



## Child Protection Policy

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## Child Protection Policy

### A. Introduction

***Hands On Heritage wants children to enjoy their involvement on site and it is important that we inform, educate and enthuse children about the work we do.***

Through this Policy we aim to:

- adopt the highest possible standards and
- take all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of the children with whom we come into contact in relation to our work with Hands On Heritage.

It is impossible to ensure that no child ever comes to any harm while in contact with Hands On Heritage. However implementing this policy and following the guidelines will enable you to undertake your work with children confident that you have taken all reasonable precautions to prevent harm occurring while being prepared to deal with an incident should it occur.

Hands On Heritage expects you to apply this policy to all of your work with children and young people under the age of 18 years. You should apply similar safeguards when dealing with vulnerable people of all ages. All references to child or children throughout this Policy and Guidelines should be taken to refer to those referred to above.

### **Hands On Heritage's work with children and young people**

It is important to remember that as a member of Hands on Heritage volunteers you may come into contact with children in a wide range of situations. In addition to organised visits to the forest, these will include:

- children using recreation and holiday facilities
- children attending shows or events
- children coming Hands on Heritage as part of event days such as 'Bring your daughter to work' and;

- young people gaining work experience.

It is important that this policy is seen to apply and the guidelines followed in all situations in which you have contact with children, young people and vulnerable people of all ages.

To whom does this policy apply

The policy applies to:

- Employees
- others whose work with Hands on Heritage brings them into contact with children eg.
- contractors
- volunteers
- any other person working with Hands on Heritage or at Hands on Heritage site who a member of the public might reasonably assume was a Hands on Heritage volunteer or member of staff

All those covered by the policy have a duty to do everything reasonable in their power to ensure the safety and welfare of children while they are in contact with Hands on Heritage

All references to 'staff' or 'staff member' in this document should be taken to include all those listed above.

## **B. Duties**

You are expected to:

- Respect the wishes of a child as you would an adult, you must not impose yourself on them.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of any child in contact with Hands On Heritage; and ensure compliance with HoH Covid 19 guidance.
- Remember that children regard adults as role models and ensure your behaviour, language, gestures etc. are appropriate and above reproach.
- Be aware of Child Protection issues in relation to the work you do and do not become complacent and believe 'it could never happen to me'.
- Prevent any other member of staff from putting any child in a situation in which there is a significant risk to their health and safety. Take appropriate action if you become aware of anyone physically, emotionally or sexually abusing a child.
- Report any evidence or reasonable suspicion that a child has been physically, emotionally or sexually abused whether by an adult or another child to the Child Protection Officer on the site.

- Not physically, emotionally or sexually abuse any child or young or vulnerable person.

### **C. Responsibilities**

Activities where a non Hands on Heritage person eg parent, teacher or other group leader accompanies a child or leads a group.

Where children are accompanied by an adult, primary responsibility for the children remains with that person. Hands on Heritage staff should nonetheless use the Child Protection Policy and Guidelines as the basis for their action and any advice they offer. They should not agree to anything which contravenes the Policy and is not in line with the Guidelines.

If, due to illness or another unexpected event a Hands on Heritage member of staff is left in charge of a child or group then they should act in accordance with the Hands On Heritage Policy and Guidelines.

#### **Activities where children are unaccompanied**

In most instances the children you come into contact with will be accompanied by a teacher or parent. However should you be the leader of an unaccompanied group then it is your responsibility to:

- plan the activities and make decisions during the event following the principles set out in these Policy and Guidelines.
- assign clear tasks to others involved in the children's activities and ensure that procedures are followed
- maintain appropriate child to adult ratios as required by the activity or an instruction by the site manager.
- This must underpin your main aim of providing an enjoyable and safe experience for the children.

#### **Occasional assistance provided by a member of staff who has not been through the Disclosure process**

Any member of staff may assist in activities with children on an occasional basis. They may do so only if the group is led by a parent, teacher or other group leader or member of staff who has been appointed following the necessary pre-appointment checks. The person leading the activities must be the one to allocate tasks and make relevant decisions.

#### **Volunteers recruited by Hands on Heritage**

Offers of help from suitably experienced individuals are always welcome and should be encouraged. When a volunteer is 'recruited' by Hands on Heritage, and is to work with children they must be made aware we have a Policy and Guidelines and agree to work in accordance with them.

