

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

June 2023

The Science Museum Group (SMG) is committed to being open for all children and adults at risk and to ensuring that everyone who accesses our premises, exhibitions, colleagues and resources should be safe and protected from harm.

All children and adults have a right to be safe from harm regardless of their age, gender or gender identity, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious or other beliefs, disability or socio-economic status. People may be at greater risk of abuse because of any of these characteristics. Our value of being Open for All and our commitment to diversity, inclusion and equity are core principles of effective safeguarding.

It is mandatory for all SMG colleagues, including volunteers and contractors, to abide by the safeguarding policy, procedures and commitment. Any colleague found not to have followed them may be subject to disciplinary action (or alternative appropriate action if they are not an employee).

SMG safeguarding documents will be made available on request to group leaders and relevant public authorities. This policy is available on the Science Museum Group website.

TERMS

Safeguarding is about protecting the health, wellbeing and human rights of children and adults at risk, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

A **child** is anyone under 18 years of age.

An **adult at risk** is 'any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and support'.

A **responsible adult** is a person over the age of 18 who has responsibility for children or adults at risk in their care (e.g. parents, teachers, carers and group leaders).

Colleague is used to mean all types of employees, workers and volunteers, including casual and temporary employees, contractors, freelancers, researchers, students and Trustees. SMG safeguarding policy and procedures must also be made clear to and be adhered to by those working for partner organisations, such as those delivering at SMG events (on site and virtual) and festival activities.

SCOPE, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone has a role to play in safeguarding and this policy applies to all SMG colleagues as defined above. It is in place to ensure that SMG is following the requirements of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

The Science Museum Group Board of Trustees are ultimately responsible for safeguarding. They must make sure that safeguarding people from harm is central to SMG's culture and that risk is being effectively identified and managed to achieve this.

The SMG Executive has delegated authority for safeguarding from the Board of Trustees and they have responsibility to ensure that safeguarding is included, where appropriate, in strategic plans, risk assessments, communications and quality assurance processes. This is led by the Director of Learning who is the organisation's Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).

On a day-to-day basis, safeguarding responsibilities are allocated to a Safeguarding Committee at each site. Their role is to act as a point of contact on safeguarding concerns for everyone working at the site and to advise on safeguarding matters. The membership of the committee at each site includes a range of employees from different departments including Learning, Operations and the People Team, all of whom have undergone safeguarding training.

Members of the local Safeguarding Committees, along with some other members of Learning and Operational teams who have volunteered to take part, act as Safeguarding Champions for the organisation, offering advice and training to colleagues.

ASSOCIATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Safeguarding Policy should be used in conjunction with the following SMG policies and procedures:

- SMG Safeguarding Procedures
- SMG Safeguarding Commitment
- Specific standard operating procedures for each site, such as lost child SOPs
- Youth Volunteering Framework
- Placements Guidance
- Data protection procedures
- Vetting and security clearance procedures
- Whistleblowing Policy
- SMG Social Media Policy
- Photography at SMG (visitors)
- Site admission guidelines
- CCTV Policy
- Contractor Management Procedure

This policy and associated documents will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required by changes in legislation or procedure or as the result of a post-incident investigation.

If an individual has any concerns about any aspects of this policy or other safeguarding

documents or procedures, they should contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

OUR AIMS

The Science Museum Group aims to:

- respect the rights of all children and adults at risk
- provide an environment (including SMG-led activities off-site) which is safe and welcoming for children and adults at risk and which protects them from all forms of abuse
- ensure that all SMG colleagues, including volunteers and contractors, are aware of the need to protect children and adults at risk and know how to reduce the risks to them
- provide procedures and guidance for everyone working at SMG for their own protection.

OUR COMMITMENT

The Science Museum Group and everyone who works and volunteers within it endeavours to safeguard children and adults at risk by:

- adopting safeguarding procedures for all, which minimise any opportunity for abuse and establish appropriate treatment of children and adults at risk both in person at our museums and activities and virtually through online engagement
- ensuring individuals engaged in activities with children / adults at risk are fully aware of and trained to follow SMG's procedures and guidance for both in person and online activities
- sharing information about the principles of safeguarding and good practice with colleagues and visitors
- providing effective management through supervision, support and training
- ensuring that responsible adults such as parents, guardians and teachers are aware of their own responsibilities in relation to safeguarding
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents/carers as appropriate
- following robust procedures for the recruitment and selection of employees and volunteers and ensuring colleagues have the appropriate DBS checks in place
- designating colleagues to lead on safeguarding issues
- reviewing our policy and practice at regular intervals
- ensuring safeguarding policies and procedures are regularly updated in accordance with current Government legislation and best practice
- taking allegations seriously and responding fairly, swiftly and appropriately
- reporting safeguarding incidents using established internal (and restricted) reporting protocols

