This is because they can't. A police check (DBS) can only be done when you work in certain organisations or if you work regularly with children. Most people working in museums won't be checked.
- Some organisations might be safer than others. You will be given the name of a contact at the museum who will have received some training (and will have been approved by the museum's trustees). Just remember that places nearby may have had no training and certainly no checks.
- You may meet people (as visitors or in staff rooms) who've been convicted of crimes against other people. It's estimated about 0.5 population were convicted of offences against children. Don't be scared, just be aware.

If you are working online and using social media as part of your project:

- Almost certainly when you send messages or post information online you will be in contact with a range of people too. Don't establish personal relationships online and don't use your personal contacts when dealing with enquiries.
- You might want to 'like' as yourself from home etc... just be aware that your comments might be seen by people who aren't safe.
- Don't accept friendship requests or use personal mobile numbers of people you work with if you are under 18. It's not that you can't be friendly in a professional way but I'd be on my guard if someone wanted my personal information (as they are going against safeguarding good practice).
- Having knowledge of a work mobile or number to contact is fine.
- Protect your own social media sites by checking who can see posts and don't put personal info online.
- Take care when putting your opinions and feelings online.

General advice:

- Sometimes it's worth being a bit cautious if someone is overfriendly. People you work with shouldn't ask for personal details or personal information about you.
- Please don't get into the car of someone who's working with you, especially if you've just met. If they have a work vehicle you might travel in it (with parental consent beforehand) but always in pairs and during volunteering hours.

Safeguarding refresher for all volunteers

When you share a change any aspect of your safeguarding policy volunteers should have the chance to discuss changes. It's also recommended that museums provide volunteers with an annual safeguarding 'refresher' session.

These ideas give you some ideas for how to deliver a successful refresher:

- Invite as many volunteers as possible and ensure that trustees, staff and volunteers are able to discuss principles of safeguarding, and museum policy together. Although volunteers, staff and trustees have different roles in regards to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, it's important that they share their points of view and appreciate the challenges of safeguarding for the museum as a whole.
- Make sure you start your refresher with your learning objectives, or aims for the session. It will be important to check that you've achieved these by the end. It's recommended that training aims are read out loud. Check everyone is happy with their meanings and has an idea of how these aims will be achieved.
- Suggest that safeguarding training can, on occasion be a little upsetting (but this is not your intention) and some conversations will need to be confidential. Good practice should be shared, however and most of the discussions in the training will be about the values and policies of the museum (so can be shared and discussed more widely).
- The training will help to protect children from maltreatment, ensure they are happy and safe as well as help them fulfil their potential.
- Remind participants that much of what they discuss is backed by laws, government advice and rules set out by the Charity Commission so it's important to get it right. National principles that have informed Safeguarding policy like 'Every Child Matters' underpin the sorts of guidance that will be given.
- The principle of 'safeguarding is everyone's responsibility' is also important. You might discuss the different roles within the museum and who is responsible for what. This should also be clear within the policy and you might look at the relevant sections of the policy together.
- It's also recommended that policy additions or changes are highlighted and opportunity is given to discuss these with participants.
- It is important to discuss issues openly, and for participants to 'speak their minds' (within reason). You may find that volunteers find safeguarding a little overwhelming and/or believe that it is an overzealous imposition. It's important to remind participants that we are trying to improve safeguarding all the time and any societal changes are to make children and vulnerable people safer.
- There are different ways to promote discussion of principles. You might try asking participants to discuss some pertinent statements or ask open ended questions.
- It's also worth mentioning that to keep children safe we must normalize 'good' behaviour so that children don't put themselves in unsafe situations. This is why we don't touch children as much as we used to. It's also why we don't encourage children to get into the cars of strangers or give out personal information freely.