

Procedures for children visiting the Guardian Foundation for use by all staff

This policy lays out procedures for dealing with children under 16 and school groups visiting the Behind the Headlines Education Centre and the Guardian Foundation's code of conduct when working with young people and vulnerable adults.

School groups are as welcome as any other visitors to the Guardian. However, there are certain issues in regard to children, their safety and security as well as the maintenance of the building, which all staff should be aware of and adhere to.

School Groups

Teachers are in *loco parentis* (in place of parents), meaning that they are responsible for the safety of all of their students while at school and off site, on an educational visit. They therefore have a legal obligation to take action where students are lost, at risk or unwell.

a. Communicating with school groups

If you need to communicate with a school group for any reason, this should **always** be done through the teacher. The teachers are in charge of their class in terms of instructions and it is important for children to receive clear instructions from an adult they know. Communicate with teachers in the same way as with other visitors: quietly, calmly and politely.

Except in emergencies or where children are separated from their teacher, it shouldn't be necessary to communicate directly with the group at all. Please leave this to the teacher and communicate only with them.

b. Noise levels

It is not usually possible for school groups to be just as quiet as adult visitors. Both teachers and pupils are used to higher noise levels at school. In addition, children are often very excited on days out and can be a bit louder than usual. For this reason teachers will need to raise their voices every so often to get the group organised. In addition, school groups may temporarily inconvenience regular staff (for example, when using the main block of toilets. These practices, within reason, need to be treated with tolerance.)

c. Individual or small groups of children

It is not advisable to be in any room (Education Centre / Scott Room) with a child or small group of children on your own. You should open the door and get another member of staff if at all possible. If the child or children have wandered into an area they are not supposed to be in, act cautiously, ask them to leave and try to get another member of staff to go with you to escort them to the rest of their group. **There should be no physical contact with children (except possibly holding hands for very young children in distress).**

Medical Problems and Emergencies

- a. Most medical problems and injuries are not severe and can be solved by the group's teacher.
- b. If a teacher asks for medical help, the first thing to do is to contact one of the designated first aiders (or front of house security team or Margaret Holborn, who are first-aiders). See attached checklist for telephone numbers.
- c. If there is a medical emergency, you should also ring Security on 34105/6 to request an ambulance. Security can also help to locate a first aider who should be available for any serious emergency first aid where a child has lost consciousness or is seriously ill.
- d. First aiders should take appropriate action, but should be careful not to exceed the limits of their expertise, and should bear in mind that the teacher is ultimately responsible for the welfare of the child.
- e. Injuries sustained, as the result of accidents on Guardian premises should **always** be recorded. An accident report must be completed in the event of an accident. The accident book is kept by Security on Level 1. An accident/dangerous occurrence form must also be completed, a copy of the form can also be found on Spike, GNM's intranet. The accident/dangerous occurrence form must be forwarded to Margaret Holborn and to GNM's Head of Workplace Management at the earliest opportunity.

Evacuation

In the event of an evacuation, school groups will evacuate from the nearest exit and go to the assembly point on the other side of the bridge on York Way. Teachers will be briefed about this on their arrival at the Education Centre. They will be instructed to make their best effort to gather their group together before evacuating.

Education Centre staff will liaise with the designated Fire Warden, who will be able to give information to teachers/group leaders on:

- locating any separated members of their group
- anything known about the likely duration of the evacuation
- when it is safe to go back into the Education Centre

Lost children

The lost persons' point for all visitors is Reception. If a teacher reports a child lost, education staff will help group leaders look for the child moving outwards from the location of the group when last seen. If the child is not found in this initial sweep, the approached member of staff should take a description of the missing child and inform Security and Reception. If a child is missing for more than 5 minutes then, a search should be made of all offices and floors by security and Education Centre staff. If the child has not been found within 15 minutes and all possible searches and attempts at contact have been made the police will need to be notified.

Found children

If a member of staff finds a young child who is lost or separated from his/her group, they should **stay with the child**. They should find out if the child is with a school or with his/her family, and first of all attempt to find the family or school group in the immediate area. If the family or group are not in the immediate area, then the child should be taken to the reception desk. **While accompanying a child, Education Centre staff should never take the child anywhere out of public view.** Wherever possible, two members of staff should accompany the child until handing him/her over to a parent, guardian or teacher that the child recognises. **Physical contact with children is inappropriate** (except possibly holding hands for very young children in distress).

Children from School Groups leaving the building

During term time Monday to Friday, children should not be allowed to leave the building unaccompanied; staff should assume that they are part of a school group. If a child or children are leaving the building, they need to be politely questioned and the group leader contacted.

Unaccompanied Children

School groups should be supervised at all times by their teacher. However, if a school is not supervising children a teacher should be located, politely informed and asked to ensure supervision of their class. Unaccompanied children of whatever age, who are causing a nuisance (e.g. by shouting, running, climbing or attempting to access staff-only areas) should be asked in the first instance to stop, and if refuse dealt with by security. **In potentially confrontational situations, physical contact should always be avoided.**

Bad Behaviour

It is the responsibility of teachers and parents to ensure that children do not behave in disruptive ways that disturb members of staff. Raised voices and excitable behaviour are

inevitable for children on a day out, and children can sometimes be less than completely aware of the needs of staff when using facilities like toilets.

Some behaviour is unacceptable, and Education Centre staff should talk to teachers where children's behaviour is likely to cause danger to themselves, the public, or staff, or damage to any property. This might include the following:

- children are deliberately or maliciously attempting to disturb staff or visitors
- children are attempting to enter staff-only areas.
- children are abusing facilities such as toilets
- children are smoking on the premises
- children are fighting or running in public areas
- children are dropping litter.

In all such circumstances, Education Centre staff should use teachers or parents as their first point of contact. Any direct intervention by any member of staff should be done **entirely verbally**, avoiding strong confrontation or any physical contact. If children are confrontational, security should be called.

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