



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility

Updated: July 2023

POLICY STATEMENT

Starlight Youth Theatre has a moral and legal obligation and is fully committed to safeguard the welfare of all children/young people up to the age of 18. When given responsibility for children/young people all committee members, chaperones, volunteers, and parents/legal guardians recognise their responsibilities and take all reasonable steps to safeguard children/young people from harm, abuse and exploitation. This means to ensure that everyone follows procedures and practises in a way to protect children/young people and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

All committee members, chaperones, volunteers and parents/legal guardians will endeavour to work together to encourage the development of an ethos which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of all children/young people.

The purpose of this policy:

- To promote good practice, providing children/young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of Starlight Youth Theatre
- To allow committee members, chaperones and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues

This policy is based on the following principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- All children/young people will be treated fairly and with respect
- All children/young people regardless of age, disability, gender, racial origin, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have the right to protection from all types of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation

Please also refer to our separate Online Safety Policy and Privacy Policy

Legal framework:

Starlight Youth Theatre will adhere to the relevant legislation when working with children/young people under the age of 18 years and this policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 2004
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Data Protection Act 2018/GDPR

PREVENTION

Starlight Youth Theatre will:

- Ensure all Chaperones are registered with the local authority in which they reside and have an enhanced DBS check including barred list if eligible
- Ensure all crew and staff coming into close contact with children/young people are DBS checked including a barred list check if eligible

- Ensure all new committee members, chaperones, volunteers undertake a safeguarding induction with the person responsible for safeguarding, to include this policy and expected code of conduct
- Ensure all committee members, chaperones, volunteers have access to safeguarding training
- Ensure all committee members, chaperones, volunteers are kept up to date of any changes in legislation and policies in relation to safeguarding
- Act within the Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children/young people
- Ensure all suspicions and allegations of abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- Ensure all contact and medical details for every child/young person are up to date and available at the place of rehearsal or performance
- Ensure bullying is not accepted or condoned

Good Practice Code of Conduct

Starlight Youth Theatre will ensure that all committee members, chaperones, parents/legal guardians, volunteers and anyone else who comes into contact with children/young people behave in an appropriate and exemplary manner at all times, and remember that ‘The Welfare of the Child is Paramount’.

Our aim is to strive towards creating a positive culture and climate by all committee members, chaperones and volunteers adhering to the following guidelines:

YOU SHOULD:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children/young people feel welcome and are familiar with their environment and are informed of personal (toilets, dressing rooms etc) and emergency arrangements (fire exits, meeting points etc) and any Health and Safety Procedures (first aid etc)
- Always put the care, welfare and safety needs of a child/young person first, recognise the individual needs of a child/young person e.g. recognising when a child/young person may need a break
- Actively encourage children/young people to be involved in making choices and decisions which directly affect them
- Respect a child’s/young person’s culture, religious beliefs or sexual orientation
- Respect a child’s/young person’s right to privacy and personal space
- Respond sensitively to a child/young person who may appear anxious about participating in certain activities
- Be aware of the vulnerability of some groups of children/young people to being isolated and hurt (for e.g. those with learning and physical disabilities, those from minority ethnic groups and those with English as an additional language)
- Ensure that children/young people are supervised appropriately at all times (licensed Chaperone)
- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and unnecessary physical contact with children/young people)
- If you see or suspect abuse of a child/young person, immediately make this known to the person responsible for safeguarding
- Listen carefully to any child/young person who “tells you” that they are being harmed and make a written record (signed, dated and timed) and report immediately to the person responsible for safeguarding

YOU SHOULD NEVER:

- Exaggerate or trivialise another's concerns about a child/young person
- Ignore an allegation or suspicion of abuse in the hope that it will either 'go away' or that 'someone else will deal with it'
- Discuss personal issues about a child/young person or their family with other people, except with the person responsible for safeguarding, when you are concerned about the child/young person's well-being
- Be drawn into any derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children/young people. You should lead by example.
- Allow a child/young person to be bullied or harmed by either a member of Starlight Youth Theatre or by one of their peers
- Allow children/young people to swear or use sexualised language unchallenged, unless it forms part of the organisations formal activities
- Engage in sexually provocative games
- Allow others or yourself to engage in touching a child/young person in a sexually provocative manner
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child/young person, even in jest
- Engage in rough or physical contact unless it is permitted within the rules of an appropriate game or activity or conforms to the guidance on appropriate physical restraint
- Form inappropriate emotional or physical relationships with children/young people
- Harass or intimidate a child/young person or another member of the organisation because of their race, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or disability
- Invite a child/young person to your home, unless there is express permission from the person responsible for safeguarding who will contact the parents or person with parental responsibility

PROCEDURES

Dealing with Concerns of Abuse

The following action should be taken if you suspect a child/young person maybe suffering abuse in some way:

- Do not attempt to investigate
- As soon as possible after becoming aware of possible abuse, make notes about your concerns, date, time and sign
- Pass on your written record to the person responsible for safeguarding at the earliest opportunity
- Do not disclose your concerns with anyone else
- Ask the person responsible for safeguarding for support for yourself if you feel you need it

Dealing with Disclosures

The following action should be taken if a child/young person confides in you about being subject to abuse:

- Listen attentively to what the child/young person is saying and take their allegations seriously
- Encourage the child/young person to talk but do not ask leading questions, interrupt or ask the child to repeat itself. Intrusive questioning could contaminate a subsequent child protection investigation

- Reassure the child/young person that they have been courageous in speaking to you about this
- Never promise that you will keep what is said confidential or secret – explain that if you are told something of concern that you will need to let someone know but that you will only tell the people who need to know and can help
- Do not make any judgements about what has been disclosed or about the alleged abuser
- Explain the next step, the child/young person should know that they will be kept informed and supported as appropriate
- Record what you have been told accurately and as soon as possible. Use the child's/young person's own words. Sign and make a note of the date, time and location, whether anyone else was present and the child's/young person's demeanour
- Ensure that your record is reported immediately to the person responsible for safeguarding
- On no account should you speak to the parent/carer or alleged abuser about what has been disclosed without first discussing it with the person responsible for safeguarding
- Ask the person responsible for safeguarding for support for yourself if you feel you need it

Dealing with allegations against a committee member, chaperone or volunteer

Good practice in both the recruitment and supervision of committee members, chaperones and volunteers should be designed in such a way that the risk of abuse is reduced and staff can protect themselves from false allegations. However, the possibility of abuse cannot be eliminated and constant vigilance is necessary.

