



## Theatre 282

# POLICY FOR SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION 2019

Theatre 282 recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Child (Performances) Regulations 1968, the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

In this policy, a child is defined as anyone up to the age of 18 years.

The society recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. The society is committed to practice which protects children and vulnerable adults from harm. All members of the society accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

### **The society believes 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 have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All members of the society should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

### **The society will ensure that:**

- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.
- The duty of care to children will always be put first.
- A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism.
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned.
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
- It will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children.
- It will undertake relevant development and training.
- It will hold a register of every child involved with the society and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

The society has child protection procedures which accompany this policy. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the society's **Equal Opportunities Policy** and **Health & Safety Policy**.

The society has a dedicated **Safeguarding Lead**, who is in charge of ensuring that the child protection policy and procedures are adhered to. That person's name is **Mary Perry** and she can be contacted on 07851575103. The Chairman of the society will act as the deputy Safeguarding Lead.

This policy will be regularly monitored by the Executive Committee of the society and will be subject to annual review.

Date: 01/05/19.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Perry', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.



## THEATRE 282

### CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES 2019

#### Responsibilities of the Society

At the outset of any production involving children the society will:

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process.
- The Safeguarding Lead, working with the director, will ensure that there is adequate and appropriate supervision in place for the children involved at all times.
- Know how to contact the local authority social services, in order to report a concern.
- Arrange child performance licensing as required through the appropriate Local Authority.

#### Parents & Carers

- The society believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and carers and the society. Parents and carers are encouraged to support the activities of the society and to share responsibility for the care of children. The Child Protection Policy and procedures will be available to all on the society website.
- Parents and carers have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of the society to take children home.

#### Unsupervised Contact

- The society will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.
- If possible there will always be two adults in the room when working with children.
- If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimise risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area, or in a designated room with a door open.
- If it is predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, he or she may be required to obtain DBS clearance.

#### Physical Contact

The society recognises that physical contact may be an integral and necessary part of performance arts. This includes rehearsals, costume fitting, attaching radio microphones etc, as well as the performance itself.

- Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity.
- Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact (unless they are at immediate risk of harm) and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

### **Photographing and Videoing:**

- Productions may be recorded by authorised members but always in full view of all attending.
- Photography and video are not permitted if this contravenes the parent or carers wishes.
- No unauthorised photographs or videos will be published and posted on Facebook, YouTube or any other social media.
- A parental photo/video consent form is required for each child taking part in a production which covers use of images during rehearsal and performances.

### **Mobile phones/tablets/recording equipment:**

- Members are prohibited from taking photographs and/or recordings of children on personal mobile phones/tablets etc.
- Any individual bringing a personal device into the theatre must ensure that it contains no inappropriate or illegal content and is not used to access such material.
- Children are not permitted to use mobile phones during rehearsals or during performances. These are handed in to the Rehearsal Guardian/Chaperone on arrival and returned at the end.

### **Whistle Blowing:**

- If anyone has any concerns about members of the organisation, they have a duty to inform the Safeguarding Lead or the Chairman. This can be done in writing or verbally but members should be able to discuss issues in the confidence that any such matter will be dealt with sensitively and with the necessary degree of confidentiality.

### **Suspicion of abuse**

- If members see or suspect abuse of a child, they have a duty to report this to the Safeguarding Lead. If you suspect that the Safeguarding Lead is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the Chairman.
- In addition, make a note for your own records of what you witnessed and your response.
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of the society, chaperone etc., that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded in accordance with the Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure of the society.

## Disclosure of abuse

If a child confides in you that abuse has taken place:

- Remain calm and in control but do not delay taking action.
- Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child to tell you at their own pace and in their own words. Do not try to investigate with searching or leading questions.
- Do not promise to keep it a secret. Make it clear to the child that you will need to share this information but you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help.
- Reassure the child that 'they did the right thing' in telling someone.
- Tell the child what you are going to do next.
- Speak immediately to the Safeguarding Lead. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities.
- As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was said, **using the child's own words**. Note the date, time, any names that were involved or mentioned, and who you gave the information to. If possible, use a Theatre 282 Concern Form available from the Safeguarding Lead. Make sure you sign and date your record.

## Recording

- In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, the details of an allegation or reported incident will be recorded on a Theatre 282 Concern Form, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a statutory child protection agency.
- This must include the date and time of the incident or disclosure, the parties involved, what was said or done and by whom, any action taken to investigate the matter, any further action taken e.g. suspension of an individual, where relevant the reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, and the name of the persons reporting and to whom it was reported.
- The record will be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation.

## **Rights & Confidentiality**

- If a complaint is made against a member of the society, he or she will be made aware of his rights under the society's Disciplinary & Grievance procedures.
- No matter how you may feel about the accusation, both the alleged abuser and the child who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998. Remember also that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released.
- In criminal law the Crown, or other prosecuting authority, has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

## **Accidents**

- To avoid accidents, chaperones and children will be advised of "house rules" regarding health and safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds. Children will be advised of the clothing and footwear appropriate to the work that will be undertaken.
- If a child is injured while in the care of the society, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the society's accident book.
- If a child joins the production with an obvious physical injury a record of this will be made in the attendance register. This record can be useful if a formal allegation is made later and will also be a record that the child did not sustain the injury while participating in the production.

