



Carver Theatre, Chadwick Street,  
Marple, SK6 7AX

Child Protection Policy (Operational)

Version 4: 30th March 2018

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

The Carver Theatre recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Child (Performances) Regulations 1968, the Protection of Children Act 1999, The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

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 from harm. All members of the Society accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues that may cause children harm.

The legal definition of a child is any person under the age of 18 years. The law acknowledges that young people aged 16 to 18 are mature enough to leave home, marry and/or work full-time. Therefore the society acknowledges that though we have a duty to safeguard all young people under 18, the procedures that back-up our policy relate to young people aged under 16 years.

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 are 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 the children to share in the decision making process.
- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism.
- Bullying isn't accepted or condoned.
- All adult members of the society provide a positive role model for dealing with other people.
- Action is taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.

- It keeps up-to-date with health & safety legislation.
- It keeps up-to-date with changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children.
- Relevant development and training is carried out.
- A register of every child involved with the Society is maintained and a contact name and number are easily accessible 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 Health & Safety Policy.

The Society has two dedicated Child Protection Officers who are in charge of ensuring that the child protection policy and procedures are adhered to. These are:

1. The Chairperson of the society
2. A member of the society appointed who has a thorough understanding of the policy  
The contact details of this person will be available on the website [carvertheatre.co.uk](http://carvertheatre.co.uk)

This policy and the procedures apply only to Carver Theatre productions and do not apply to productions staged by other organisations who hire the theatre. Such organisations are fully responsible for organising their own child protection arrangements and the Carver Theatre cannot be held responsible for the adequacy, or otherwise, of those arrangements. The Carver Theatre policy and procedures will be regularly monitored by the Executive Committee of the society and will be subject to review.

Due Date for Next Review: 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## **CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

### **Responsibilities of the Child Protection Officers**

For any production involving children the Child Protection Officers will:

- Ensure an Adults Production Register is completed (Appendix 1).
- Issue a copy of the Society's Code of Good Practice For Working with Young People to all adults on the production (Appendix 2).
- Identify at the outset a Lead Chaperone who will have responsibility for child protection for the duration of the production process, including nominating deputies when unable to attend workshops, rehearsals or productions. However, please note the following:
  1. Children and young people who are capable of acting as stage crew are regarded as sufficiently mature and responsible to not need chaperoning. Therefore the Stage Manager will take overall responsibility for safeguarding children and young people aged under 16 who are part of the stage crew.
  2. Rehearsals for principals often take place separately from the chorus and are unlikely to be attended by chaperones. In those rehearsals, therefore, the Show Director will take overall responsibility for safeguarding children and young people aged under 16 who have principal roles.
- Ensure the Director, Lead Chaperone and Stage Manager undertake risk assessments on pre-populated Risk Assessment Grids (Appendix 3) prior to cast selection, prior to on stage rehearsals and prior to dress rehearsals, as there will be new risks posed at each of these stages, and monitor risk throughout the production process.
- Ensure the Lead Chaperone collects forms covering Medical Questionnaire, Good Behaviour and Photography (Appendix 4) completed by parents/guardians for all children and makes this information accessible to deputies as appropriate.
- Engage in effective recruitment of other chaperones with responsibility for children, including vetting where necessary.
- Ensure the chaperone role is not combined with any other responsibilities on the production.
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times.
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case a concern arises that needs discussion or reporting.

### **Parents**

- The Society believes it is important that there is a partnership between parents and the Society. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the Society and to share responsibility for the care of children. All parents will be given a leaflet explaining the Society's Policy and the parents' role in that. A copy of the Society's Full Child Protection Policy and Procedures will be available to parents.
- Parents and children will be required to sign a Good Behaviour Agreement with the Society (Appendix 4).
- Parents will be required to sign a Photography/Video Agreement (Appendix 4).
- All parents 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.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring that the education of their children does not suffer due to rehearsals or performance and this includes keeping up with homework and full-time attendance at school.

## **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 minimize risk. For example, work might be carried out in a public area, or in a designated room with a door open.
- In the case of young people and children aged under 16 who form part of the stage crew, parents or guardians will be informed by standard letter (Appendix 6) that their child will be working without a chaperone and their agreement will be obtained.
- If it is predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, he or she may be required to obtain a criminal record disclosure.

