

The Moray Society (Elgin Museum)

Protecting Children and Vulnerable Groups Policy (including Learning and Outreach Policy) 2025

Elgin Museum is committed to safeguarding children and other vulnerable groups, whether they visit with a school group, for an organised activity, with parent/guardian or carer, through another organisation (such as Cubs or Brownies) or in any other capacity.

1. Protecting Children and Vulnerable Groups Policy

For the purpose of this policy, PVG Scheme Records, PVG Scheme Record Updates, Standard and Enhanced disclosures will be referred to as Disclosure Records.¹ The Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020 came into effect on 1st April 2025.

The Moray Society aims to ensure that all children and protected adults are kept safe from harm while they are with staff or volunteers in this organisation. In order to achieve this, we will ensure our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised.

Selection

- All applicants to our organisation will complete an application form. The applicant also signs the volunteer agreement which outlines the commitment of the museum and the applicant to one another and the expectations that apply to each of the parties. This includes appropriate behaviour on the part of the volunteer.
- Short listed applicants for both voluntary and paid positions will be asked to attend an interview.
- Short listed applicants for paid employment will be asked to provide references and these will always be taken up prior to confirmation of an appointment.

The job description for staff and volunteers will be assessed by the Convenor of the Elgin Museum Management Committee (EMMC) who will decide if the role is regulated (as defined in the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020) and thus requires disclosure.² For a paid position, the successful applicant will be offered the post subject to a PVG Disclosure Certificate being issued before the appointment is confirmed. Volunteers requiring disclosure as determined above, will need to have a certificate issued before carrying out PVG designated duties. The only exceptions are the Learning & Outreach volunteers who applied for a PVG prior to 30 Jun 2025 and who are waiting for a certificate to be issued. The Moray Society's Secure Handling of Disclosure Information Guidance and Policy describes how applicants' personal data will be handled and stored.

¹ PVG <https://mygov.scot/pvg-scheme>

² Disclosure <https://mygov.scot/disclosure-types>

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Training

Successful applicants for regulated roles will receive induction training which will include an overview of the organisation to ensure that they know its purpose, values, services and structure. Relevant training and support will be provided on an ongoing basis and will cover information about their role, and opportunities for practising skills needed for work. Training on specific areas such as health and safety procedures, identifying and reporting abuse, and confidentiality will be given as a priority to new staff and volunteers and will be regularly reviewed.

Supervision

Paid employees will attend an annual appraisal, where their performance, skills, motivation and expectations will be discussed. Annual reviews will be minuted and copies made available to the member of staff. All paid staff will have a designated supervisor who will provide regular feedback and support in conjunction with their line manager if this is not the same person. Disciplinary procedures for employees are outlined in their contract. There is no appraisal procedure for volunteers due to insufficient resources. The post of Volunteer Mentor is currently held by Stephanie Horner and she is the first port of call for a volunteer with a grievance or against whom a grievance has been raised. If this post is vacant, a named member of the Moray Society Board will carry out the Volunteer Mentor's duties.

Named Person

The Convenor of the EMMC is the designated Named Person responsible for the management of the Protection of Vulnerable Persons Scheme. Any evidence or reasonable suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult has been physically, sexually or emotionally abused on the Elgin Museum Site must be reported to the Named Person. If the Named person is unavailable, the incident must be reported to the Learning and Outreach Officer (if in post) or to the Vice-President of the Moray Society, Elgin Museum (see page 4; paragraph 2).

Reporting Abuse

The Moray Society understands that in addition to making a referral (a written report) to Disclosure Scotland, child protection issues concerning workers (paid/unpaid), children and young people must always be referred to the child protection agencies (i.e., social work and/or police) for appropriate investigation. Any issues of a criminal nature will be reported to the police.

The Moray Society will ensure that all staff and volunteers involved in recruitment, training and supervision, are aware of this policy and have received appropriate training and support to ensure its full implementation.

Legal issues

It is an offence for an individual who is barred to undertake the type of regulated work from which they are barred.

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It is an offence for an organisation to offer regulated work to someone who is barred or fail to remove a person from regulated work if they have been notified that they are barred.

It is an offence for an organisation not to refer an individual to Disclosure Scotland where the grounds have been met.

Associated Legislation

Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020

2. Learning and Outreach Policy

Statement of Purpose

The Moray Society, a membership organisation, owns and manages the Elgin Museum. The purpose of Elgin Museum is to conserve and display the objects and archive in its care, to act as a focus for learning and enjoyment for all and to support the appreciation of the natural history, culture and heritage of Moray and to maintain the buildings in its ownership.

The Learning and Outreach Policy aims to support the Museum's Forward Plan and main policy documents by endeavouring to safeguard the collections, to make them accessible for study and enjoyment and to preserve them for future generations. It seeks to embed the Museum's core educational role and its commitment to education and learning.

