

HATHERSAGE PLAYERS CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

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.
- Identify at the outset the person with designated responsibility for child protection.
- Engage in effective recruitment of Chaperones and Supervisors, including appropriate vetting (if necessary in consultation with Derbyshire County Council for licensed productions).
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times.
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case it needs to report a concern.

Parents

- The Society believes it to be important that there is a partnership with parents. 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 access to a copy The Society's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- 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 requested to talk through The Society's 'Guidance for Young People' with their child prior to their participation in any production:

'Guidance for Young People'

- Let the Production team know you have arrived and when you are leaving so that you can be signed in/out
- Electronic devices/phones can be used at break times and to make calls to parents. By participating in the production you agree not to use them during rehearsals/performances when advised by the Production team – devices may be removed from you until the end of the rehearsal if their use is disruptive.
- **No** photographs are to be taken at rehearsals/performances without prior agreement from the supervising Production team
- You need to stay at the Rehearsal Venue e.g. the Memorial Hall during a rehearsal/performance, including break times
- If you have a worry or question please speak to a member of the Production team

- Parents are encouraged to raise any Child Protection concerns with the dedicated Child Protection Officer for The Society, The Producer/Director or the Chairperson of The Society.

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 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 Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check.

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 Society may take photographs and video recordings of children in rehearsals or performances for use by The Society and these may be stored by the society. Parents will be informed when their child joins The Society that images may be recorded and the intended use of these images.
- Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes, particularly if children are to be named.
- 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 DBS 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 person with responsibility for child protection.
- If you suspect that the person with responsibility for child protection is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the Chairperson of the Society.
- 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 production areas, 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 person with responsibility for child protection. 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 person with responsibility for child protection. It is that person'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.

Rights & Confidentiality

- If a complaint is made against a member of The Society, he or she will be spoken to by the Chairperson of The Society and informed that a complaint has been made (no details of the child or allegation to be given).
- 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 applicable.
- If a child is injured while in the care of The Society, first-aid will be administered and the injury will be recorded in The Society’s accident book. The accident should also be reported to the person responsible for child protection.
- If a child joins the production with an obvious physical injury a record of this will be made in the accident book. 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.

Criminal Record Disclosures (DBS checks)

- If The Society believes it is in its best interests to obtain DBS checks for chaperones or other personnel, it will inform the individual of the necessary procedures and the level of disclosure required.
- The Child Protection Officer and the Chairperson of the committee will be the only people to know details of disclosure information and they will make a decision on behalf of The Committee about the suitability for a person’s role. In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for a wider discussion amongst The Committee and approval for this will be obtained from the individual whose disclosure information is to be discussed.
- In line with the DBS code of practice, the information revealed will be considered only for the purpose for which it was obtained and will be destroyed after a suitable period has passed - not more than 6 months.
- The Society will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

Licensing Productions

- A licence or Body of Persons Exemption will be sought for Productions which involve children where a child performs for more than four days in any six month period or where school absence is required.
- Where a licence is required, chaperones will be allocated to children participating in the production.

Supervisors/Chaperones

- Supervisors will be appointed by The Society for the care of children during any production. A chaperone will be appointed for licensed productions. 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 supervisors/chaperones may be required to supply photographic proof of identity and references unless already well known to The Society.
- Supervisors/chaperones will be made aware of The Society's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- They will not usually have unsupervised access to children in their care.
- Where supervisors/chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the Producer/Director. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily, they should consider not allowing the child to continue.
- If a supervisor/chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, they will inform the Producer/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. Chaperones should tell the Producer/Director to cease using children in this way and should contact the local authority.
- During performances, a supervisor/chaperone/the Production Manager will be responsible for meeting children at the Memorial Hall entrance and signing them into the building. Parent/carers are responsible for ensuring that a child has been registered with the relevant person prior to leaving the site.
- Supervisors/chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times.
- Children are not to leave a venues unsupervised by supervisors/chaperones unless with their parents.
- Children will be reminded to inform the supervisor/chaperone prior to going to and from the toilets.
- Children and adult dressing spaces will be designated and the supervisor/chaperone will monitor access.
- Supervisors/Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures in the venue, and will try to ensure that children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger.
- Supervisors/Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by The Society. They should have access to the accident book so that it can be reviewed after each activity.
- Unless otherwise informed it is assumed that parents will collect their children from performances and rehearsals. If someone different is to collect the child or the child is going home independently, the parent should advise the supervisor/chaperone in writing if possible. If information is provided in writing via the child/another adult other than the parent, a telephone call may be made to the parent to confirm the arrangements.
- Children should be signed out and a record made of the person collecting if not the child's parent.
- If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the supervisor/chaperone to stay with that child or agree alternative provision with the Production team, until arrangements to take them home can be made.