

Annex A - The Morris Ring

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY GUIDELINES

These Child Protection Policy Guidelines are provided in response to a number of enquiries for advice - there is no intention to raise spectres of doom but simply to raise awareness and hopefully reassure that there is still a place for common sense.

This policy has been adapted from the policy document drafted by Bev and Ray Langton, (who organise a number of children's festivals throughout the country) on behalf of the Association of Festival Organisers. .

The Morris Ring cannot be held responsible for the policies or actions of member or associate sides of the Morris Ring or the actions of individual members of such sides. The Morris Ring is an umbrella organization whose member / associate sides are autonomous groups. What follows are simply guidelines, suggestions of 'good practice', and must be interpreted in this light. They do not purport to be a definitive statement of law and it remains a matter for individuals or sides to seek professional guidance in any case of doubt as to appropriate steps to be taken.

Notes: This guidance is divided into three sections:

1. Situations where children and young people are members of the side and attending practice sessions and public performances.
2. Situations where children and young people are members of the side and attending residential events - e.g. Ring Meetings or Ales.
3. Situations where children and young people are attending workshops or other events where Morris dancers come into contact with unsupervised children.

Situation 1

Suggestions:

At any Morris event (including practices) any child under the age of 8 must be under the direct supervision of

- His parent/ guardian - or
- a responsible adult who is either a direct blood relative or
- an appropriate (police-checked) named individual adult

Where the responsible adult is not the parent / guardian the side must be satisfied that the parent(s)/guardian(s) are aware of the nature of the event and happy with the planned level of supervision¹.

At any Morris event (including practices) any child under the age of 16 should be the responsibility (in terms of safety AND behaviour) of

- His parent/ guardian - or
- a responsible adult who is either a direct blood relative or
- an appropriate(police-checked) named individual adult

Where the responsible adult is not the parent / guardian the side must be satisfied that the parent(s)/guardian(s) are aware of the nature of the event and happy with the planned level of supervision

Situation 2

Where the event involves overnight accommodation and / or changing and / or washing /showering facilities additional safeguards might be necessary. *The basic FACT is that no minor must ever be alone with only one other non-relative.*

Situation 3

The attached outline policy was written for use by Morris sides when hosting workshops or instructionals where 'outside' children or young people might be involved.

Electronic copies can be obtained from the Ring Bagman.

¹ Where children join Morris sides as members, this policy should be viewed alongside the approach that it is for the parent or guardian of the child to decide how much unsupervised contact his/her child will have with the side. It is, however, the responsibility of the whole side to be aware of what is, or is not, appropriate under Children and Young Persons Protection Legislation.

THE MORRIS RING CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The policy will need to be amended for use by the individual Morris side, replacing the asterisks with the name of the organisation hosting the event. (i.e. *Each Side will need to amend this policy according to their specific venues, activities and individual programmed events for children.*)

THE SAFE CHILD POLICY

AIM

The Children's Events organisers at ***** will take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of all children within events programmed specifically for children. The organisers of ***** believe that the safety of children is paramount on all occasions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SAFE CHILD POLICY

The ***** is/are committed to protecting children from the following:

HARM

- Injury
- Abduction
- Attack
- Emotional distress

ABUSE

- Verbal
- Physical
- Sexual
- Bullying

EXPOSURE TO INAPPROPRIATE:

- Attitudes
- Language
- Materials
- Actions

Through these objectives the organisers of ***** are committed to ensuring that all possible situations are risk assessed to ascertain the level of risk involved. The organisers of ***** will then endeavour to establish suitable control measures to reduce the risk to acceptable levels. Both artists and stewards must be aware of the risk assessment and control measures in place.

The ***** Safe Child Policy will be accessible to all participants and interested parties for inspection.

PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM HARM AND ABUSE

1. VENUES will have:

- Adequate lighting, heating and ventilation
- Supervised and controlled entry and exit
- Clear boundaries or be appropriately fenced and located away from open water
- Clearly labelled exits and fire exits
- Access to toilets and running water within a reasonable distance
- A *No Smoking* policy during all Children's and Family events
- Suitable furniture for the age range of the children
- Appropriate safety glass, handrails and non slippery floors
- Provision for the regular and safe disposal of rubbish
- Suitable levels of adult supervision at all times

2. ACTIVITIES

- Each activity and event will have a maximum number of children
- Age guidelines will be defined for all activities
- The ***** has a commitment to the equality of opportunity for all children, including those with disabilities, to participate actively within its events

3. ADULT SUPERVISION

Children's events must be arranged and managed by responsible and suitable adults who have relevant qualifications, expertise and experience. The person/s with designated overall responsibility for organising events for children must have a clearly defined role including before, during and after the event.