Elgin Museum is committed to ensuring physical and intellectual access to its collections through research, teaching, display, programmes of education and events for a wide variety of audiences, interpretation and publications both in print and electronically. It is committed to promoting and advancing knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the history and culture of Elgin and the wider community of Moray by supporting learning and enjoyment of the objects, buildings, archives and knowledge in our care.

Education lies at the centre of all the Museum's activities. Elgin Museum aims to support lifelong learning through involvement with schools, colleges, universities and other education groups and organisations in the ways set out in the Forward Plan 2026. The implementation of the Learning and Outreach Policy is a shared responsibility of all staff and volunteers in the Museum, and the Museum is committed to providing training and support to deliver education and enjoyment to all.

Elgin Museum will endeavour to consider the wide range of interests, needs and learning styles of the very broad variety of visitors who access the collections and information about them. Learning and Outreach sessions will be offered to all schools in the local area and within Moray generally, led by a qualified teacher or a member of the Museum staff with the relevant experience and training. Object Handling boxes focussed on our collections will also be made available for a variety of subjects linked to the Curriculum for Excellence areas of study. The Museum will also develop a range of educational resources that can be accessed by schools and other interested groups to support learning across the curriculum. Elgin Museum will work in partnership with other providers of life-long learning to develop and expand the range of provision for adults through formal and informal educational opportunities including outreach where appropriate, temporary exhibitions and permanent collections.

Membership of the Moray Society includes categories for families and Junior /Young Marvel members. All details of children and young people will be kept in compliance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) including the Elgin Museum Photographic policy and the Elgin Museum (The Moray Society) Photo/Video

Consent Form. Staff and volunteers should ensure that consent is given by parent/guardian before any photo or video is taken.

All staff, paid and voluntary, must be aware of the current Health and Safety Policy, First Aid and Risk Assessment, with particular regard to children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Legal context

The museum and its staff, both paid and voluntary, operate within a clear legal framework and with reference to other relevant government guidelines.

In particular:

- The Children Act 2004 which establishes clear requirements and guidance relating to the protection of children, their welfare and developmental needs.
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which sets out the necessity of all children having access to basic human rights.
- The Protection of Children Act 1999, a document that provides a framework for employers to check the suitability of employees seeking to work with children.
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007.
- General Data Protection Regulation 2018.
- Data Protection Act 2018.
- The Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020

All staff and volunteers attend a general training session during their induction which includes indicators of appropriate behaviour when working in the Museum as set out in the Child Protection Procedures document appended to this policy. Any staff member or volunteer who may be working alone with young or vulnerable people, or who is in a regulated role, will undergo vetting by Volunteer Scotland. This disclosure process will be administered by the Convenor of the EMMC as lead signatory, supported by the Volunteer Mentor as an additional signatory.

If any staff member or volunteer feels that a Child Protection issue has arisen, they have a duty of care to raise the matter with the Named Person within the Museum (see page 2; paragraph 2) and, in the case of visiting school groups, the class teacher responsible for the group. This named person will have the support of the EMMC and the Board of the Moray Society. Should the named person be unavailable, the matter should be raised in the first instance with the Learning and Outreach Officer, if in post, or The Moray Society Vice-President.

To safeguard Museum staff and visitors, no unaccompanied children under the age of 16 will be allowed entry unless for a pre-arranged event or activity organised by the Learning and Outreach Coordinator and/or Learning and Outreach Activities Volunteers. It is expected that all children under the age of 16 will be accompanied by teaching staff, recognised group organisers, a parent/guardian or other responsible adult over the age of 16. All family events will generally be drop in and not drop off, even though such events will be run by staff and/or volunteers who hold disclosure certificates.

The GDPR defines personal data as any information related to an identified or identifiable natural person, including data can be assigned to a person such as a telephone number. There are 7 key principles, Lawfulness, fairness and transparency; Purpose limitation; Data minimisation; Accuracy; Storage limitation; Integrity and confidentiality (security) and Accountability. For further information see GDPR policy and <https://www.mygov.scot/sharing-personal-information>

3. Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Procedures

3.1 Statement of Intent

The Board of The Moray Society (TMS) will endeavour to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected from harm while they visit our properties. We will do this by:

- Making sure our staff are carefully selected and that staff or volunteers in regulated roles will be PVG checked prior to carrying out that role.
 - See <https://www.disclosure.gov.scot> for further details of regulated roles.
- Providing adequate training for staff in issues of child protection.
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of any child or vulnerable adult in contact with the Moray Society.
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure that no child or vulnerable adult in contact with the Moray Society is physically, emotionally or sexually abused.
- Taking all reasonable steps to prevent any staff member, persons working for us or member of the public from putting any child or vulnerable adult in a situation where there is an unreasonable risk to their health and safety.
- Taking all reasonable steps to prevent any staff member, persons working for us or member of the public from physically, emotionally or sexually abusing any child or vulnerable adult.
- Reporting to the designated Named Person any evidence or reasonable suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult has been physically, emotionally or sexually abused in contact with the Moray Society.
- Implementing this policy in conjunction with our Health and Safety guidelines.
- Ensuring any personal details are held in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation.

