

Crewkerne Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Society
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

CUDOS recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Child (Performance) Regulations 1968, the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000. The society recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. The society is committed to practice which protects children from harm. All members of the society accept and recognise 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 will be taken seriously, and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All members and employees of the society should be clear on how to respond appropriately

The society will ensure that:

- All children are treated equally and with respect and dignity
- The duty of care to children will always be put first
- A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers the children to share in any decision making process
- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned
- All adult members of the society 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 & Safety legislation
- Members are kept well informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children
- Representatives undertake relevant development and training
- It holds a register of every child involved with the society and will retain an emergency contact name and telephone number close at hand in case of emergencies

The society has child protection procedures which accompany this policy.

The society has a dedicated Child Protection Officer who is in charge of ensuring that the Child Protection Policy and Procedures are adhered to. This person is Denyze Harris and she can be contacted on 07970 600556.

This policy will be monitored regularly by the CUDOS Committee and will be subject to an annual review at the first committee meeting following the AGM.

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 other individuals responsible for child protection, including appropriate vetting (if necessary, in association with the local education authority)
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times
- Know how to contact 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 between parents and the society. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the society and to share responsibility for the care of children.

- All parents will have access to a copy of the society's Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children at the end of rehearsals and 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
- Whenever possible, there will always be at least two adults in the room when working with children
- 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 the door open
- If it is predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, they may be required to obtain the relevant Disclosure & Barring Service certification

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 a particular activity
- Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact will be made explicitly clear

Managing sensitive information:

The society has procedures for the taking, storing and use of photographs of children:

- Permission will be sought from parents before the use of any photographic material featuring children is used for promotional or other purposes

- The society's web-based materials and activities will be closely 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 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 designated 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 Chairman or Vice-Chairman 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 or venue staff etc., that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation has concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms and any other space and will not have unsupervised contact with any children in the production or activity

Disclosure of abuse:

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

- Remain calm and in control, but do not delay in taking action
- Listen carefully to what is being disclosed, allow the child to tell you at their own pace and only ask questions for clarification. Never ask questions that might suggest a particular answer
- Do not promise to keep their disclosure a secret
- Make it clear to the child that you will need to share this information with others, but 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
- Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the person responsible for child protection, whose responsibility it is to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually social services or the police
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, note down what was said in the child's own words, as well as the date and time of the disclosure and any names that were involved or mentioned, and to whom you passed on the information. Make sure you sign and date your record
- In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, the details of the 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 further investigate the matter, any further action taken including the suspension of an individual, and where relevant the reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory child protection agency, and the name of the persons reporting and to whom it was reported
- The record shall be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation

Rights and confidentiality:

- If a complaint is made against a member of the society, they will be made aware of their rights under the society's disciplinary procedures
- No matter how you feel personally about the allegation, 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 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:

- In order to avoid accidents, chaperones and children will be advised of "house rules" regarding Health & 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 to be undertaken
- If a child is injured whilst in the care of the society, a designated first aider will administer any necessary first aid, the accident will be recorded in the society's accident book and the report will be countersigned by the person with responsibility for child protection
- If a child joins a production or activity with an obvious physical injury, a record of this will be made in the society's accident book and countersigned by the person with responsibility for child protection, and used if a formal allegation is made later, providing a record that the child did not sustain the injury whilst in the care of the society

Chaperones:

- All chaperones will be licensed by Somerset Council, and will be appointed by the society for the care of children during a specific activity or production process
- By law, the chaperone is acting in loco parentis and should exercise the care that a good parent might be reasonably expected to provide for the children
- The maximum number of children in a single chaperone's care shall not exceed 12
- Chaperones will be made aware of the society's Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Chaperones will not usually have unsupervised access to children in their care, but if unsupervised access is unavoidable, or if this is a requirement of the local authority, the relevant Disclosure & Barring Service certification will be sought
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the provided conditions for the children in their care, they should bring this to the attention of the producer or the designated person with responsibility for child protection – if satisfactory changes can not be made, the chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue
- If the chaperone considers a child unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the producer or the designated person with responsibility for child protection, and must 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, which could include working on wires or heavy lifting – in this situation, chaperones must tell the producer or the designated person with responsibility for child protection to cease using children in this way, and must contact the local authority
- At rehearsals and performances, chaperones or the designated person with responsibility for child protection will be responsible for meeting the children at the

designated meeting point (usually at the top of the venue landing) and sign them into the building

- Chaperones must be aware of where the children are at all times whilst they are in the care of the society
- Children are not to leave the theatre unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents
- Children will be adequately supervised when going to and from the toilet
- Chaperones must be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures in place in the venue
- Chaperones must ensure that children in their care do not place themselves or others in danger
- Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by the society
- Chaperones should examine the accident book each day and ensure that if an accident has occurred, the child involved is not used until a medically qualified opinion has been obtained – not just the word of the parent or child
- Chaperones should have written arrangements for the collection of children after performances or activities, and if any situation differs from the documented arrangements, a telephone call should be made to confirm the change of arrangements with the parent
- Children should be signed out when leaving the building, and a record should be made of the person collecting the child
- If a parent does not collect their child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with the child or make arrangements to take them home

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