Child Safety & Vulnerable Adults Policy

Policy Number	MUC-SAF-001	**Category**	Safety & Operations	**Effective Date**	Pending adoption
Review Cycle	Every 2 years or upon law change	**Supersedes**		**Approved by**	Advisory Board

1. Purpose and Commitment

1.1. The Museum of Uintah County (MUC) is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, and protective environment for all visitors, with special attention to children and vulnerable populations — including individuals with disabilities, elderly visitors, and others who may require additional consideration. This policy establishes standards for interactions with minors and vulnerable individuals in all museum settings, including public programs, school tours, volunteer activities, and special events.

1.2. The safety and well-being of children and vulnerable populations are a non-negotiable institutional priority. All board members, staff, interns, and volunteers are required to comply with this policy.

MANDATORY REPORTING — UTAH CODE § 80-2-602: Utah law requires that any person who has reason to believe a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect must report immediately to law enforcement or the Division of Child and Family Services. All MUC staff and volunteers who work with or around minors are mandatory reporters under this statute. See Section 8 for the full reporting obligation and contact numbers.

2. Scope

2.1. This policy applies to all MUC programs, events, and activities involving:

2.1.1. Individuals under the age of 18 ("minors" or "children")

2.1.2. Adults with intellectual, developmental, or physical disabilities

2.1.3. Elderly visitors who may require additional assistance or supervision

2.1.4. Any person who, due to age, disability, or circumstance, is in a position of reduced ability to protect themselves

2.2. This policy applies to all board members, paid staff, interns, and volunteers. Compliance is a condition of service for all roles.

3. Staff and Volunteer Screening

3.1. Volunteers — County Policies 201 and 204

3.1.1. Uintah County Human Resources coordinates background checks for MUC staff and volunteers in accordance with County Policy 201 (Recruitment and Selection) and 204 (Volunteers). County

Policies 201 and 204 govern the background check process, permissible use of results, and recordkeeping. MUC-specific requirements:

3.1.1.1. Any staff member, intern, or volunteer who will have regular, unsupervised contact with minors must complete a background check before beginning service in that role, and every three years thereafter

3.1.1.2. Individuals with convictions for offenses against children — including sexual abuse, exploitation, or violence against children — shall not be permitted to work with minors in any capacity at the MUC, regardless of how much time has passed since the conviction.

3.1.1.3. A background check clearance automatically expires after three years. The Museum Manager retains discretion to restrict a volunteer's or staff member's access to programs involving minors at any time if concerns arise.

3.2. Orientation and Training

3.2.1. All staff and volunteers who interact with children or vulnerable populations shall complete the MUC's child safety orientation before beginning such work.

3.2.2. Training covers:

3.2.2.1. Recognition of abuse and neglect indicators

3.2.2.2. Standards for appropriate and inappropriate interactions with minors

3.2.2.3. Mandatory reporting procedures and contact numbers (Section 8)

3.2.2.4. Emergency protocols for group visits and separated children

3.2.2.5. Photography and recording consent requirements (Section 6)

3.3. Training completion shall be documented, and records shall be retained for the duration of the individual's service plus five years

4. Standards for Interactions with Minors

4.1. The Two-Adult Rule

Two-Adult Rule: Whenever possible, at least two unrelated adults must be present when working with children in any MUC program or activity. A single adult shall not be alone in a closed space with a child or group of children unless a second adult is immediately accessible, aware of the situation, and able to intervene if needed. If the two-adult rule cannot be maintained due to unexpected circumstances, the adult shall immediately move the activity to an open, visible area.

4.2. Appropriate Interactions

4.2.1. All interactions with minors shall be professional, respectful, and in keeping with the MUC's educational mission.

4.2.2. Physical contact shall be limited to what is necessary for safety or program participation (e.g., guiding a child's hands in a hands-on activity).