## **D. Golden Rule - Safety in numbers**

**We should aim to ensure that no adult is in a one to one situation with a child. Safety in numbers should be the golden rule, whether the numbers are other children or adults.**

If for any reason a one to one situation is unavoidable then additional safeguards should be put in place. For guidance discuss with a Trustee or lead volunteer.

## **E. Disclosure**

### **Appointments/Membership**

Appointment to an employed post, or work as a volunteer which involves regular, substantial or unaccompanied contact with children:

Any individual in either of these categories which involve regular, substantial or unaccompanied contact with children will be subject to pre-appointment checks aimed at assuring Hands on Heritage of their suitability to work with children. These will include the applicant being asked to apply to The Disclosure and Barring Service. *Employment* will only proceed if:

- the pre-employment checks prove satisfactory
- and
- the Disclosure provides no cause for concern as to their suitability to work with children.

Trustees must be mindful of these requirements if the content of a post develops over time and new tasks are assigned.

All volunteers coming into contact with children in the course of their volunteering will also be subject to a DBS check to be arranged and funded by Hands on Heritage.

**Note:** staff or volunteers may have been subject to a Disclosure in a previous role. These checks are not valid in the new role, and all new staff and volunteers must have a new check specific to their role with HoH..

Individuals are free to share the contents of a Disclosure with whoever they wish but under no circumstances must they be required to do so. It is illegal to take copies of a DBS check certificate or hold copies locally.

## **F. When working with others involves children**

### **Contractors and Franchisees**

HoH will only engage contractors or franchisees whose work involves 'regular, substantial or unaccompanied' contact with children if the individual produces a Disclosure certificate.

## **Partners**

Where Hands on Heritage is working in partnership with other organisations and the work involves children, young people or vulnerable people of any age, Hands On Heritage will use the Policy and Guidelines as the basis for discussion and where appropriate include explicit conditions relating to child protection in the partnership agreement. This may be achieved by a simple reference to our Policy and Guidelines and/or those of our partners. Copies of the Policy and Guidelines may be shared with other organisations to assist this process. This partnership policy would also apply in the unlikely event that HoH helped to fund another organisation to deliver our objectives.

## **G. Incidents**

### **Lost or injured children**

Trustees and lead volunteers on site should work to an agreed framework for dealing with a lost or injured child. All staff/volunteers on site should be made aware of the framework.

### **H. Allegation of abuse**

It is to be hoped that you will never have to deal with an alleged incident of child abuse. But it is sensible that you are prepared to do so if necessary and this will be assisted if you have discussed the issue locally

There are four likely scenarios which you should be aware of and be prepared to deal with if necessary. These are;

- There is suspicion or evidence that a child is being abused by a staff member, volunteer or other person associated with Hands on Heritage
- A child accuses a staff member, volunteer or other person associated with Hands on Heritage of abusing them.
- Abuse takes place or is suspected on Hands on Heritage site or at a Hands on Heritage event by an individual unrelated to Hands on Heritage .
- A child discloses abuse happening elsewhere eg at home

In all cases you must:

- Speak with the a Trustee or lead volunteer immediately.
- Be prompt, calm, assured and professional
- Keep any details strictly confidential and share only on a 'need to know' basis.

### **I. Allegations against staff or volunteers**

Though our focus must be on safeguarding children you must also be aware that allegations of abuse made by children about adults do occasionally happen. Some

prove mistaken or, very rarely, malicious. The Policy and Guidelines are there to help you to avoid situations in which well-intentioned actions could be misinterpreted and ensure that you do not find yourself in a situation where an allegation by a child, young or vulnerable person can be made.

#### **J. Use of Information relating to children**

There is rarely any reason or need for HoH staff/volunteers to have or to keep any information about children eg names and addresses, but if any is held it must be treated confidentially. It must be kept securely by a Trustee, stored only as long as necessary and disposed of in a way which maintains their confidentiality.

#### **K. Discussion of the issues**

Open discussion of child protection should be encouraged since this helps to make staff more comfortable with the issues involved. Do not keep it 'under wraps' for fear of upsetting or embarrassing people.

*Adapted from SCC guidelines and revised for use by Hands on Heritage CIO*