



Rumburgh Morris Safeguarding Policy

1 Safeguarding Policy Introduction

Everyone who participates in morris dancing is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. Rumburgh Morris has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that its members are provided with the highest possible standard of care.

This policy highlights children and should also apply to all adults, especially the vulnerable groups. The actions taken may differ depending on circumstances.

Rumburgh Morris is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone involved in morris dancing accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of Rumburgh Morris and to allow members to make informed and confident responses to specific safeguarding issues.

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children's Act 1989).

A vulnerable adult is as defined in The Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006).

1.1 Policy Statement

Rumburgh Morris is committed to the following:-

- The welfare of the child is paramount;
- all children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity (notwithstanding constitutional restrictions), should be able to participate in morris dancing in a fun and safe environment;
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings;
- all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately; and



- working in partnership with parents and children is essential for the protection of children.

1.2 Monitor and review the policy and procedures

The implementation of procedures should be regularly monitored and reviewed. The Safeguarding Lead of Rumburgh Morris should regularly report progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements, gaps and areas where changes are required to the Committee. The Safeguarding Lead should be willing to have an enhanced DBS check carried out. The DBS check is a commonplace feature of modern life and it is likely that most sides will have at least one member who has been checked through their work or voluntary activities. Everyone should be made aware who the Safeguarding Lead is.

The policy should be reviewed every three years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation.

2 Promoting Good Practice

2.1 Introduction

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities in morris dancing, everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. **It is therefore NOT the responsibility of participants in Rumburgh Morris to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child,** as explained in section 4.

This section will help you identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.

2.2 Good Practice

Everyone in Rumburgh Morris should adhere to the following principles and action:-

- Rumburgh Morris will always obtain a junior member form completed by the child's parent/guardian before admitting anyone who is under the age of 18 into



the side. The junior member form should be complete with the personal details of both the child and parent(s) and forwarded to the Squire for approval;

- if the child's parent(s) cannot accompany them to an activity, Rumburgh Morris will always obtain a parental consent form completed by the child's parent/guardian(s). The parental consent form will secure written parental consent for the team to act in loco parentis, and to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment if the need arises;
- Rumburgh Morris's junior member form and parental consent form will be approved by the committee and reviewed every three years or in tandem with the safeguarding policy;
- always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets);
- make the experience of morris dancing fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying;
- always moderate your conversations in the presence of young people (in terms of bad language, references to alcohol consumption etc.);
- treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity;
- always put the welfare of the young person first;
- maintain a safe and appropriate distance with dancers (e.g. it is not appropriate for team members to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them);
- avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given. Parents, carers and young people should be made aware that morris dancing involves physical contact with other dancers. They should also be



made aware that it is common to dance at pubs or other venues where alcohol is available;

- involve parents/carers wherever possible, e.g., where young people need to be supervised in changing rooms, encourage parents to take responsibility for their own child. If groups have to be supervised in changing rooms always ensure parents and others work in pairs. The parent of a child should always be copied into official side communications delivered to the child, e.g. parents will be on the side's email list and in any WhatsApp groups of which the child is also a member. Personal communications (e.g. direct messaging) with the child should be kept to a minimum and only used if strictly necessary;
- gain written parental consent if members are required to transport young people in their cars and for any significant travel arrangements, e.g. overnight stays. Written parental consent in the form of an email or text message is acceptable;
- ensure that if a young person is performing out with the side, the team should always include both a male and female adult team member;
- ensure that at away events adults should not enter a young person's room or invite young people to their rooms;
- always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism;
- recognise the developmental needs and capacity of the young person and do not risk or sacrifice welfare in a desire for team or personal achievements. This means avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will; and
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given.

2.3 Poor Practice

To avoid recognised items of poor practice, all members of Rumburgh Morris should:-

- Avoid unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others;



- avoid taking young people alone in a car on journeys, however short;
- avoid taking young people to your home where they will be alone with you;
- avoid sharing a room with a young person;
- avoid engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
- avoid allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching of any form;
- avoid allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- avoid making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun;
- avoid reducing a young person to tears as a form of control;
- avoid allowing allegations made by a young person to go uninvestigated, unrecorded or not acted upon; and
- avoid doing things of a personal nature that the young person can do for themselves.

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situation, e.g. transporting a young person in your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/carer and the young person involved.

If during your care you accidentally hurt a young person, the young person seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to another member of the side and make a written note of it. Parents should also be informed of the incident.

3 Defining Child Abuse

3.1 Introduction

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.



There are four main types of abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities.

Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person.

Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood.

Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

3.2 Types of Abuse

Physical abuse is where adults physically hurt or injure a young person, e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, or drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute child abuse.

This category of abuse can also include when a parent/carer reports non-existent symptoms or illness deliberately to cause ill health in a young person they are looking after. This is called Munchausen's Syndrome by proxy.

In dancing, as with any sports situation, physical abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training disregard the capacity of the child's immature and growing body.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or only valued in terms of meeting the needs of another person.

It may feature expectations of young people that are not appropriate to their age or development.



It may cause a young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn.

Ill treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse may occur when the young person is constantly criticised, given negative feedback, or expected to perform at levels that are above their capability. Other forms of emotional abuse could take the form of name calling and bullying.

Bullying may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves.

There are four main types of bullying. It may be:-

- physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping);
- verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages);
- emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group); or
- sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

In dancing or sport bullying may arise when a parent or coach pushes the young person too hard to succeed, or a rival uses bullying behaviour.

Neglect occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development.

For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.



Neglect in dancing, as with sport, could occur when a coach does not keep the young person safe, or exposing them to undue cold/heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

Sexual abuse occurs when adults (of any gender) use children to meet their own sexual needs.

This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling.

Showing young people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.

In dancing, activities which might involve physical contact with young people could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed.

3.3 Indicators of Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:-

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries;
- an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent;
- the young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them;
- another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a young person;
- unexplained changes in a young person's behaviour, e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper;
- inappropriate sexual awareness;
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour;
- distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected;



- difficulty in making friends;
- being prevented from socialising with others;
- displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite;
- losing weight for no apparent reason; and
- becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt.

Signs of bullying include:-

- Behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to attend practices or dance displays;
- physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping and bed wetting;
- scratching, bruising, damaged clothes and bingeing (e.g. on food, alcohol or cigarettes); and
- a shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions.

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place.

It is NOT the responsibility of those participating in Rumburgh Morris to decide that child abuse is occurring. It IS their responsibility to act on any concerns.

3.4 Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment at Events

There is evidence that some people have used public performances as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people. All teams should be vigilant, and any concerns should be reported to a member of the committee.

4 Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

4.1 Introduction

It is not the responsibility of anyone in Rumburgh Morris 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 so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person. This applies BOTH to allegations/suspensions of abuse occurring within Rumburgh Morris and to allegations/suspensions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

This section explains how to respond to allegations/suspensions.

4.2 Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed in section 3 above, or it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the young person affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:-

- Stay calm so as not to frighten the young person;
- reassure them that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell;
- listen to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously;
- keep questions to a minimum so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify;
- inform the child that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child this is to help stop the abuse continuing;
- safety of the child is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a safeguarding issue;
- record all information; and
- report the incident to a member of the committee.



In all cases, if you are not sure what to do, you can gain help from the NSPCC 24-hour helpline: 0800 800 500.

4.3 Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

Information should include the following:-

- The child's name, age and date of birth;
- the child's home address and telephone number;
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's;
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information;
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. 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/injuries occurred;
- have the parents been contacted? If so, what has been said?;
- has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details; and
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail.

4.4 Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations **MUST** be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected



or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

Rumburgh Morris expects its members to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child immediately with the person in charge and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

It is your duty as an individual to take responsibility and seek advice from the NSPCC helpline, the duty officer at your local social services department or the police. Telephone numbers can be found in your local directory. It would be prudent to inform the Bagperson or Squire that you have done this.

Where there is a complaint against a team member, there may be different types of investigation:-

- Criminal, in which case the police are immediately involved; or
- Child Protection, in which case the social services (and possibly) the police will be involved.

The members of Rumburgh Morris are not child protection experts and it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for child protection

Social services have a legal responsibility under The Children Act 1989 to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the child and family (where appropriate), gathering information from other people who know the child and making inquiries jointly with the police.

NB: If there is any doubt, you must report the incident. It may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern.

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by someone within your team should be reported to a member of the committee who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

This will include the following:-



- You, with the knowledge of the member of the committee, will refer the matter to social services;
- the parent/carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from social services; and
- the Squire should be notified to decide who will deal with any media.

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made some time after the event. Where such allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to social services. This is because other children may be at risk from the alleged abuser.

Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children.

4.5 Concerns outside the immediate environment (e.g. a parent or carer)

- Contact their local social services department or the police immediately;
- social services will advise and decide how to inform the parents/carers;
- the governing body should ascertain whether or not the person(s) involved in the incident play a role in the organisation and act accordingly; and
- maintain confidentiality on a need-to-know basis.