- People working with children must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- People working with children must be deemed to be medically fit
- The ***** will ensure that appropriate First Aid cover is as close as possible
- All people working with children should know the nearest First Aid point and all emergency procedures
- All people working with children should be fully briefed on all aspects of event safety and child protection issues
- No single adult should be in sole charge of any single child
- All accidents must be recorded on an *Accident Report* form
- Children under 8 years must not be left unattended
- It is inadvisable for children under 8 years to leave the event unless accompanied by a parent or carer
- All artists and stewards must take all possible steps to avoid the inappropriate handling or touching of any child

4. BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT OF CHILDREN

- All artists and stewards must be conversant with procedures for discipline and dealing with uncooperative children
- Corporal punishment (smacking, slapping and shaking) is illegal
- Practices that threaten, frighten or humiliate children must not be used
- Bullying and physical abuse from one child to another, will not be tolerated
- The ***** will not accept disruptive or unruly behaviour from any child which spoils the enjoyment by others

5. LOST CHILDREN

- The organisers of the ***** have a Lost Children Policy which is accessible to all

PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL ABUSE

The Morris Ring is totally committed to protecting all children, of all ages, from sexual abuse by any adult.

This Safe Child Policy has been modelled on the Association of Festival Organisers document with their thanks and it is understood that the AFO's policy has been produced, following detailed research into aspects of *Child Protection and the Prevention of Unsuitable People from Working with Children and Young Persons*.

Documentation consulted for the research included:

- DfES Guidance 0278/2002: Child Protection: Preventing Unsuitable People from Working with Children and Young Persons in the Education Services
- DfES Guidance 0780/2002: Criminal Records Bureau: Managing Demand for Disclosures
- The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000
- Chapter 22 of the HSE The Event Safety Guide
- Out of School Care: Guidance to the National Standards published by OFSTED

The Morris Ring believes that it appears to be neither practically possible nor legally required, for all performers and volunteers working with Children, to be police checked or to have a Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure. *Any Children's events organiser will be required to fulfil these requirements.*

To ensure that children are protected from both sexual and all other types of abuse, the organisers of the ***** reserves the right not to employ in any capacity:

- Any person with a known history of sexual abuse to children
- Any other person that they feel presents a danger or threat to the safety of children

The organisers of the *** will endeavour to take all reasonable steps possible, to ensure that there are no situations where any artist or volunteer steward is working within a situation where they have sole charge and unsupervised access to children.**

If any person reports any incident of unacceptable behaviour towards any child, ***** is committed to taking immediate and appropriate action, to ensure the safety of children within the event.

The organisers of the ***** is totally committed to annually reviewing its Safe Child Policy, to ensure that there is neither complacency nor negligence in its commitment to protecting children from abuse.

PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM EXPOSURE TO INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES, ACTIONS, LANGUAGE AND MATERIALS

The Children's Events organisers at ***** are committed to:

- Booking helpers/performers whose acts have been viewed or who provide credible references
- Ensuring that helpers/performers or stewards do not swear, use lewd actions or make inappropriate references to sexual or illegal activities
- Ensuring that performers/artists and stewards avoid overt criticism or sarcasm to any child
- Providing performers with guidance about the age range of children
- Ensure that all performers and stewards avoid stereotypical attitudes, racist terminology or gender bias

Signatories including Event Organiser and Named Person with responsibility for Children's Events

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The event contact details are as follows:

Children's Events Organiser details are as follows:

Contact details:

Date of police check/CRB Disclosure Certificate

ORGANISATIONS WHICH CAN PROVIDE USEFUL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

DfES: www.dfes.gov.uk
HSE: www.hse.gov.uk
Home Office: www.homeoffice.gov.uk
Kids' Club Network: www.kidsclubs.co.uk
OFSTED: www.ofsted.gov.uk