

It is advisable to ask those adults helping with the running of your stamp club to complete and sign a simple form which asks them to provide the names and addresses of two referees, and to state whether they have ever been convicted of a sexually-related offence, or of an offence against children.

Health and Safety

The impact of club premises on the health and safety of children attending should be given proper consideration. The amount of space should be sufficient for the numbers present. Any safety hazards should be noted and dealt with before meetings start. Check toilet and bathroom facilities, ensuring that they are properly maintained and adequate for the number of children (and suitable for any with special needs or disabilities).

Clubs operating in schools will be subject to the policies and regulations of the education authority which may require adults to have police checks.

Under no circumstances should adults invite children into their homes. The only exception would be if the child is accompanied by their parent or guardian.

Further guidance about safeguarding your members should be obtained from the Child Protection Agency.

The other leaflets in this series are -

- 'How to Start Your Stamp Club'
- 'Understanding the Basics of Stamp Collecting'
- 'Developing Your Stamp Club'
- 'Need More Help with Your Club?'



safeguarding your members





Important Guidelines

Safeguarding Children Attending Stamp Clubs

Clubs and organisations associated with young people have long provided some adults with opportunities to exploit the children and young people in their care or under their supervision. Successive legislation has sought to ensure that professional relationships, which exist between adult and child, are regulated and monitored. The Child Protection Agency is the leading authority in this regard.

Within its stated aim of promoting stamp collecting amongst children and young people, the Stamp Active Network (SAN) has a duty to provide guidance outlining adults' responsibility to safeguard children attending stamp clubs. The SAN also wishes to raise awareness of the risk to and vulnerability of adults who undertake this work.

Within this leaflet are guidelines for working with children. Whilst every attempt has been made by the SAN and every care taken to ensure that the material contained in this leaflet and others in this series is accurate, regrettably the SAN can take no responsibility for any errors and/or omissions, or for any misinterpretation of the facts presented herein by any adult involved in any capacity with a youth stamp club.

Guidelines for Working with Children and Young People

Select a venue that is safe and suitable for the needs of the group and its activities.

Work with the consent and support of the children's parents or guardians.

Obtain written consent of parents/guardians of those children wishing to attend the club.

Inform parents of which adults will be present at club meetings, what the meetings involve and a contact number for further information.

Be aware and familiarise yourself with any 'special needs' of the children who attend the club (such as physical or learning difficulties).

Ensure that there is more than one adult present at any meeting (ideally one adult for every ten children).

Never work in isolation with a child.

Do NOT invite a child to your home.

Ensure that any physical contact is appropriate to the context and cannot be misinterpreted by the child.

Do not attempt to impose one's own values, attitudes or beliefs on children.

Be alert to any children's injuries that would appear non-accidental; any unusual or dramatic changes in behaviour or any signs of neglect. These should be reported immediately to the Head Teacher or local authority.

Never promise to keep a secret.

Share any concerns you may have about a child. If you are concerned about a child's safety or welfare, you should contact your local Social Services.

Registration

There are relatively few statutory requirements regarding the setting up and running of a stamp club.

Section 71 of the Children's Act 1989 deals with the registration of childminders. A childminder is defined as a person who looks after one or more children under the age of eight years for reward, and the period spent so looking after children exceeds two hours per day. Childminders have to register with the local authority for the specific premises from which they operate, and pay an appropriate fee. They are subject to inspection. Most schools are exempt from registration. As long as organisers do not take income from a club catering for those under eight years old, there are no statutory regulations.

Police Check

It is compulsory for most people working in a statutory capacity with children, or who operate in a position of trust, to undergo police checks for criminal offences. Where certain offences have been committed it can result in disqualification from working with children. Persons convicted of specific serious offences listed under Schedule 1 of the Children & Young Persons Act 1933 are subject to registration and monitoring of their movements.