4.6 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. This includes the following people:-

- The member of the committee whom the incident is reported to;
- the parents of the child;
- the person making the allegation;
- social services and/or the police; and



- the alleged abuser (and their parents if the alleged abuser is a child), as and when it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Seek social services' advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

All information should be stored in a secure place with access limited to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

4.7 Internal Inquiries and Suspension

Irrespective of the findings of social services or police inquiries, the committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police.

In such cases, the committee must reach a decision (with the help of a Morris Federation representative, if desired) based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.



Appendix A - Rumburgh Morris Junior Member Form

This form is to be completed by a parent or guardian of a child who is interested in joining Rumburgh Morris. Please return the completed copy of this form to the side Bagperson.

1 Child's Details

Name:

Date of Birth:

Home Address:

.....

Telephone Number:

Email Address:

Dietary Requirements:

.....

Medical Conditions / Allergies:

.....

Medical Needs and Details of Medications Needed:

.....

Child's GP Details:

.....

Any extra help needed due to illness, disability or activities not permitted:

.....

.....

Anything else we should know about:

.....



2 Parent's Details (Emergency Contact)

Name:

Home Address:

.....

Telephone Number:

Email Address:

Vehicle Registration:

Rumburgh Morris aims to provide a safe and enjoyable experience for every child, young and vulnerable person. To help us do this, please note the following information and refer to our Safeguarding Policy which can be supplied on request.

Please tick to acknowledge the following:

- ☐ The junior member form must be fully completed and signed by the parent or carer before any child takes part.
- ☐ Parents and carers must ensure they notify us of any changes to the information given on the form.

I agree to the following (please tick):

- ☐ Rumburgh Morris keeping a record of this form for health and safety reasons.
- ☐ I understand that my child needs to follow the behaviour code and any safety rules so that Rumburgh Morris can keep them and other children safe.

Signed:

Print name:

Dated:



Appendix B - Rumburgh Morris Parental Consent Form

This form is to be completed by a parent or guardian of a child who will be attending events unaccompanied by their primary caregiver. Please return the completed copy of this form to the side Bagperson.

Name of child:

Day/date(s) of activity:

.....

(If a regular activity, please provide the day of the week and time it takes place).

Type of activity that the child will be doing (delete as appropriate):

Practice / Pub Night / Dance Out / Folk Festival / Camping Trip / if other please detail:

.....

Please tick to acknowledge the following:

- ☐ Parents and carers must make arrangements for children to be brought to and from the activity safely and on time. If a parent or carer is not able to deliver or collect their child, they must let us know in advance who will be doing so.
- ☐ Rumburgh Morris cannot take responsibility for any damage done to clothing and/or personal items during the activity.
- ☐ Parents and carers should ensure children have sufficient water, food, clothing, sun lotion, medication, bedding, accommodation and monies (where appropriate) for the duration of the activity.



I agree to the following (please tick):

- ☐ My child taking part in the stated activity.
- ☐ Any medical treatment that my child may need to be given in an emergency.
- ☐ My child being filmed or photographed during the activity, with the possibility that these photographs/media may be used for publications or marketing publicity. (Rumburgh Morris will take all steps to ensure these images are used solely for the purposes for which they are intended).

Note: if consent is not given, Rumburgh Morris will not use any images taken during the activity that contain the junior member.

1 Appointment of Responsible Adult to Act in Loco Parentis

Name:

Home Address:

.....

Telephone Number:

Email Address:

Vehicle Registration:

I give consent for the above representative to be responsible for my child in loco parentis for the stated activity and to administer any required medications.

Signed:

Print name:

Dated:



2 Junior Member's Declaration (please ask your child to complete)

I agree to:

- ☐ Taking part in the activity.
- ☐ Talk to my appointed Responsible Adult if I am not comfortable at any time during the activity so they can help me or arrange for me to do something else.
- ☐ Inform a member of the side if I need to leave the group at any point (e.g. to go to the toilet) and understand that I may need to be accompanied for my safety.
- ☐ Rumburgh Morris keeping a record of this form so they have the information they need to keep me safe during the activity.
- ☐ Receiving any medical treatment that I may need.
- ☐ Being filmed or photographed during the activity. I understand that the photographs or film might be used to tell other people about what Rumburgh Morris does. Note: If I don't agree to this, Rumburgh Morris will not use any images of me.

I understand that enjoying the activity and being safe means I need to follow the behaviour code and safety rules.

Signed:.....

Print name:.....

Dated:.....