

Child Protection Policy

BACKGROUND

The Association was established to encourage and develop cooperation and coordination between all members having an interest in heritage in the area centred on the Milton Keynes Unitary Authority (otherwise Milton Keynes Council). Members are admitted from within the area of the Authority, and at the discretion of the Executive Committee from a wider area .

The objects of the Association fall within the following areas: - Heritage Policy, Collecting Policy, Research/recording of history, Publicity, Education, Training, Communication, Activities, Conservation/ display, Raising funds, Investment of monies, Legal requirements, Grants and projects and Commercial activities.

Child Protection Policy

Introduction

Milton Keynes Heritage Association and its members have interaction with children through its various activities. Many of these children and young people take part in activities as part of organised groups or with family and friends. While the primary responsibility for children's welfare rests with the supervising adult, MKHA wishes to ensure that all children are safe and protected from harm whilst taking part in its activities.

MKHA will refer any child protection issues on to the appropriate agencies. In particular if MKHA encounter a case that constitutes, or may constitute, a criminal case against a child the police will be informed.

MKHA also wishes to protect its staff **and volunteers** from unfair allegations: the guidelines in this policy will ensure that there is no doubt over obligations and standards.

This policy will apply to all permanent and temporary staff and volunteers.

Legal background

The Police Act 1997, the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 provide an integrated system of child protection. Essentially, the legislation provides that individuals may be disqualified from working with children by inclusion on one or more of a number of official lists. It is a criminal offence for an employer to, knowingly, recruit a disqualified individual into a post working with children (NB this also applies to voluntary work).

The National Information Service (NIS) equates to the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and both act as a "one-stop shop" for employers to check whether a prospective employee is a disqualified person. Only standard checks are available from the NIS. Enhanced checks are available from the CRB.

Policy Statement

MKHA believe that :

- The welfare of the child or young person is vitally important
- All children have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be properly investigated and dealt with swiftly and appropriately
- All staff, contractors and volunteers should be clear on appropriate behaviour and responses. Failure to maintain appropriate standards may be dealt with using the disciplinary procedure.

MKHA will therefore seek to ensure that

- Staff are carefully selected, trained in issues of child protection and regularly monitored.
- All staff and members are aware of this Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- At public events organised by MKHA, or in which MKHA participates, all reasonable efforts shall be made to ensure that children attending are accompanied by a parent, guardian or other responsible adult, when they interact with MKHA staff or volunteers

Responsibilities

MKHA Executive Committee will be responsible for administrative procedures relating to selection and induction and for advising on any disciplinary action.

MKHA Executive Committee will monitor implementation of the policy and take appropriate action on any breaches within their areas of responsibility.

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to maintain appropriate standards of behaviour and to report lapses in these standards by others. Any concerns or reasonable suspicions of abuse should be reported to the MKHA Executive Committee.

Any allegations of inappropriate behaviour should also be reported to the MKHA Executive Committee who will liaise with police and social services as necessary.

The role of the MKHA Executive Committee will be to:

- Assess information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information about the matter as appropriate.
- Consult initially with a statutory child protection agency, such as the local social services department or Local Health Group, or the NSPCC helpline to test out any doubts or uncertainty about the concerns

- make a formal referral to a statutory child protection agency or the police.

It is not the role of the MKHA Executive Committee to decide whether a child has been abused or not: this is the task of the social services department which has this legal responsibility, or of the police. The NSPCC also has powers to investigate child protection concerns.

Selection

All appointments to MKHA posts will be conditional on a satisfactory check of the applicants criminal record where necessary. For most posts a standard disclosure via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) although an enhanced disclosure via the DBS will be required for posts with regular and/or unsupervised access to children. <https://www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record>

A risk assessment should be carried out for each post prior to appointment by the appropriate line manager to determine the level of disclosure needed. The assistance of HR may be sought.

All applicants will be required to declare all past criminal convictions (and any current or pending investigation) prior to interview.

All appointments will be subject to satisfactory employer/personal references and a satisfactory probationary period.

At interview applicants will be required to account for any gaps in employment history.

Training

MKHA will provide and explain the content of this policy to all new staff in the course of the induction process.

Basic child protection awareness training will be given to all appropriate members of staff where necessary.

Child protection awareness training will be given to any members of staff or volunteers with regular contact with children.

Review

The Executive Committee shall regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy in achieving the stated aims. This process shall be undertaken two yearly or sooner and shall aim to seek the views of organisations representing the interests of those groups referred to in this policy.

This is the current copy of this policy

Name:

Signature:

Position

Agreed at the AGM on 28 September 2023 v2 review NL Mar 26, ratified by
MKHA Executive Committee and to be submitted for formal agreement to
2026 AGM