

Didcot Railway Centre
Home of the Great Western Society
Safeguarding children and vulnerable people policy, version 2.1

Our Vision is to recreate the golden age of the Great Western Railway.

Our Mission is:

- To be a nationally accredited independent organisation
- To maintain Didcot Railway Centre as a working museum dedicated to the Great Western Railway
- To provide suitable facilities to demonstrate restoration and maintenance of the Collection
- To be open to the public for the enjoyment, benefit and education of the community.

Our challenge is to become a more commercially orientated organisation in order to achieve the Vision.

Background

In South Oxfordshire: Young people have an important role to play in South Oxfordshire. There are 15,500 young people aged between 10-19 living in the district with over 2,500 people aged between 10–19 living in Didcot alone¹.

In museums: Children and their families are a significant audience for museums across the South East. Children and young people are the museum visitors, staff, trustees and volunteers of the future. It is important for museums to balance consideration of the safety of children and vulnerable people with the need to be welcoming and accessible to them.²

The legal position: For legal purposes, someone is a child until their 18th birthday. Children are the legal responsibility of their parents and carers even when they are not present².

At Didcot Railway Centre: children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. Applications from members under 18 (including family members) must be signed by the applicant's parent or guardian certifying that they will be responsible for the young member conforming with the GWS's rules and regulations. Young volunteers under the age of 16 must be a member of the GWS Young Volunteers. 16 is also the minimum age for unaccompanied footplate rides.

The Law Commission's³ broad definition of a vulnerable person is someone of 16 years or over who:

- is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and
- who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable people who are visiting or working at Didcot Railway Centre.

Particular provisions governing children's employment at Didcot Railway Centre are at Appendix A and particular provisions governing young volunteers at Didcot Railway Centre are at Appendix B.

¹ South Oxfordshire Young Peoples' Strategy, 2006 - 2009

² MLA In Brief, Safeguarding children in museums, March 2007

³ Department for Constitutional Affairs, Legal Policy, Mental Capacity, Public Law protection for people at risk

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The policy

Didcot Railway Centre welcomes visitors of all ages and abilities, and we pledge to treat everyone with respect. We aim to provide a healthy and safe environment for all our staff, volunteers and visitors, including children and vulnerable people. Their wellbeing is considered as part of our health and safety management process. We will also do all we can to protect children and vulnerable people from physical, emotional, or sexual abuse to the best of our ability whilst they are on our premises or in our charge. We aim to ensure that volunteers and paid staff are not allowed to get into a one-to-one situation with any child.

Children and vulnerable people visit in family groups, with carers or in school groups with a responsible adult. Although the primary responsibility for their care rests with their parent or other responsible adult, Didcot Railway Centre seeks to ensure that its activities and policies also afford as much protection as is reasonably practicable.

We will do this by:

- Treating children and vulnerable people with dignity and respect.
- Ensuring that our staff and volunteers are selected, trained, supervised, supported and protected.
- Requiring our staff and volunteers to be good role models and not using offensive language or making sexually suggestive comments. Failure to maintain appropriate standards may be dealt with using the disciplinary procedure.
- Complying with legal requirements for the employment of young people under 18.
- Providing clear procedures for parents, guardians, supervising adults and children to voice their concerns if they feel unsure or unhappy about anything.

Operating procedures

The policy is supported by the following procedures that minimise the opportunity for abuse:

- We work in an open environment, avoiding unobserved secluded locations or situations.
- We will only admit children under 12 to the Centre with an adult and require that they shall be supervised at all times.
- We do not permit children to participate in any activity without the consent of their parents, guardian or teacher.
- We will carry out first aid treatment with more than one adult present wherever possible 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 person.
- We shall always have a teacher or supervising adult and one other adult in the group to lead guided tours for groups of children.
- We encourage parents to get out of carriages before their child to help the child down. Our staff shall not touch a child unless it is in clear view of the parent or guardian, who can see that there is no inappropriate behaviour, or in an emergency when the child may be at risk of harming him or herself (see Appendix C for more detailed restraint procedure).
- Any member of staff or volunteer finding an unsupervised child must not physically touch the child, if possible, and must seek another colleague to help as soon as possible. If any member of staff or volunteer is approached by a lost child, they should keep the child with them and notify the Duty Manager or Manager of the Day

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as soon as possible. The procedures for dealing with lost and found children are at Appendix C.

