



RIVERSIDE MINIATURE RAILWAY®

Riverside Miniature Railway Policy for the Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable people who are visiting or volunteering at Riverside Miniature Railway (RMR).

The legal position

For legal purposes, someone is a child until their 18th birthday, however this policy focuses on children 16 years and under. For the purposes of this policy children aged between 16 and 18 are deemed as young adults. Children under the age of 16 years are the legal responsibility of their parents and carers even when they are not present.

The broad definition of a vulnerable person is “someone who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation”.

At RMR we offer family membership for children under the age of 16. The membership states that children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult named in the membership application at all times.

The policy

RMR welcomes visitors of all ages and abilities, and we pledge to treat everyone with respect. We aim to provide a healthy and safe environment for all our volunteers and visitors, including children and vulnerable people. Their wellbeing is considered as part of our health and safety management process. We will also do all we can to protect children and vulnerable people from physical, emotional, or sexual abuse to the best of our ability whilst they are on our premises or in our charge. We aim to ensure that volunteers are not allowed to get into a one-to-one situation with any child.

Children and vulnerable people visit in family groups, with carers or in care groups with a responsible adult. Although the primary responsibility for their care rests with their parent or other responsible adult, RMR seeks to ensure that its activities and policies also afford as much protection as is reasonably practicable.

We will do this by:

- Treating children and vulnerable people with dignity and respect.
- Ensuring that our volunteers are trained, supervised, supported and protected.
- Requiring our staff and volunteers to be good role models and not using offensive language or making sexually suggestive comments. Failure to maintain appropriate standards may be dealt with by expulsion from the club and the possibility of legal action.
- Providing clear procedures for parents, guardians, supervising adults and children to voice their concerns if they feel unsure or unhappy about anything. This can be done by completing a Safeguarding Incident Report form, available from the booking office.

Operating procedures

The policy is supported by the following procedures that minimise the opportunity for abuse:

- We work in an open environment, avoiding unobserved secluded locations or situations.
- We require children to be supervised by a parent/guardian at all times. We require children aged 5 years and under to be accompanied on the train by a parent/guardian. We advise parents/guardians that children under the age of 8 should be accompanied by an adult & that to travel alone, is at the parent/guardians discretion.
- We do not permit children as part of the 'family membership scheme' to participate in any club activity without the consent of their parents or guardian.
- We shall always have a teacher or supervising adult and one other adult in the group to lead visits for groups of school children.
- We encourage parents to help their children board the trains and to disembark carriages before their child to help the child down. Our staff shall not touch a child unless it is in clear view of the parent or guardian, who can see that there is no inappropriate behaviour, or in an extreme emergency when the child may be at risk of harming him or herself.
- Any member of staff or volunteer finding an unsupervised child must not physically touch the child, if possible, and must seek another colleague to help as soon as possible. If any member of staff or volunteer is approached by a lost child, they should keep the child with them and notify the Person in Charge (PIC) for that day as soon as possible. **Please see appendix A**

We will take all concerns and allegations of abuse seriously and ensure that we respond promptly and appropriately. We may refer incidents to Cambridgeshire Local Safeguarding Children Board www.cambslscb.co.uk and where necessary, the police.

- When individual children under 16 are asked to pose for publicity photographs, we will ensure that we ask their parents/guardians for permission in writing.
- During events such as Father Christmas visits, no child shall undertake the visit unaccompanied by a parent or guardian.
- We will ensure our volunteers are aware of this policy and we brief them on it and on good practice in respect of children and vulnerable people in training sessions for operating volunteers.
- We have designated **Michaela Hewlett** as the RMR member responsible for safeguarding issues and for ensuring that these issues are taken seriously and any incidents or suspected incidents are thoroughly investigated and appropriate action taken.

We avoid the following unacceptable practices both for the protection of children and vulnerable people, and the safeguarding of our own staff and volunteers:

- Spending excessive time with individual unescorted children and vulnerable people.
- Visiting secluded places around the site or being in a building such as inside the station with an individual child without their parent, guardian or teacher being present.
- Taking children to their home or an adult's, or in a private vehicle, other than in a group.
- Engaging in rough play or games of physical contact.
- Allowing children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.

This policy was approved by the officers of RMR on Thursday 19th April 2018

This policy be monitored and reviewed biennially.

Signed:

Ivan Hewlett – Chairman

Keith Ford – Vice-chairman

Appendix A – Lost and found children

Lost children

If a child is lost, the Person in Charge (PiC) will note details of the child (e.g. name, age, height, clothing, where last seen) and will arrange for a calm, thorough search of the RMR site

The priority must be to find the child but the (PiC) should also reassure the parent or guardian of the lost child that a search is underway. It may be useful to nominate a member of staff or volunteer to stay with the parent or guardian until the child is found.

If the child is not found, the (PiC) will contact the Police and the RMR Chairman.

Found children

Anyone finding a child should contact the Person in Charge (PiC) without delay.

If a child is found, the PiC, or the person they have delegated to deal, should crouch down to the child's height, show them their name badge and tell them that they work at RMR. The PiC should take the child's name, address and telephone number if possible; giving the child time to respond as the child may be extremely distressed. The PiC must not physically touch the child if possible and must seek another colleague to help as soon as possible.

The PiC, or the person they have delegated to deal with the situation, may take the child around the immediate local area to look for the parent or guardian provided there is at least one colleague with the child at all times, preferably including the person who made the initial contact to avoid further distress to the child. The child must never be left alone nor should the PiC or colleague be alone with the child at any time. If the parents are found, the PiC must ask for identification and should not release children to anyone who appears to be under the age of 16. The PiC will complete the Safeguarding Incident Report Form in the normal way.

If you have immediate concerns about a safeguarding issue you can ring Cambridgeshire Social Services on:

0345 045 5203 (office hours)

01733 234 724 (out of hours)

Or email: MASH.C&F@cambridgeshire.gcsx.gov.uk