

Charles Dickens Museum

CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The Charles Dickens Museum Limited acting as the sole trustee of The Dickens House and the Dickens House Fund.

This Policy was approved by the Board on 2 March 2017, and reviewed on 15 March 2018 and 14 March 2019.

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The Policy:

This policy applies to all Board members, staff, volunteers, sessional workers, students or anyone working on behalf of the Charles Dickens Museum.

The Charles Dickens Museum (CDM) welcomes visitors of all ages and abilities and believes that everyone has a right to enjoy the Museum as a safe environment. However, we require that all children under the age of 18 and all vulnerable adults are accompanied by a responsible adult or carer, whether as general visitors or participating in education, other activities or events.

Throughout this policy we have referred to 'children', by which we mean individuals who are under the age of 18. Most children visit CDM in school groups or otherwise with a responsible adult such as a relative or youth group leader. (We refer to this adult in this document as the child's carer). This policy also refers to 'vulnerable adults', by which we mean individuals aged 18 or over who are in receipt of one or more type of care, health or welfare service.

The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount and we are committed to the protection and safeguarding of all children and vulnerable adults who visit the Museum and participate in our activities. We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are kept in a safe environment and not exposed to physical, sexual or emotional harm. All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

Child Protection Officer:

The nominated Child Protection Officer (CPO) for CDM is the Education Manager.

Code of Conduct:

- We ensure that CDM premises and our online spaces are safe and secure and promote enjoyable and positive experiences.
- We take seriously all suspicions and allegations of harm and respond to them speedily and appropriately.
- We make all our staff (both paid and voluntary) aware of their responsibilities to ensure the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. This includes a responsibility to raise any concerns or suspicions that may arise to the Child Protection Officer, or in her absence, to the Director.

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- We have in place a safe recruitment process to ensure that our people do not pose a risk of harm to children and vulnerable adults.
- We never take the place of the child's or vulnerable adult's carer. Children aged under 18 and vulnerable adults are not allowed on CDM premises without a carer in attendance.
- We seek to ensure that our activities afford as much protection, as is reasonably practicable, for the wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults.
- Staff, including freelance staff and volunteers who are recruited to work with children and vulnerable adults are selected with care and caution and their references are checked. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks may also be required depending on the nature of the role and the activity involved.
- We obtain the consent of the carer/parent/guardian in writing prior to taking photographs of children and vulnerable adults.
- We treat children and vulnerable adults with dignity and respect. We do not conduct education of any sort on a one-to-one basis.
- Where first aid treatment is administered, it is carried out wherever possible with more than one adult present except in the rare situation of serious injury where any delay in providing urgent first-aid pending the arrival of medical aid would be harmful to the child or vulnerable adult.
- We involve teachers, parents and carers whenever possible in work with children and vulnerable adults. We require our staff and volunteers to be good role models who do not use offensive language, make sexually suggestive comments, show favouritism, or allow abusive behaviour (such as ridiculing, taunting or bullying).
- We require staff and volunteers to report any incident relating to child and vulnerable adult safeguarding to the Child Protection Officer or, in her absence, to the Director, and also to the child's teacher or carer.
- We avoid the following unacceptable practices both for the protection of children and vulnerable adults and the safeguarding of our own staff and volunteers:
 - 1) Spending excessive time with individual young people.
 - 2) Taking children home or in a private vehicle.
 - 3) Engaging in rough play, horseplay, or games of physical contact.
 - 4) Being closeted in a toilet or any private room with an individual child.
 - 5) Doing things of a personal nature that the child can do for his or her self or with the assistance of a carer.

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- 6) Physical restraint, other than to prevent danger to the child or others, damage to property, or to prevent a criminal offence or serious anti-social behaviour.

What to do if you suspect a child is being physically, sexually or emotionally abused:

- Do not independently investigate or question.
- Do not challenge parents/carers about your concerns.
- Inform the CPO or, in her absence, the Director as soon as possible.
- Do maintain confidentiality.
- If you are working in a school environment you must respect their procedures and report directly to a senior teacher, the Head Teacher or their Deputy Head Teacher in the first instance.
- Make a written record as accurately as you can of any conversation or evidence which has caused you to be concerned.
- The CPO, or Director, will contact the NSPCC helpline on 0800 800 5000 in the first instance.

Working with partner organisations and off-site on projects:

The lead on any project for CDM is required to meet with the partner's representative, at the outset, to establish the following:

- Ask for a copy of the organisation or local authority's child and vulnerable adult safeguarding policy.
- Ask for the name and contact of their Child Protection Officer. If they do not have such a person, be clear about how to report any concerns.
- Ask for the name and contact of their Health and Safety Officer. If they do not have such a person, be clear about how to report any concerns.
- Ensure that a joint risk assessment has been carried out in respect of the activities that you will be doing.

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