## **Disclosure and Barring Service Checks**

- Theatre 282 requires those leading children/youth groups or acting as chaperones, to undergo the appropriate level of DBS checking in line with current government guidance.
- Theatre 282 will have a written code of practice for the handling of disclosure information.
- The society will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

## **Rehearsal Guardians / Chaperones**

- Chaperones, who are licensed by the Local Authority, will be appointed by the society for the care of children during the production process. By law the chaperone is acting in loco parentis and should exercise the care which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give to a child.
- Rehearsal Guardians will be appointed by the society for the care of children during rehearsals. The Rehearsal Guardian is acting in loco parentis and should exercise the care which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give to a child.
- The maximum number of children in the chaperone's care shall not exceed 12.

- Rehearsal Guardians and Chaperones will be made aware of the society's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Where Rehearsal Guardians and Chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the director. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily, the chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue.
- If Rehearsal Guardians and Chaperones considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, they must inform the director and not allow the child to continue.
- Under the Dangerous Performances Act, no child of compulsory school age is permitted to do anything which may endanger life or limb. This could include working on wires or heavy lifting. Rehearsal Guardians and Chaperones should tell the director to cease using children in this way and should contact the local authority.
- During rehearsals and performances, and Rehearsal Guardians /Chaperones will be responsible for meeting children and signing them into the building.
- Children will be kept in supervised groups.
- Rehearsal Guardians and Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times.
- Children are not to leave the theatre unsupervised by Rehearsal Guardians and Chaperones unless in the company of their parents/carers.
- Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
- Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms.
- Rehearsal Guardians and Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures in the venue, and will ensure that children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger.
- Rehearsal Guardians and Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by the society.
- Rehearsal Guardians and Chaperones should have written arrangements for children after performances. If someone different is to collect the child, a telephone call should be made to the parent/carer to confirm the arrangements.
- Rehearsal Guardians and Chaperones will supervise the signing out of children and handing over to parents.
- If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the Rehearsal Guardians and Chaperones to stay with that child and make arrangements for them to be taken home.

## **Extremism and radicalisation**

- Theatre 282 recognises its duty to protect our children from indoctrination into any form of extreme ideology which may lead to the harm of self or others.
- The society will take action to refer incidents and concerns to the relevant authorities ([counter.extremism@education.gov.uk](mailto:counter.extremism@education.gov.uk) tel. 020 7340 7264) if any individual or group is perceived to be attempting to influence members of our community, either physically or electronically.
- Our definition of radical or extreme ideology is *'a set of ideas which could justify vilification or violence against individuals, groups or self'*.
- Further information is also available on the Government's Educate Against Hate website.

## **Peer on peer abuse**

Members should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying);
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- Initiation / hazing type violence and rituals.

Members should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. This must always be taken seriously and concerns passed on to the Safeguarding Lead without delay.

## **Children with special educational needs and disabilities**

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- Being more prone to peer group isolation than other children;
- The potential for children with SEN and disabilities to be disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

To address these additional challenges, parents/carers should be closely involved in provision for inclusion in the society.



## Good Practice Guidelines for members working with children and young people.

- You must be aware that children may not see the physical danger associated with activities and theatre equipment that an adult would recognise. You should therefore ensure that equipment is safely stored and used, that children are warned of any danger, and that any horseplay which could lead to injury is immediately stopped.
- You should control and maintain good order and discipline.
- You must respect all children as befits their age.
  - You must be aware of how your speech; tone of voice and body language may be perceived. In particular you should never scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child.
  - Be aware that adult 'banter' is not always appropriate in the presence of children.
  - Children must not be exposed to age-inappropriate media – this could be classed as sexual abuse.
- Be aware that someone could misinterpret your actions even if they are genuine and well intentioned - you could be accused of 'grooming'.
  - Do not exchange text/email/social media contacts with children – you should always contact them through their parents/guardians.
  - You must respect a child's right to privacy; in particular, do not invade a child's privacy whilst washing or toileting.
  - Do not show favouritism to any one child and do not allow children to involve you in excessive attention-seeking. Do not give personal gifts to children without the full knowledge and approval of their parents/guardians or the organisation.
  - Ensure you are not left alone with a child, in particular:
    - never give a lift to a child when alone;
    - do not take a child alone backstage or to any other part of the theatre;
    - never invite a child back to your home or to any other place.
- Think carefully about how to manage those times where it becomes necessary to touch a child, whether it's on or off-stage. You may need to help them with their costume, fit a radio-mic, physically guide them in choreography... The script may require physical contact such as hugging or restraining.
  - Make sure you are not alone/unsupervised.
  - Only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity.
  - Always ask their permission first (unless they are at immediate risk of harm) and explain why it is necessary. If they are not happy with it, don't do it.
  - Ensure that the Rehearsal Guardian/Chaperone is aware and comfortable with it too.