



THE SOVEREIGN HILL MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURE

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OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURE

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy describes protocols for ensuring the emotional and physical safety of children visiting any of The Sovereign Hill Museums Association's facilities, specifically protection from improper violations of privacy, sexual harassment, bullying and abuse.

The Sovereign Hill Museums Association is committed to the protection of all staff and volunteers and participants from physical and emotional harm. It is recognised that children especially need protection because of their potential vulnerability. This may be due to lack of life experience, trust/distrust of adults, physical size and strength, and power imbalance between children and adults.

2. PURPOSE

To achieve a consistent approach to protecting children visiting The Sovereign Hill Museums Association's facilities from emotional and physical mistreatment.

3. POLICY

The Sovereign Hill Museums Association's goal is to provide children with a positive, enjoyable experience, with access to a wide range of interesting and challenging activities. Within a safe and controlled environment SHMA will empower children to be creative through practical, hands on experiences and education programs that encourage their independence and decision making.

All children visiting Sovereign Hill's museums, programs, accommodation or other facilities under the control of the Association have the right to a safe and caring environment, which promotes learning, personal growth and positive self-esteem. We will respect the diversity of children and promote the safety of children of all cultures (including Aboriginal culture, and culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds) and abilities.

The staff and management of Sovereign Hill will ensure a child's emotional and physical safety at all times by ensuring the SHMA Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children (Appendix 1) is implemented and complied with.

The SHMA take a zero tolerance approach to child abuse.

4. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all locations and Association-endorsed activities of The Sovereign Hill Museums Association.

5. DEFINITIONS

“**SHMA**” means The Sovereign Hill Museums Association. Sovereign Hill and Association refers to the same.

“**Executive Team**” means the SHMA Chief Executive Officer and the Association Directors

“**Supervisor and Manager**” in this procedure covers any employee of the Association who plans, organises or supervises the activities of other employees, volunteers, contractors or visitors on behalf of the Association.

“**Child Abuse**” is defined as:

- sexual abuse (including grooming with the intent to sexually abuse a child);
- physical abuse or violence;
- serious psychological or emotional abuse;
- serious neglect.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

The **SHMA Executive Team** is responsible for the management of strategic health and safety risks including the management of child abuse risk.

The **OHS Policy Committee** is responsible for implementing this Procedure and for contributing to the development of any associated Guidelines and processes.

Managers and **Supervisors** must ensure the application of this procedure at all times.

Staff and Volunteers have a responsibility to cooperate with this procedure.

Contractors who undertake work **and Visitors**, who are involved in programs, must be made aware of the Association’s expectations in regard to their safety. They must follow the instruction of their Supervisor or Manager

The **Manager – Occupational, Health and Safety** is responsible for the maintenance and ownership of this procedure and associated Code of Conduct.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

Sovereign Hill will establish an environment of trust and inclusion that enables children to ask questions and speak up if they are worried or feeling unsafe. We will identify, within the activities and services we provide to children, any potential risks and proactively reduce the likelihood of child abuse emerging or escalating, rather than responding when harm has occurred.

We will have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (e.g. any doors that will lock); online environments (e.g. no staff or volunteer to have contact with a child on social media); within our education programs (e.g. recruitment and

supervision of staff, volunteers or contractors); and our visitors (e.g. observation and action taken to correctly identify risky and/or inappropriate behaviour).

PROCEDURE

8. HOW STAFF ARE EXPECTED TO RELATE TO CHILDREN

8.1. Physical contact

Sovereign Hill acknowledges that there are often times when it is appropriate for physical contact between adults and children.

8.1.1. This can occur during activities where equipment has to be fitted (e.g., costume) or assistance provided (e.g., in an education session or hands-on activity, boarding a vehicle or during photography).

8.1.2. It can also occur in a hug of congratulations or a friendly pat on the back. Sovereign Hill staff and volunteers will use the following principles for touching children while respecting their privacy and safe feeling:

- Any touching must be with the child's permission, for example, ask, 'May I adjust your costume?'
- Touching should be in the open and with other people around, not secretive and not especially focussed on one person.
- Touching should only ever be to support or respond to a need of the child and NEVER to meet the needs of an adult.
- Any touching must avoid body areas such as breasts, buttocks and the groin.

8.2. Personal privacy

8.2.1. Children are entitled to privacy in personal matters and Sovereign Hill staff and volunteers must respect this.

8.2.2. If a Sovereign Hill staff member believes there is evidence of a problem or disclosure of abuse, it is the staff member's responsibility to report this - see 'responsibility' of staff' below.

8.3. Sleeping, showering and toilet privacy

8.3.1. Whilst staying in The Sovereign Hill Museums Association accommodation facilities, boys and girls will have separate sleeping, showering and toilet facilities and must stay in these designated areas.

8.3.2. Wherever children are domiciled in accommodation facilities operated by The Sovereign Hill Museums Association, they will have exclusive use (that is, no adults not associated with the children will be allowed access).

8.3.3. Adults with supervisory roles in these areas must respect the children's privacy, and knock or call out to let them know they are entering the facility.

8.3.4. Cleaning of areas such as toilets and showers is scheduled to be done at times when children are less likely to be using the facilities.