4.2.3. Communications with minors (including digital communications) shall be conducted through official MUC channels, with parents or guardians copied as appropriate, and shall be limited to museum programming topics

4.3. Prohibited Behaviors

4.3.1. The following behaviors are strictly prohibited for all staff, volunteers, and board members:

4.3.1.1. Meeting with a minor alone in a private, enclosed space

4.3.1.2. Personal communication with a minor through social media or personal phone/email channels

4.3.1.3. Photographing or filming minors without written parental/guardian consent (see Section 6)

4.3.1.4. Any form of corporal punishment, physical restraint, or intimidation

4.3.1.5. Sharing inappropriate content (sexual, violent, or otherwise inappropriate for minors)

4.3.1.6. Any conduct that could be construed as grooming, including building inappropriate personal relationships, offering special gifts or privileges, or seeking one-on-one contact beyond program needs

4.3.1.7. Allowing a minor to observe collection handling or sensitive storage areas without a second adult present

4.3.1.8. Some of these things may be altered due to familial relationship

Violations are grounds for immediate termination of employment, board service, or volunteer status — and may result in mandatory reporting of the individual to law enforcement. Staff who observe a colleague engaging in prohibited behavior shall report it immediately to the Museum Manager or the LAM Director.

5. School Groups and Organized Youth Programs

5.1. Supervision Ratios

5.1.1. For all school and organized youth group visits, the following minimum adult-to-child ratios apply for child safety purposes. These ratios align with those in the Visitor Conduct & Group Visit Policy (MUC-OPS-001, Part II, Section 13.1) and should be read together with that policy.

Age / Grade Level	Minimum Supervision Ratio
Ages 5 – 7 (Pre-K – Grade 2)	1 adult per 5 children
Ages 8 – 10 (Grades 3 – 5)	1 adult per 7 children
Ages 11 – 14 (Grades 6 – 8)	1 adult per 8 children
Ages 15 – 17 (Grades 9 – 12)	1 adult per 10 children

5.1.2. Visiting schools and youth organizations must provide their own adult supervisors in addition to MUC staff and docents. MUC staff facilitate programming — they are not the primary supervisors for visiting groups. Groups must meet ratios upon arrival; groups that cannot meet the minimum ratio may be required to reduce group size or reschedule.

5.1.3. *For specific situations involving children with higher support needs, the Museum Manager may set a more conservative ratio. These are minimums, not targets.*

5.2. Response to a separated child

5.2.1. The MUC maintains a response protocol for a child who becomes separated from their group, requiring immediate notification of the group leader, a prompt search of public areas, contact with Uintah County Emergency Services (911) if the child is not located within 15 minutes, immediate notification of parents or guardians once the child is located or once emergency services are contacted, and documentation on the MUC's incident report form within 24 hours (see Section 9).

6. Photography and Recording of Minors

6.1. The MUC shall not photograph, film, or otherwise record identifiable minors in any museum program or activity without the prior written consent of a parent or legal guardian

6.2. The MUC shall obtain consent forms for all school programs, special youth events, and any MUC-produced content featuring children. Consent forms shall specify the intended uses of images.

6.3. Images and recordings of minors shall be used only for the educational and promotional purposes specified in the consent form; a new consent is required for any substantially different use.

6.4. Images of minors obtained at public events where photography is generally expected (e.g., public opening receptions) shall be used with discretion and shall not identify individuals by name without consent

6.5. No images of minors shall be published on the MUC's website, social media, or print materials without a valid consent form on file. See MUC-OPS-003

7. Visitors with Disabilities and Elderly Visitors

7.1. MUC staff and volunteers shall treat all visitors, including those with disabilities or who are elderly, with dignity, respect, and patience

7.2. Physical assistance shall be offered — not imposed. MUC staff shall ask before assisting a visitor with mobility needs; do not assume a visitor needs or wants help

7.3. MUC facilities shall be maintained to support the safe movement of visitors with mobility limitations; staff shall promptly report any safety hazards to the Museum Manager.