OUR CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOUR

We all play a part in helping keep vulnerable people from harm and ensuring that our own behaviour and conduct is appropriate and professional. We can do this by:

- valuing each visitor as an individual by listening to and respecting them
- taking the same care to safeguard visitors and their data online as on our sites
- remaining in clear sight wherever possible when interacting with the public by staying in open spaces, in the presence of responsible adults and/or colleagues
- talking with anyone, visitors or colleagues, in a friendly but not overfamiliar manner, ensuring our conversations avoid any topic that might be regarded as inappropriate in nature, including conversations via radio
- only taking photographs of visitors following SMG procedures for consent and storage of images
- remaining professional at all times. Even if we meet visitors in a social setting, we are always the face of the museum to them
- remembering that if friends or family are visiting the museum when we are on duty, we are still on view to everyone
- not initiating or encouraging physical contact
- gently moving back when a visitor initiates physical contact and then engaging in conversation
- asking a visitor's permission and letting them know what we are about to do if we need touch them to help them, for example, someone who has fallen who is visiting on their own.

SAFEGUARDING REPORTING STRUCTURE & GOVERNANCE

All safeguarding incidents must be reported immediately, following the SMG Safeguarding Procedures. Any concerns about any area of safeguarding, whether it is something that has been seen or heard by you or reported to you by someone else, must be reported. Incidents that occur online, or concerns about online activity, must also be reported.

Any visitors, teachers or other members of the public with safeguarding concerns about an SMG site or activity should also report them immediately to a member of staff.

Whilst it is vital that this information is shared, the confidential nature of personal details must not be overlooked. Personal information should be included only in the SWIMS report which has restricted access. No written records or emails which include personal details should be shared or forwarded to other colleagues.

The steps below show the general flow of information through the organisation following the report of any safeguarding incident, whether on or off site or online.

1. Incident - immediate action taken on the ground as appropriate by Duty Managers, with escalation to Heads of Ops (or equivalent)/Learning/People as required and contact with Police/Social Services as necessary.
2. Alert Bulletin sent
3. SWIMS report made
4. All incidents reported to and discussed at Site Safeguarding Committee (quarterly)
5. Safeguarding reported to and discussed at Site S&W Committee (quarterly)
6. Safeguarding reported to and discussed at SMG Safeguarding Review Meeting (quarterly)
7. Safeguarding report made to SMG S&W Committee (quarterly)
8. Safeguarding report made to SMG Executive (bi-annual)
9. Safeguarding report made to Audit and Risk Committee (annual)

SMG DSO / Director of Learning available for advice throughout

The Science Museum Group Board of Trustees are ultimately responsible for safeguarding and have delegated authority for safeguarding to the SMG Executive, led by the Director of Learning who is the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO). Trustees receive an annual report on safeguarding at the Audit and Risk Committee, which also reviews the safeguarding policy and procedures every three years.

Safeguarding is an agenda item on all museum Safety and Wellbeing committees, with a report being provided by the Head of Learning or Operations for the site.

Key items will be escalated to Group Safety and Wellbeing Committee by the Director of Learning. A bi-annual report is also made to SMG Executive by the Director of Learning.

Safeguarding committees will be held quarterly at all public sites¹, and will be attended by:

- Head of Learning (or nominated deputy)
- Head of Operations/Site Manager (Locomotion)
- A representative from the People Team
- Representatives from the Duty Management team
- Additional members can be added as required by each site

¹ A safeguarding committee will be established at the Science and Innovation Park once public access to the National Collections Centre begins

The purpose of these meetings is to:

- Review all safeguarding incidents
- Review any relevant procedures and ensure they are adequate
- Review and monitor training on site
- Report to the site S&W Committee
- Make recommendations as appropriate

Terms of reference are in place for each safeguarding committee:

- Science Museum
- National Science and Media Museum
- Museum of Science and Industry
- National Railway Museum and Locomotion

Members of the local safeguarding committees, along with some other members of Learning and Operational teams who have volunteered to take part, also act as Safeguarding Champions for the organisation, offering advice and training to colleagues.

Quarterly incident sharing meetings will be held with the Head of Learning and Head of Operations from each site, chaired by the Director of Learning and the Head of Safety & Wellbeing to ensure consistency and learning across the organisation.

It is useful to have safeguarding as an agenda item at site senior leadership team and departmental meetings to share good practice, however this is not part of the governance structure.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

All colleagues are required to have an awareness of safeguarding procedures and know what to do if they are concerned about anything that they have seen, heard or had reported to them.

A range of training and briefing sessions are available depending on role and responsibilities. The minimum training requirement for all SMG colleagues is annual reading and signing of the Safeguarding Commitment. A full list of training is available in the SMG Safeguarding Procedures document.