## **Physical Contact**

- All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.
- 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 and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

## **Managing sensitive information**

- The Lead Chaperone will inform all children and parents that no photography is permitted in the dressing room and no photographs taken during workshops, rehearsals or during productions are to be uploaded to the internet, other than those taken with parental permission for publicity purposes.
- Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes (Appendix 4).
- The society's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.
- The society will ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of its members, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such as criminal record disclosures.

## **Suspicion of abuse**

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of the Society, please make this known to the Lead Chaperone. If you suspect that the Lead Chaperone is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to one of the Society's two Child Protection Officers (see page 2 of this document).
- Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed as well as your response, in case there is follow-up in which you are involved.
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of the Society, Chaperone, venue staff etc., that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms etc. and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production.

## **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 ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.

- Don't promise to keep it a secret. Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the Lead Chaperone or Child Protection Officer, as appropriate. Make it clear to the child that you will need to share this information with others. Make it clear that 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 Lead Chaperone or Child Protection Officer, as appropriate. It will be the Child Protection Officer's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually social services or the police.
- 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. 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, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a statutory child protection agency.
- An accurate note shall be made of 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.

### **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, the Lead Chaperone or their deputy will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the Society's Accident Book. The Lead Chaperone or deputy will discuss the incident with the child's parent or guardian as soon as possible.

### **Criminal Record Disclosures**

- If the society believes it is in its best interests to obtain criminal record disclosures for Chaperones or other personnel, it will inform the individual of the necessary procedures and the level of disclosure required. An Enhanced Disclosure may be required for anyone with unsupervised access.
- The society will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is kept confidential, being known to only the Chairman, the General Secretary of the Society, the Junior Secretary and the Child Protection Officer and not misused.

### **Chaperones**

- Chaperones 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. The maximum number of children in the Chaperone's care shall not exceed 12.

- Potential chaperones will be required to supply photographic proof of identity (e.g. passport, driving licence) and two references from individuals with knowledge of their previous work with children, unless already well known to the society.
- Chaperones will be made aware of the society's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Chaperones will not usually have unsupervised access to children in their care. If unsupervised access is unavoidable a criminal record disclosure may be sought.
- Where Chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the Director of the production. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily, the Chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue.
- If a Chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the Chaperone must inform the Director of the production 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. Chaperones should tell the Director of the production to cease using children in this way and should contact the local authority.
- During performances, the Lead Chaperone or their deputy chaperones will be responsible for meeting children in the Theatre Library and signing them into the building using the Stage Door Register (Appendix 5).
- If a child is expected at the theatre but has not appeared 30 minutes after the due time then the Chaperone will contact the parents to inform them.
- Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times.
- Members of the stage crew who are aged under 16 will report to the Stage Manager on arrival in the theatre.
- Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
- Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms unless absolutely necessary.
- Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures in the theatre, and will ensure that children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger.
- Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by the Society.
- Children are not to leave the theatre unsupervised by Chaperones unless in the company of their parents or if age 11+ (have reached the age of 11 by the preceding 1<sup>st</sup> of September) with the standard written permission of their parent or guardian (Appendix 7). This applies to cast, chorus and stage crew. F
- If someone different is to collect the child the details must be noted on the Stage Door Register (Appendix 5). If somebody different from this comes to collect the child, who is not the parent or guardian, then a telephone call should be made to the parent to confirm the arrangements.
- Children should be signed out when leaving and a record made of the person collecting using the Stage Door Register (Appendix 5).

If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the Chaperone to stay with that child or make arrangements to take them home.

## **Further advice**

For further advice contact the NSPCC (020 7825 2775 or visit [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk))

### Further reading

Keeping Arts Safe, Protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in arts activities, Arts Council of England. Available from Marston Book Services on 01235 465500.

FIRST CHECK, a step by step guide for organizations to safeguard children, NSPCC. This excellent and detailed guide also contains templates for recording allegations or suspicions.

National Network for Children in Employment and Entertainment. [www.nncee.org.uk/home/](http://www.nncee.org.uk/home/)