

HD&OS

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Responsibilities of the Society

Each September the society will:

- undertake a risk assessment of activities involving children and monitor risk throughout the activities;
- engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting;
- ensure that children are supervised at all times;
- know how to contact the designated officer.

Parents

- Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the society and to share responsibility for the care of children. A copy of the society's Child Protection Policy and procedures will be made available to all parents.
- All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after workshops, trips, rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of the society to take children home.

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 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 society will not provide personal information to an outside agency without permission.
- Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes.

Concerns regarding possible abuse

- If any person suspects abuse of a child while in the care of the society, they should make this known to the person with responsibility for child protection. If they suspect that the person with responsibility for child protection is the source of the problem, they should make their concerns known to the Secretary of the society.
- If a suspected incident occurs before or during a performance, this should be reported to the Front of House Manager who will contact the Child Protection Officer.

Issued June 2004

Revised July 2005

Revised January 2007

Reviewed December 2009

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Reacting & Listening

- Allow the child time to speak and do not interrupt nor make suggestions to them that could imply making an investigation.
- Do not interrogate or question other than to clarify your understanding. (If the matter is to be investigated further it will be done so by professionals.)
- Be honest and tell the child that you cannot keep it a secret - you have to talk to someone else who can help.
- Remain calm, no matter how difficult it is to listen to the child – think of how hard it is for them to say it.
- Listen to the child and re-assure them they have done the right thing.

Recording

As soon as is practical write down everything the child told you, but remember this is confidential and the only person you can discuss this with is the designated person, or in his or her absence, the Secretary.

Health & Safety

- 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, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the society’s accident book.
- Under the Dangerous Performances Act no child of compulsory school age is permitted to do anything which may endanger life or limb.

Chaperones

- Children under school leaving age are chaperoned during performances according to legislation. All chaperones are licensed through Herts County Council who ensures they have enhanced disclosure certificates from the CRB. The licences are reviewed annually and renewed every 3 years. 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.
- Chaperones will be made aware of the society’s Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- During performances, chaperones will be responsible for seeing children have signed into the building.
- Children will be kept together at all times except when using separate dressing rooms.
- 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 the adult dressing rooms unchaperoned.
- 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.

Young Idea Workshops

Workshop leaders are licensed as chaperones. Invited session leaders are monitored at all times and not left alone with the children.