



ID Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

This policy is to help the SCA in the UK, Iceland and Ireland address the issues of Child Protection at its public and private events.

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This guide is issued collectively by the Insulae Draconis (ID) officers, with the approval of the SCA Kingdom of Drachenwald.

The same procedures outlined in this document should also be applied when dealing with Vulnerable Adults in the SCA.

1 Introduction

As Society of Creative Anachronism (SCA) events are run on an informal self-help basis and SCA events are not aimed at children, the SCA in the Crown Principality of Insulae Draconis (ID) require that the parents, guardians or carers are responsible and involved in all activities that their children take part in at all times. This includes ensuring appropriate sleeping, changing and care arrangements are organised. However the SCA is family friendly and recognises that children will attend as part of a family (or extended family) group. For this reason, all members should adopt the following guidance and procedures for all SCA-sponsored events.

2 Child Protection Policy Statement

The SCA in ID has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in any ID activity and ensure that they are protected from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. The ID officers will work to ensure the safety and protection of all children involved at all ID events through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by the ID Seneschal and Officers.

All ID events that make provision for children and young people must ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity/orientation , have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All members have a responsibility to report any concerns to the event staff as well as the local Seneschal or ID Seneschal

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989 UK).

3 Policies & Procedures

3.1 Policy and Guidelines

The aim of the Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst attending an ID event.
- All members should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

(a) Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations with children

and encouraging open communication.

- Ensuring that at events, parents/carers should be made responsible for their children's sleeping arrangements.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Treating all young people equally with respect and dignity.
- Always making the welfare of each individual young person a priority.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with participants (e.g. it is not appropriate for members to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to these guidelines. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children. If groups have to be supervised, always ensure parents/members work in pairs.

Practices to be avoided

The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies. If a case arises where these situations are unavoidable (e.g. the child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of an activity), it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge of the event or the child's parents.

Otherwise, avoid:

- Spending time alone with children away from others.
- Taking or dropping off a child to an event.

Practices never to be sanctioned

The following should **never** be sanctioned. You should **never**:

- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching, including rough physical or sexually provocative games.
- Share a room alone with a child or invite/allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.

3.2 Addressing Incidents

3.2.1 Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another member and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- If a child is accidentally hurt. Members may provide such assistance as appropriate with the knowledge and consent of the child and parents/carer. The exception should be if the situation is an emergency where the child would be in danger if help were not forthcoming.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner
- if a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- if a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

3.2.2 Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of each member or participant to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

If an allegations are about Unsanctioned Practices (see above), i.e. not following the guidelines set out in

this policy, appropriate officers of the SCA will deal with the issue.

(a) Concerns about suspected abuse:

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by any member should be reported to the event staff and the Local/ID Seneschal, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The event staff or Local/ID Seneschal will refer the allegation to the social services department, which may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.
- The event staff or Local/ID Seneschal should also notify the relevant officer.
- If the event staff or Local/ID Seneschal is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Kingdom Seneschal or other senior Officer who will refer the allegation to social services.

3.2.3 Action if bullying is suspected

If bullying is suspected or witnessed, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above. The SCA does reserve the right to impose SCA sanctions if necessary.

3.2.3 Confidentiality

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. It is advisable to seek social services' advice on who should approach the alleged abuser. Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure). Only a social worker or police should investigate allegations.

4 Photographs/Videos

Video as a coaching aid or as a record of the fun had at the event: there is no intention to prevent event Officers or members using video equipment at events and practices. However, children and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is part of the event and such films should be handled responsibly. Photographs or videos of children should not be published without the consent of the parents.

5 Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse:

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The child's name, age, date of birth of the child, home address, and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.

Where possible, referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and

the name of the contact that took the referral should be recorded.

Disclaimer

The *ID Child Protection Policy* is based on what is believed to be current good practice. They are not intended to be exhaustive in their content and are open to revision.

These notes are intended for guidance only and may not apply to all circumstances that arise.

The SCA cannot be held responsible for actions of other official bodies, or for the imposition or effect of any legislation/regulation of which it was unaware at the date of issue of this policy.