7.4. In the event a visitor becomes ill, disoriented, or experiences an emergency, staff shall follow the Emergency Action Plan, contact emergency services as warranted, and remain with the visitor until help arrives — do not leave an incapacitated visitor alone

8. Mandatory Reporting

8.1. Reporting Obligation

8.1.1. If any MUC staff member or volunteer suspects, observes, or receives a disclosure of child abuse or neglect — including abuse occurring outside of the MUC's programs — they are legally required to report immediately:

MANDATORY REPORT — MAKE THIS CALL IMMEDIATELY	
Utah Child Abuse Hotline **1-855-323-3237** *Available 24 hours / 7 days a week*	**Vernal City Police / Law Enforcement** **435-789-5835** 911 in emergencies

8.2. Scope of the Obligation

8.2.1. **Suspected abuse counts —** you are not required to be certain. A reasonable belief or suspicion is sufficient to trigger the reporting obligation. Do not investigate — report.

8.2.2. **Outside MUC applies —** if a child discloses abuse that occurred at home or elsewhere, the reporting obligation still applies.

8.2.3. **Confidentiality of reporter —** under Utah Code § 80-2-608, the identity of a person who makes a good-faith mandatory report is confidential and may not be disclosed without a court order.

8.3. Non-Retaliation and Good-Faith Protection

8.3.1. The MUC prohibits retaliation against any person who makes a mandatory report of suspected child abuse or neglect in good faith. Under Utah Code § 80-2-610, good-faith reporters are immune from civil and criminal liability even if the report is not ultimately substantiated. This protection applies even if the report proves mistaken, provided it was made honestly and without malice.

9. Incident Reporting

9.1. Any incident involving a minor or vulnerable person at the MUC — including an injury, separation, complaint, disclosure of abuse, or suspected policy violation — shall be documented on the MUC's Incident Report Form and submitted to the Museum Manager within 24 hours.

9.2. *A mandatory report to authorities (Section 8) and an MUC incident report are two separate obligations — both must be completed. The incident report documents what happened at the MUC; the mandatory report fulfills the legal obligation to notify law enforcement or DCFS.*

10. Review

10.1. This policy shall be reviewed every three years, or immediately if Utah's mandatory reporting law (§ 80-2-602 or related statutes), county policy, or best practices for child safety in museum settings change significantly.

10.2. The LAM Director is responsible for initiating the review process.

10.3. The Museum Manager shall ensure all staff and volunteers are notified of any updates within 30 days of adoption. At each review, the LAM Director shall confirm that the statutory citations in Section 8 remain current by checking Utah's consolidated Title 80 on le.utah.gov.

11. Related Policies and Legal References

11.1. County Policy

11.1.1. Policy 270 — Background Checks (governs the background check process for MUC staff and volunteers)

11.2. Legal References

11.2.1. Utah Code Ann. § 80-2-602 — Mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect

11.2.2. Utah Code Ann. § 80-2-608 — Confidentiality of reporter identity

11.2.3. Utah Code Ann. § 80-2-610 — Immunity for good-faith mandatory reporters

11.2.4. Utah Code Ann. § 80-1-102 — Definitions of abuse and neglect under Utah Juvenile Code

11.2.5. Utah Code Ann. § 26B-6-205 — Mandatory reporting of vulnerable adult abuse and neglect

11.2.6. Utah Code Ann. § 80 (Title 80, Utah Juvenile Code) — Full text at: le.utah.gov

11.3. *Utah Child Abuse Hotline: 1-855-323-3237 (24/7) | Division of Child and Family Services: dcfs.utah.gov*

12. *Adoption*

Acting Chair, Historic Preservation and Museum Advisory Board 10/6/2026 Signature / Date	**LAM Director, Uintah County** 10/06/2026 Signature / Date
Commissioner, Uintah County Sonya Norton 10-14-26 Signature / Date	