

Saffron Walden Museum / Uttlesford Museum Service

## **Education Policy**

**Date : September 2005**

**Due for revision by : September 2008**

### **1 Education Mission Statement**

‘Educational provision at Saffron Walden Museum aims to provide pathways to greater understanding and enjoyment of the museum’s collections. These pathways are created by learning experiences designed to be appropriate for different audiences who use the museum.’

This is the education mission statement of the Museum and this policy sets out the ways in which the mission statement is carried out by defining

- The principles which guide educational practice at Saffron Walden Museum
- The target audiences the museum wants to work with
- The resources that are available for this work
- The ways in which learning experiences are delivered

All members of staff are concerned to some extent with the provision of learning experiences. This policy has been written after a consultation process with the Museum staff, as well as Service users.

### **2 Guiding Principles of the Education Service**

- 2.1 Learning is at the heart of the Museum Service
- 2.2 All users of the education service are treated with equal respect and sensitivity
- 2.3 Their safety and physical comfort are of primary importance
- 2.4 As a centre for lifelong learning, the Museum’s education service must take differing learning styles into account by being flexible and imaginative in the ways that learning is delivered.
- 2.5 Educational activities should always be object- or specimen- based.
- 2.6 Consultation with users and non-users is constant and evaluation of educational activities regularly takes place.
- 2.7 Access to educational activities is made available to all.

### **3 Target Audiences**

The educational provision at Saffron Walden Museum is aimed at all users of the Museum Service but with limited staffing and resources certain target groups have been identified

to concentrate resources effectively. Visitor surveys and a non-user survey were used as evidence.

Target groups are subject to constant review as new opportunities or needs arise. For educational services the target groups are:

- 3.1 Family groups with children aged 3 - 12 years
- 3.2 School groups, especially pre school, Key Stage One, Key Stage Two and home educated children.
- 3.3 Adults with special interests in areas covered by the collections.
- 3.4 Young people aged 13 - 18 years (secondary school, Key Stages Three and Four and Sixth Form), and in general young people 16 – 29 in keeping with the Museum Service's audience development priorities.

#### **4 Resources**

- 4.1 Saffron Walden Museum holds collections that are varied and extensive. They contain significant objects from many different time periods and cultures as well as natural history specimens and local history. Artifacts selected from the reserve collections are used for object handling sessions and as visual aids.
- 4.2 Staffing - There is one full time Education Officer. Other staff are involved in the delivery of learning, especially the Curator, Natural Sciences Officer, Conservation Officer and Documentation & Exhibitions Officer.
- 4.3 Learning through Work Experience and Student Placements – the Museum regularly offers placements, e.g. to students in further and higher education and an annual Trident placement to a local school pupil. Conservation placements for mature students are a special feature of the programme.
- 4.4 The Museum has a dedicated education room which holds groups of up to 35 adults. An area in the Museum gallery space can be used for similar sized groups.
- 4.5 Walled grounds laid to grass and trees, containing the ruins of a 12th century castle surround the Museum.
- 4.6 A loyal audience of family and school groups has been established.
- 4.7 The service is supported by funding from Uttlesford District Council.
- 4.8 New partnerships have been established with bodies such as the North and West Essex Adult Community College, Saffron Walden Archive Point, Saffron Walden Library Service.

#### **5 Ways in which Formal Learning is delivered at Saffron Walden Museum.**

- 5.1 'Drop in' sessions for families held during the school holidays. These usually take the form of art or craft based activities suitable for children.
- 5.2 'Museum Minis', monthly activity sessions for 2-5 year-olds and their parents or carers.

- 5.3 Booked sessions for schools using a combination of object handling, role-play and story telling.
- 5.4 Activity days with re-enactor groups, artists or performers suitable for all ages.
- 5.5 Workshops for adults with special interests led by experts.
- 5.6 Lecture series for adults with invited speakers.
- 5.7 Talks given to adult groups at venues outside the Museum.
- 5.8 Practical sessions for adults or families - e.g. how to classify pottery finds, drawing in the museum.
- 5.9 Reminiscence Loan Boxes and/or sessions on request for care homes and day centres in Uttlesford
- 5.10 Practical sessions for young people - e.g. film making, spray painting inspired by the collections.
- 5.11 Natural history based investigations in the Museum grounds.

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