



## **THE MUSICAL THEATRE COMPANY - SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

The Musical Theatre Company (hereafter referred to as THE MTC) is committed to a practice which protects children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm.

THE MTC recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. All staff accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of issues which cause children, young people and vulnerable adults harm.

For the purpose of this policy, a child/children is/are defined as anyone under the age of 16 or under the statutory school leaving age.

With reference to additional information regarding the safeguarding of young people over the age of 16 (of statutory school leaving age) and vulnerable adults please see Appendix 1.

THE MTC believes that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount,
- All children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and 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 staff of THE MTC should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

THE MTC will ensure that:

- All children are treated equally with dignity and respect,
- No child can ever be left on his or her own and must always be in the sight of a chaperone – occasionally this may involve the use of monitors in the wings if the nature of the show/set makes it impossible to see the child.
- The welfare of each child is always put first,
- At all times the Children and Young Person Act 1963/ Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014 will be upheld and adhered to.
- A balanced relationship based on mutual trust is built which empowers children to share in the decision-making process,
- Enthusiastic and constructive criticism is given rather than negative criticism,
- Bullying (whether physical or cyber) is not accepted or condoned,
- All adult members of the company 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 and safety legislation,
- It keeps informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children,
- It undertakes relevant development and training,
- It holds a register of every child involved within the company and retains a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.



The company has a dedicated Safeguarding Officer who is in charge of ensuring that the Safeguarding Policy and procedures are adhered to. That person's name is Kevin Reay and he can be contacted on 07984 890664. This Safeguarding Policy will be regularly monitored by the Company and will be subject to annual review.

## Safeguarding Procedures

### Responsibilities Of The Company

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

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor the risk throughout the production process,
- Identify at the outset the designated person responsible for safeguarding,
- Engage in the effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting,
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times,
- Boys and girls will have separate toilet facilities where possible, which will be labelled BOYS and GIRLS and may not be used by adults.
- Know how to get in touch with the police, local authority safeguarding team and local authority social services department, in case it needs to report a concern.

### Parents And Carers

- The Company believes it to be important that there is a true partnership between parents, carers and the Company.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the Company and to share the responsibility for the care of children.
- All parents and carers will be given a copy of the Company's Safeguarding Policy.
- All parents and carers have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. Children must be signed in and signed out on every occasion. It is NOT the responsibility of the Company to take children home.

### Unsupervised Contact

- The Company will ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.
- As far as possible there will be one or two chaperones present at each pre show rehearsal depending on the number of children rehearsing.
- 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 a DBS certificate.

### Physical Contact

- All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.
- Adults will only touch children when absolutely necessary in relation to a 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**

- Permission will be sought from the parents and carers for the use of photographic material featuring children for promotional and archival purpose.
- The Company's web based materials will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.
- The Company will ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of its members, in accordance with data protection.

### **Suspicion Of Abuse**

- If you see any abuse of a child while in the care of the Company, please make this known to the person with responsibility for safeguarding, Kevin Reay.
- 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 a member of the Company, chaperone, venue staff etc, that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal room etc. and will not have any unsupervised contact with 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 person responsible for child safeguarding. Make it clear to the child that you will need to share the information with others. Make it clear that you will only tell 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 person with responsibility for safeguarding. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually the local safeguarding team, social services or the police.
- As soon as possible after disclosing the 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 for 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 safeguarding 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 eg 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 more about the incident or allegation.



## **Rights and Confidentiality**

- If a complaint is made against a member of the Company he or she will be made aware of their rights under the Company's disciplinary 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 Company, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the appropriate accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person responsible for safeguarding.
- If a child joins the production with an obvious injury a record of this will be made in the accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for safeguarding. 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.

## **DBS Certificates**

- If the Company believes it is in the best interests to obtain DBS certificates for personnel it will inform the individual of the necessary procedures and the level of DBS required. A Standard DBS will apply for anyone with supervised access to children. An Enhanced DBS will be required for anyone with unsupervised access.
- The Company will ensure that the information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

## **Chaperones**

- Chaperones will be appointed by the Company for the care of the 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 a child. The maximum number of children in the chaperone's care shall not exceed 12.
- Chaperones will also be present during all pre show rehearsals.
- Chaperones will not permit photographs to be taken of the children under any circumstances except official photographs taken by the Production Photographer which are subject to copyright.
- Potential chaperones will be asked to produce a valid Chaperone's licence.
- Chaperones will be made aware of the Company's Safeguarding Policy and procedures.
- When chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the director. If the 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 and not allow the child to continue.



- Under the Dangerous Performances Act no child of compulsory school age is permitted to do anything that may endanger life or limb. This could include working on wires or heavy lifting. Chaperones should tell the director to cease using children in this way and should contact the local authority.
- During rehearsals and performances chaperones will be aware of where children are at all times.
- Children are not to leave the rehearsal venue or theatre unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents or carers.
- Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
- Chaperones should be aware of safety arrangements and first aid procedures in the venue and will ensure that children in their care do not place themselves in any danger.
- Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by the Company.
- Chaperones should examine the appropriate venue's accident book each day. If an accident has occurred, the director will not be allowed to use that child until a medically qualified opinion has been obtained (not just the word of the parent or child).
- Chaperones should have written arrangements for children after rehearsals or performances. If someone different is to collect their child, a telephone call should be made to the parent or carer to confirm the arrangements.
- Children should be signed out when leaving and a record made of the person collecting.
- If a parent or carer has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with the child until they are collected by a named person.

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