

LEEDS CHILDREN'S THEATRE SAFEGUARDING PROTECTION POLICY



Leeds Children's Theatre (herein referred to as 'LCT') recognizes its duty of care to young people under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Child (Performances) Regulations 1968, The Children (Performance) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 1998(1), The Children (Performance) Amendment Regulations 2000, The Children (Performance) (Amendment No2) Regulations 2000, the Protection of Children Act 1999, the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, the Every Child Matters Agenda 2003, the Children's Bill 2004, and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

Children and young people occupy a central and fundamental place within LCT and all its work. We strongly believe that all children and young people have the right to be treated fairly, justly and have the right to freedom from abuse and harm. The society recognizes that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. Therefore the society is committed to best practice which as far as possible protects the children in its care from harm. All members of the society accept and recognize 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 and employees of the society should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

To this end the society will strive to ensure that:

- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.

- The welfare of each child will always be put first.
- A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers the children to share in the societies decision-making process.
- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than destructive or negative criticism.
- Bullying will not be accepted, condoned or tolerated in any form.
- All adult members of the society will strive to provide a positive role model for dealing with other people.
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
- It will keep up to date with health & safety legislation.
- It will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children.
- It will undertake, wherever possible, relevant development and training.
- It will hold a register of every child involved with the society and will retain a contact name and telephone number close at hand in case of emergencies.
- It will seek the written consent of all its members, as well as parents/guardians to use photographic images of children for publicity/promotional/archive library materials as standard within its annual membership form.
- It will monitor carefully that photographic images of children in publicity/promotional/ archive library materials are used in an appropriate manner and safeguard any personal details that may put the child at risk. Breaches of these safeguards will be reported to the relevant authorities immediately.

Leeds Children's Theatre 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 also has a dedicated Child Protection Officer, who is in charge of ensuring that the child protection policy and procedures are adhered to.

That person is **Ian Goodison** and he can be contacted 

This policy will be regularly monitored by Leeds Children's Theatre Committee and will be subject to annual review.

Date:

LEEDS CHILDREN'S THEATRE SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES



Responsibilities of the Society

At the outset of any production which involves 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 other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting (if necessary, in consultation with the local education authority);
- ensure that children are supervised at all times;
- be aware of how to get in touch with local authority social services, in case it needs to report a concern.

Role of Parents

Leeds Children's Theatre believes that it is important that there is an active partnership between parents and the society. Parents are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of the society's activities and to share responsibility for the care of children. To this end Leeds Children's Theatre will provide a copy of the society's Safeguarding Policy and procedures to any parent / guardian or relevant outside agency should it be requested.

- All parents have a responsibility and duty of care to collect (or arrange for the collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances at a pre-stated time and location. It must therefore be clearly stressed that it is NOT the responsibility of the society to take children home if their parents do not arrive by the stated time.

Unsupervised Contact

- The society will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.
- If at all 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 any risk to children. For example, work will be carried out in a public area or in a designated room with an open door.
- 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 records disclosure.

Physical Contact

- All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.
- Adults will only touch children in an appropriate manner when it is absolutely necessary in relation to a particular activity or exercise.
- Adults will seek a child's consent prior to any physical contact and clearly explain the purpose of the contact to the child.

Managing sensitive information

The society has a policy and procedures for the taking, using and storage of photographs or digital images of children. The main points of this are laid out below.

- Permission will be sought from parents / guardians for use of photographic images / material featuring children for promotional use or other purposes.
- The society's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.
- The society will strive to 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 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 then make your concerns known to the Chairperson of the society.

- Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed or heard 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 then be suspended immediately from any society activities until an investigation is concluded by the relevant local agencies. The individual must also be immediately excluded from the theatre or rehearsal rooms etc. and must not have any further unsupervised contact with any other children in the production or society.

Disclosure of abuse

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

- Remain calm and in control but do not delay taking action.
- Listen carefully to what is said. Allow the child to tell you at their pace what has happened. Ask clear questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Don't promise to keep the information a secret. Inform the child that you must pass the information on to the relevant persons and that you will only tell people who need to know and can help. Reassure the child constantly, as this will be an upsetting experience for them. At the first opportunity you have share this information with the person responsible for child protection matters.
- 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 Incidents

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 must be recorded, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a statutory child protection agency. Therefore it is necessary that:

- An accurate note must be made of all the details involved in an alleged incident or disclosure. This must include; the date and time of the incident or disclosure, the names of the parties involved, what was said, or done, by whom, and any action taken to investigate the matter, any further action taken e.g. the suspension of an individual from the society and where relevant the reasons why the matter was not referred to statutory child protection agencies. The name of any persons reporting the incident and to whom it was reported should also be noted. This record must be stored securely and shared only with those individuals/official agencies that need to know about the incident or the allegation.

Individual 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 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 complete confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998. Remember that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released. In criminal law, the Crown, or other prosecuting authorities guilt has to be proven and therefore any defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Accident Procedure

- To avoid accidents, chaperones and children will be advised of any "in house rules" regarding health and safety that apply to them and will be clearly notified of particular areas that are out of bounds or present a hazard.
- Children will be advised of the correct clothing and footwear that is 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 as necessary to the child and the injury will be recorded in the society's accident book. If the injury requires further urgent medical attention a member of the society will call the emergency services and accompany the child to hospital. Parents / guardians will be contacted immediately, and a member of the society will remain with the child until parents / guardians are able to attend at the hospital. This process will also be entered into the society's accident book and will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for safeguarding.

- If a child attends a workshop session, rehearsal or joins a production with an obvious physical injury a record of this will be made in the society's accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for child protection. This record can be useful if a formal allegation is later made against the society or any of its members and will stand as a record that the child did not sustain the injury while participating in any of the society's activities, productions or events.

Criminal Record Disclosures

- If the society believes it is in its member's best interests to obtain formal criminal record disclosures for any chaperones, or other personnel directly involved in its daily activities. It will inform the individual of any necessary procedures and the level of disclosure that is required. A Standard Disclosure will apply for anyone with supervised access to children and an Enhanced Disclosure will be required for anyone with unsupervised access to children.
- The society 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.

Chaperones

- If necessary 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 as such 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 at any one time.
- Potential chaperones will be required to supply photographic proof of identity (e.g. passport, driving license) and two references from individuals with knowledge of their previous work with children, unless already well known to the society. They will also be asked to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children.
- Chaperones will be made aware of the society's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- Chaperones will not usually have unsupervised access to children in their care. If unsupervised access is unavoidable, or if this is a requirement of the local authority, a criminal record disclosure will be sought.

- Where chaperones are not satisfied with conditions for the children as they believe that they constitute a potential hazard, they should bring this to the attention of the director of the show. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily the chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue with the performance.
- If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the producer immediately 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 tasks. Chaperones should tell the producer to cease using children in this way, and should contact the local authority immediately.
- During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the stage door and signing them into the building.
- Children will be kept together at all times except when using separate dressing rooms during performances or having makeup applied in a different dressing room.
- Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times.
- Children are not to leave the theatre unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents.
- Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
- Children will not be allowed to enter adult dressing rooms.
- 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.
- Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by the society.
- Chaperones should examine accident books each day. If an accident has occurred, the producer is not 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 collection arrangements for children after performances. If someone different is to collect the child, a telephone call should be made to the parent to confirm the arrangements.
- Children should be signed out of the venue when leaving and a record made of the person collecting them.
- If a parent has not collected their child, it is the duty of the chaperone to remain with that child until the parent arrives or makes other suitable arrangements to take them home.