

MORLAN CENTRE

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Morlan Centre organises various events and activities during the course of a year for people of all ages and from all sectors of the community, some of which, such as the weekly youth club, are aimed at children or young people, and most of which are run by volunteers.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Morlan Centre believes that every child and young person has the right to feel safe and respected, and it will take every reasonable step to ensure the happiness, safety and well-being of every child and young person participating in any events and activities that Morlan has organised for them.

Morlan agrees with children and young people's rights as noted in the statements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 1989 Children Act. To this end children and young people participating in these events and activities will have the right to expect that every adult responsible for them will protect them from all harm.

This Child Protection Policy applies to all staff and volunteers involved in these events and activities and will be revised and updated as necessary.

2. POLICY AIM

The aim of this Policy is to promote good practice to ensure children and young people are protected during activities and events organised by Morlan for them, and to allow all staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

3. STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

All staff and volunteers who are involved in any activity or event arranged by Morlan for children and young people will undergo a Disclosure Check with the Criminal Records Bureau. Morlan will ensure that all staff and volunteers who apply for a Disclosure Check receive a copy of this Policy.

If Morlan arranges any activity which brings in other people to work with the children or young people, the Centre will ensure that those people have undergone Disclosure Checks.

4. PARENTAL CONSENT

For long-term activities, such as the Youth Club, written parental consent will be obtained to act *in loco parentis*.

If photographs of children and young people participating in Morlan activities and events are taken, written permission from parents will be obtained before any photographic material is used in the public domain

5. GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

We advise that any staff and volunteers involved in Morlan activities and events that are aimed at children and young people:

- act as a good role model and treat all children and young people with respect and dignity
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given
- always work in an open environment and avoid private or unobserved situations
- only engage in physical contact when necessary
- avoid bringing a child or young person to the event/activity or taking them home afterwards.

In addition, you should never:

- reduce a child or young person to tears as a form of control
- engage in any physically rough or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child or young person even in fun
- allow allegations made by a child or young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- invite or allow any of the children or young people to your home unsupervised.

5. RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Morlan, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place, but there is a responsibility to act on any concerns. Staff or volunteers should follow these guidelines in such a situation.

Suspicious

- If you are worried about a child's change of behaviour or any signs of inexplicable physical abuse, you should keep a confidential record of this in an Incidents Book.
- If you **suspect** that a child is being abused, then you should discuss these suspicions with the parent/carer where possible, seeking an explanation for any injury or unusual behaviour. You should record the parent's/carer's responses and explanations after the discussion, together with any further steps taken. If you suspect the parent/carer is actually the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to another person in authority.
- If you **strongly believe** that a child is being abused, you should contact the Duty Officer of the local Area Office of the Social Services Department and/or the Police or the NSPCC.
- Ensure all records are kept securely and in locked situations, in line with data protection laws.
- Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

Allegations

- If a complaint or allegation of abuse is made against a member of Morlan staff or a volunteer, Morlan will seek advice from the relevant authority and will follow the procedures outlined by that authority.

6. ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

A First Aid Box is located in the Coffee Bar kitchen. Please notify Morlan's Manager of any accident. All accidents and injuries should be recorded in the Accident Book which is located in the Manager's office.

Any serious accident will be investigated, so no changes should be made to the site of the accident, except for safety reasons, until authorisation to do so is given by a responsible person.

If a child or young person arrives at a Morlan activity with an obvious physical injury you should also record the injury in the accident book and note that the injury was not sustained whilst at Morlan.