3.2 Definitions of abuse

Abuse is when a child or vulnerable adult is intentionally harmed by another adult or child – it can be over a period of time but can also be a one-off action. It can be physical, sexual or emotional and it can happen in person or online. It can also be a lack of love, care and attention – this is neglect.

Further information can be found at:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/help-from-social-services-and-charities/abuse-and-neglect-vulnerable-adults/>

3.3 Safety and welfare guidelines for children and vulnerable adults.

These guidelines apply to:

- Any situation involving children and young people up to and including age 16, whether or not accompanied by adults over the age of 16. TMS also recognises that vulnerable people of any age will benefit from similar safeguards therefore, whenever the guidelines refer to children, this broader meaning applies.

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- All staff, contractors and consultants working in or on the Elgin Museum. In the case of contractors and consultants it is incumbent upon the Convenor of the EMMC to ensure that they are made aware of these guidelines.

3.3.1 General Duties of all Moray Society Staff and Volunteers in regard to the safety and welfare of children and other vulnerable people:

- To take all reasonable steps to protect from hazards.
- To take appropriate action if an accident occurs.
- To strictly observe the code of behaviour given here.
- To take all reasonable steps to prevent abuse of children and vulnerable adults in contact with the Elgin Museum.
- To report any incident or suspicion of abuse.
- To be mindful of GDPR requirements when dealing with personal data of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

3.3.2 Code of Behaviour for all the Moray Society Staff and Volunteers

All people working with TMS must observe the following requirements where children, young people or similarly vulnerable people are concerned, at all times.

You should always:

- Uphold the spirit and specific provisions of the Statement of Policy and these Guidelines.
- Do your best to behave in an open and friendly manner but avoid being over-familiar in word or action.
- In so far as possible, avoid situations in which you are alone with children or similarly vulnerable people. If necessary, move to a place where you can both be seen by other colleagues or other adults.
- If a child is hurt or distressed, do your best to comfort or reassure them without compromising their dignity or doing anything to discredit your own behaviour.
- Try to avoid physical contact or behaviour that could be unwelcome or misconstrued. Physical touch should only be in response to a child's need and should respect their age and individual stage of development. It may be appropriate to hold a child's hand, to put a comforting arm around their shoulder. However, you should first explain what you have in mind and ask directly if that is what they want. Otherwise, it may be unwelcome or misinterpreted.
- Where you have to rely on your own judgment, always treat the child's welfare as paramount.
- Be aware of Health and Safety requirements in the policy and risk assessment at all times. For example, awareness of hazardous substances, reckless physical behaviour, sharp implements (scissors, antlers etc), stairs and hot liquids.

You have a strict duty never to subject any child or vulnerable adult to any form of harm or abuse. Failure to honour this will be treated as gross misconduct. Forms of unacceptable behaviour include:

- Causing distress to a child by shouting at them or calling them derogatory names.
- Slapping a child.
- Holding a child in such a way that it causes pain.
- Shaking a child.
- Physically restraining a child to protect them from harming themselves or others should only be carried out by accompanying adults over the age of 16 or anyone who is currently trained in restraint techniques for children.
- Taking part in horseplay or rough games.
- Allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching of any kind.
- Doing things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves or that an accompanying adult can do for them. Including going to the toilet with a child unless another adult is present.
- Allowing or engaging in sexually suggestive behaviour within a child's sight or hearing or making suggestive remarks to or within earshot of a child.
- Showing anything to a child that could be construed as pornographic.
- Seeking or agreeing to meet children anywhere beyond normal visitor areas of The Moray Society property without the full prior knowledge and agreement of their parents or guardians.
- Accessing personal data without good cause or authorisation.

Supporting the Policy

Confidentiality

We recognise that it is important for us all to feel that any information about alleged or actual child abuse will only be disclosed where it is in the best interests of the child to do so. Furthermore, we have a responsibility to protect the identity of anyone reporting suspected or actual abuse. No such disclosure will be made without careful consultation at directorate level.

The role of the designated Named Person

The designated name person is the Convenor of the Elgin Museum Management Committee.

The role in this context is twofold: to serve as a centre for information and guidance on child welfare issues and to support managers and staff in dealing with any suggestion of misconduct or need for expert advice.

Disseminating information about this policy and procedure

Everyone working or applying to work for TMS is to be made aware of our policy for the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. Furthermore, these guidelines are being issued to all staff and other people who are likely to have contact with children and vulnerable adults as part of their work with us.

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Review

The Protecting Children and Vulnerable Groups Policy including Learning and Outreach Policy and associated documents will be reviewed annually to ensure that they remain up to date, relevant and that it takes advantage of any changes, developments and initiatives launched by other interested groups.

History: original policy approved 2023; updated 2025 to reflect changes to Disclosure (Scotland) regulations

Agreed EMMC: 19/5/2025

Agreed MSB: 26/5/2025

Date for next review: not more than 12 months (26/5/2026)