- If a child/young person makes an allegation against a committee member, chaperone or volunteer it must be reported immediately to the person responsible for safeguarding. Record what you have been told accurately using the child's/young person's own words. Sign, make a note of the date, time and location
- The information should be passed on to the person responsible for safeguarding and handled in the same manner
- Should an allegation be made against the person responsible for safeguarding then the Chairperson will be treated as a suitable replacement
- A referral will be made to the LADO for advice

Please note that in managing disclosures/concerns it is not your responsibility to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. You must abide by these guidelines if you are concerned about the welfare of a child/young person.

Definitions of Abuse – Refer to Appendix B

Form for recording/reporting concerns/allegations – Refer to Appendix C

Storing of and Access to Confidential Child Protection Data

Starlight Youth Theatre abides by the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Everyone responsible for using data has to follow strict rules called 'data protection principles'.

All child protection information will be stored securely and will only be shared with authorised personnel and appropriate authorities.

Health and Safety in the Theatre

A risk assessment will be carried out prior to children/young people using rehearsal or theatre space and risk monitored throughout the production process. Dressing rooms and back stage areas will be assessed to ensure they are safe and comfortable. Starlight Youth Theatre members must be aware of the fire

evacuation procedure and a register of those present must be kept. No photographic equipment or any devices with a camera will be permitted in the dressing room at any time.

Starlight Youth Theatre have Public Liability Insurance with Zurich Insurance plc.

Starlight Youth Theatre has a **designated person responsible for safeguarding** who is in charge of ensuring that the child protection policy is adhered to. The person responsible for safeguarding is **Judy Banks** and can be contacted at:

Email judybarber35@gmail.com
Mobile 07572044635

If the person responsible for safeguarding is unavailable please contact the Chairperson or in an emergency situation contact First Response Children’s Duty Team or the Police.

Emergency Contact Details – Refer to Appendix A

In implementing this policy Starlight Youth Theatre will:

- Ensure that all committee members, chaperones and volunteers understand their legal and moral responsibility to protect children /young people from harm
- Ensure that all committee members, chaperones and volunteers understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a child/young person, or a co-workers conduct towards a child/young person to the person responsible for safeguarding
- The person responsible for safeguarding will refer any child protection concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (i.e. LADO, First Response Children’s Duty Team, Police and/or Children’s Social Care)
- Children/young people, parents and carers will be informed of the person responsible for safeguarding

This policy will be regularly monitored by Judy Banks and Chris Dimelow and will be subject to an annual review and agreed by Starlight Youth Theatre Committee.

Signed: Chairperson.....

Signed: Person responsible for safeguarding

Original date policy written and agreed: April 2018

Date policy reviewed, updated and agreed: July 2023 Date policy to be reviewed: July 2024

Local Contact Information

Agency	Contact Details
First Response Children's Duty Team	01163050005 24 hour phone line
Social Care Charnwood Office	Office Hours: Monday to Friday – 8.30am to 5.00pm Pennine House 2 Lemyngton Street Loughborough Leicestershire LE11 1UH 01509266641 01509210167 Out of Office Hours Emergency Duty Team (EDT) 1 Grey Friars Leicester LE1 5PH 01162551606
Police	Non-Emergency 101 Emergency 999
Child Performance & Employment Team	01163057820
Leicestershire County Council Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) If you are concerned that someone in a position of trust has harmed a child or behaved in a way that they may be unsuitable to be in a position of trust please contact the LADO.	01163057597 01163054532

Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect

A child is abused or neglected when somebody inflicts harm or fails to act to prevent harm. A child or young person up to the age of 18 years can suffer abuse or neglect and require protection.

- **Physical Abuse** - May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates or induces illness in a child whom they are looking after.
- **Sexual Abuse** – Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening, may involve: physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts; non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect** – Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger or the failure to ensure access to appropriate care or treatment. It may also include neglect of or unresponsiveness to a child’s basic emotional needs.
- **Emotional Abuse** – The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional and behavioural development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age and developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, for example witnessing domestic abuse within the home or being bullied or exploitation or corruption of children. *Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.*

IT IS YOUR DUTY TO REFER CONCERNS/ALLEGATIONS ON, NOT TO INVESTIGATE

Name of Child:
Age:
Address and telephone number:
Name of Parent(s)/Carer(s):
Name of sibling(s) (if known):
Any special circumstances relating to the child (e.g. Special needs, health and welfare):
Nature of concern (e.g. allegation by child, young person or a suspicion of abuse by a concerned adult):
If disclosure made by a child/young person give the name of the person they spoke to and the date, time and location of disclosure:
Please attach written record of disclosure this should be as accurate as possible and in the child's own words. Dated, timed and signed.
If another adult has expressed concerns regarding the safety of a child/young person record their concerns and ask them to confirm details are correct:
Any possible signs or indicators identified:

If known record the name(s) of the person(s) implicated in the abuse:

When was the referral to appropriate team made (i.e. social care, police) who received your call and advice given:

Signed:

Date:

Signed (Designated Safeguarding Lead/Chairperson)

Date: