

CHILD PROTECTION

NAReS recommends the following as guidance to good practice in regard to relationship between adults and children and young persons under 18.

Good Practice

All members of the Society should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour towards children in order to protect both the child and themselves against any allegations of wrongdoing.

The following is a set of guidelines that should be followed when dealing with any children attending or taking part in any event who are not your offspring or ward.

- Always work in an open environment.
- Treat all children equally and with respect for their dignity.
- Maintain an appropriate distance.

Any physical contact required during an event either on the battlefield or on the L.H.E (living history exhibit) should be performed safely and with only the appropriate contact ensuring the safety of the child at all times. If physical contact is impossible to avoid because of an activity (e.g. trying on armour), the nature of the contact should be explained to and agreed by the participant before it takes place.

Always obtain the consent of the responsible adult to any training activities, where appropriate, in which the child wishes to take part. Do not encourage children to do anything they do not wish to do.

Practice to be Avoided

The following should be avoided except in a case of emergency. If any of these situations is unavoidable the consent of the responsible adult should be sought beforehand, otherwise a responsible Society Officer should be consulted.

- Spending time with a child alone and away from others.
- Taking a child alone to your tent or living structure.

Practices Never to be Sanctioned

- Engaging in rough physical or sexually provocative games.
- Sharing a sleeping space with a child without the knowledge and consent
- Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Making sexually suggestive remarks to a child, even in play. Remember that someone else may misinterpret your words or actions however well intentioned.
- Allowing allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or doing things of a personal nature for a child that they can do for themselves.

If any of the following occur they should be reported to the responsible adult or Society Officer immediately:

- If a child is accidentally injured, physical contact may be necessary to prevent children from hurting themselves. The nature of the contact which has taken place should be explained to the responsible adult. Mobility assistance may need to be provided to children with a physical disability. Members of the Society may provide such assistance as appropriate with the knowledge and consent of the responsible adult and the consent of the child. The exception should be if the situation is an emergency when the child would be in danger if help were not forthcoming.
- If a child is unduly distressed.

Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

It **is not** the responsibility of any Society member to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place.

It **is** the responsibility of any member of the Society to act on any concerns through contact with the responsible adult.

Action on Concerns

If, following consideration, an allegation is about Unsanctioned Practices (see above) i.e. not following the guidelines set out in this policy, appropriate officers of the Society will deal with the issue.

Suspected abuse - Any suspicion should be reported to a Senior Society Officer as soon as possible. The Society Officer should take any necessary step to ensure the safety of the child. Social Services or the Police should be informed as appropriate.

Confidentiality - every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be disseminated on a need to know basis

Bullying

If bullying is suspected or witnessed then the responsible adult should be informed. The Society will leave the course of action to be taken up to the responsible adults concerned.

Photographs

Never publish a photograph of a child without the knowledge and consent of the responsible adult.

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