- We will take all concerns and allegations of abuse seriously and ensure that we respond promptly and appropriately. We may refer incidents to children's services and, when necessary, the police.
- When children under 12 are asked to pose for publicity photographs, we will ensure that we ask their parents or guardians for permission.
- We carry out Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks as necessary, including, the education team, specific children's characters (eg Santa, Fat Controller) and supervisors of young volunteers. We require our entertainers to be CRB checked.
- For work experience students we will encourage members who are placement supervisors to put their names forward for the STEM Ambassadors⁴ scheme.
- We will ensure our staff are aware of this policy and we brief them on it and on good practice in respect of children and vulnerable people in training sessions for operating staff, event helpers and guides.
- We have designated our Chairman as responsible for child protection issues and for ensuring that child protection issues are taken seriously and any incidents or suspected incidents are thoroughly investigated and appropriate action taken.

We avoid the following unacceptable practices both for the protection of children and vulnerable people, and the safeguarding of our own staff and volunteers:

- Spending excessive time with individual unescorted children and vulnerable people.
- Visiting secluded places around the Centre or being in a vehicle such a locomotive footplate or carriage compartments with an individual child without their parent, guardian or teacher being present.
- Taking children to their home or an adult's, or in a private vehicle, other than in a group.
- Engaging in rough play or games of physical contact.
- Allowing children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Being with an individual child in a toilet or shower.

This policy was approved by Council on 13th April 2010.

Ann Middleton
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⁴ STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Network) Ambassadors are everyday people from real working backgrounds who volunteer their time for free to act as inspiring role models to young people (www.stemnet.org.uk)

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Appendix A – employment of children at Didcot Railway Centre

Children aged 13/14

Term Time

Children in this age group may work up to 12 hours per week

Mon-Fri 2 hours per day but not during school times

Saturday 5 hours, must have a break of 1 hour if working over 4 hours

Sunday 2 hours maximum on any Sunday

School Holidays

May work up to 5 hours per day and up to 25 hours per week, must have a break of 1 hour if working over 4 hours

Children aged 15/16

Term Time

Children may work up to 12 hours per week

Mon- Fri 2 hours per week and not during school hours

Saturday 8 hours, must have a break of 1 hour if working over 4 hours

Sunday 2 hours maximum

School Holidays

May work up to 7 hours per day and up to 35 hours per week, must have a break of 1 hour if working over 4 hours

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Appendix B – young volunteers at Didcot Railway Centre

The GWS complies with the 'Child Protection Principles for Employers involved in Work Experience' as provided by Oxfordshire Education Business Partnership.

The Young Volunteers programme is well structured, effectively supervised and provides fun, learning and recorded achievement for its members.

Young people may join Young Volunteers when they are 12 years of age (Year 7 at school) and must be members of the Great Western Society.

Young members under the school leaving age must complete an information and agreement form together with their parents and the Society to allow them to take part in voluntary work at Didcot Railway Centre.

It is a requirement that supervisors of Young Volunteers should be STEM Ambassadors or be CRB checked.

The programme comprises monthly day visits and for older members work experience with either a restoration group or one of the Didcot Railway Centre visitor activities.

No events requiring overnight accommodation are to be included in the Young Volunteers programme.

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Appendix C – detailed actions

Restraint procedure

We will only use physical restraint to prevent a child or vulnerable person from harming him or herself, or others, or from damaging property. All incidents where physical force is used by staff shall be reported using our normal incident reporting procedures. Reports shall include: why the use of force was deemed necessary; all steps taken to diffuse the situation and resolve it without force; the nature of the force used; and the child's response and the outcome of the incident. The parents of the child shall be informed, and their response recorded with the incident report.

Lost children

If a child is lost, the Duty Manager or Manager of the Day (DM/MoD), will note details of the child (e.g. name, age, height, clothing, where last seen) and will arrange for a calm, thorough search of the Railway Centre. If the child is not found, the Duty Manager will contact the Police and the Chairman. The Duty Manager or Manager of the Day will complete the Incident Report Form in the normal way.

Found children

Anyone finding a child should contact the Duty Manager or Manager of the Day (DM/MoD) without delay.

If a child is found, the Duty Manager or Manager of the Day (DM/MoD), or the person they have delegated to deal, should crouch down to the child's height, show them their name badge and tell them that they work at Didcot Railway Centre. The DM/MoD should take the child's name, address and telephone number if possible; giving the child time to respond as the child may be extremely distressed. The DM/MoD must not physically touch the child if possible and must seek another colleague to help as soon as possible. If the child does not give any details, the DM/MoD must call the Police.

The DM/MoD, or the person they have delegated to deal with the situation, may take the child around the Centre to look for the parents provided there is at least one colleague with the child at all times, preferably including the person who made the initial contact to avoid further distress to the child. The child must never be left alone nor should the DM/MoD or colleague be alone with the child at any time. The DM/MoD must ensure care is taken to make appropriate public address announcements, for example, asking the parent to contact a member of staff and not making any reference to the child. If the parents are found, the DM/MoD must ask for identification and not release children to anyone under the age of 16. The Duty Manager or Manager of the Day will complete the Incident Report Form in the normal way.