8.3.5. When cleaning is being carried out a sign to that effect is displayed at the entrance.

8.4. Avoiding compromising situations

8.4.1. Sovereign Hill staff, volunteers and contractors must avoid placing themselves or children in situations where they can be compromised. This can be done by:

- Avoid being alone with a child; stay in view of others
- Knock and ask permission to enter sleeping or private areas
- Use staff toilet and shower facilities where provided
- Avoid 'favourites' and treat all children with the same level of friendliness and courtesy
- Seek the child's permission before touching or adjusting clothing they are wearing
- Avoid situations that cause embarrassment or humiliation to children
- Avoid sexual talk or behave in a way that promotes promiscuity or the acceptance of sexually explicit material.

8.5. Administering first aid

8.5.1. If Sovereign Hill staff are required to render first aid or emergency treatment:

- They will involve another staff member of the same sex as any child requiring attention whenever possible. Otherwise, they will endeavour to have another person present, preferably a parent, guardian or teacher accompanying the group/child.
- Unless absolutely necessary, they will leave examination of private areas to health professionals.
- They will not force children to remove clothing for an examination
- They will record their actions in accordance with first aid (incident) recording procedures
- Refer to a parent, guardian or teacher for any issues relating to children requiring medication.

8.6. Favouritism and exclusiveness

8.6.1. There is no place for playing 'favourites'. In most instances, the showing of favouritism to a child or small group of children fosters the needs of the adult, not the child. It can create emotional dependence on the adult and isolate the child from peers. When a child needs a little extra attention, it must be given openly and carried out in such a way that no secretiveness or exclusivity is perceived by the child or others.

8.7. Bullying and harassment

- 8.7.1. Bullying is an act of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another. It can take away many forms - physical, verbal, gesture, victimisation, extortion, exclusion or offensive notes/graffiti etc.
- 8.7.2. Forms of harassment, such as those of a sexual or racial nature, are also unwanted behaviour directed towards an individual.
- 8.7.3. This sort of behaviour is unacceptable and should not be ignored. Staff and volunteers must take appropriate action. For example, reporting incidents to the parent, guardian or teacher accompanying the group/child, removing opportunities for bullying by conducting well-organised activities, or simply by being vigilant.
- 8.7.4. Bullying and harassment must always be treated seriously - it is important to be consistent and assertive in dealing with all forms of bullying.

9. STAFF SELECTION AND TRAINING Through staff training programs, Sovereign Hill staff and volunteers are briefed to ensure that they understand their obligations to respect the rights and privacy of all children, and to implement this policy of child protection.

- 9.2. All Sovereign Hill staff and volunteers will have a police check prior to appointment and are required to hold a current Working with Children Check card (to be updated every five years).
- 9.3. Should these checks reveal any convictions for child abuse behaviour, the person will not be employed. Any other convictions will be considered according to the position being filled and their relevance to the current situation.
- 9.4. The employment agreement includes the Association's Code of Conduct, and the volunteer's or staff member's signature indicates that he or she has read, understood and agrees to follow Sovereign Hill's policies and procedures.
 - 9.4.1. Child protection issues are discussed at staff meetings as appropriate, and staff are encouraged to be an active part of reviewing the policies, as well as developing and ensuring a safe environment for all participants.
- 9.5. Staff and volunteers are reminded of this protective behaviours policy.

10. RESPONSIBILITY OF STAFF

- 10.1. Any incident, complaint or concern regarding child safety at Sovereign Hill must be taken seriously and fully investigated (with outside help if necessary). Staff or volunteers that suspect child abuse must report it to the Leading Hand or their Manager immediately.
- 10.2. Sovereign Hill will act to comply with the law or implement appropriate action such as reporting to police, school principal, or other relevant authority.

11. REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

- 11.1. Sovereign Hill is committed to reporting any evidence or disclosure of child abuse to Department of Human Services Protective Services.
- 11.2. The office number for our region (Grampians) is 1800 000 551.
- 11.3. The Child Protection 24-hour line is 131 278 (toll free) or depending on the severity and urgency of the situation, Victorian Police 000.
- 11.4. Complete an SHMA incident report. All documentation will be kept in accordance with the SHMA privacy policy.

12. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

All listed documents are located on the Shared Drive unless indicated otherwise.

SHMA Policy – Occupational Health & Safety

SHMA Code of Conduct

SHMA Code of Conduct for Protection of Children (appendix 1 of this document)

SHMA Education Code of Conduct for Schools

SHMA Privacy Policy

13. REFERENCES

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)

Department of Human Services Child Protection Guidelines

Commission for Children and Young People – Child Safe Standards

Victorian Worksafe website - www.worksafe.vic.gov.au

14. DISTRIBUTION

This document will be distributed via:

1. The Association's shared S Drive and Intranet;
2. At Staff Meetings;
3. Notification in the staff newsletter;
4. Included into Occupational Health and Safety Manual; and
5. OHS Policy Committee.



APPENDIX 1 – CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

All staff, volunteers and board members of The Sovereign Hill Museums Association are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

All personnel of The Sovereign Hill Museums Association are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- adhering to The Sovereign Hill Museums Association child protection policy and procedure at all times
- upholding The Sovereign Hill Museums Association statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns to SHMA managers or leading hands
- ensuring that if an allegation of child abuse is made, that the child(ren) are safe as quickly as possible
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

Staff and volunteers must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (e.g. the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (e.g. inappropriate sitting on laps.)
- put children at risk of abuse (e.g., by locking doors)
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (e.g., intimate content or sexual innuendo)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- communicate directly with a child through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc.)
- provide alcohol or drugs to a child.

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to The Sovereign Hill Museums Association Management.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse or harm, phone 000.