



## **Good Practice Guide For the Care and Protection of Children Participating in SALOS Productions**

Originally prepared in Consultation with Swindon Children's Services Department & NODA

***Reviewed: August 2023***

SALOS recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, Examples of Best Practice – Child Performance and Activities Licensing by Local Authorities in England (Feb 2015), the Protection of Children Act 1999, the Children & Families Act 2014, and Keeping Children Safe In Education (Sept. 2023) [Draft]. 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 that protects children from harm.

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this guide is to outline the basic philosophy of the society concerning the care and protection of children participating in the rehearsals and productions undertaken. The guidance offered in this document is intended to serve as a means to avoid either children, or those charged with their care, being placed in any compromising situation; a 'common sense' attitude is recommended at all times in order to avoid such situations.

A child is defined as anyone up to the age of 18 years, however, regulations relating to children in theatrical performances apply up to the age of 16, so young people between the ages of 16 and 18 may require reasonable adjustment.

*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 of the society should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

*The society will ensure that:*

- all children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity;
- the duty of care to children will always be put first;
- bullying will not be accepted or condoned;
- all adult members of the society 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 informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children.

### **Philosophy**

The basic philosophy of the society concerning the care of children at rehearsals and during performances is that all individuals should be treated as one might expect one's own children to be treated. Please note that it is NOT the role of the society to decide whether a child has been abused or not; this is the task of Children's Social Care, it is, however, everybody's responsibility to ensure that concerns are shared and appropriate action taken.

The following list of measures is not intended to be exhaustive, but is to form a framework within which the society will operate in its dealing with children.

### **General Measures**

- Responsibility for safeguarding children and young people is the responsibility of the society's Main Committee.
- SALOS' nominated person with responsibility for child protection is *Russell Langdown* supported by *Becci Benson*; both members are Enhanced DBS cleared and have attended Child Protection Courses at Level 3 and enhanced training. Both have contact details should additional, professional support be necessary. Russell or Becci can be contacted via: [saloschildren@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:saloschildren@hotmail.co.uk) marked **CONFIDENTIAL**, and will respond quickly to any safeguarding concerns.
- The society will appoint a Children's Coordinator for each production; for 2023, this is: Russell Langdown.
- The society will apply to Swindon's Local Authority for a Child Performance License (or BOPA) to demonstrate its commitment to safeguarding any children performing in our shows.
- The society expects permission to be given by parent/carers for images of their children to be used in any promotional material, archive recording and photography, including the society's website.

**Advice may be sought at any time from Swindon Borough Council's "MASH" (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) department on 466903 (office hours) or 436699 (outside office hours).**

#### **Chaperoning / Welfare Procedures:**

- Guidance suggests 1 Chaperone per 12 children.
- Parents/carers will drop their child off at the rehearsal or performance venue and the child will be signed in by the Children's Coordinator, Lead Chaperone, or Production Director.
- At the end of rehearsals / performances, children will only be released according to the instructions of the parent/carer; this may include identity of other individuals authorised to collect the child at the end of the session.
- The society will hold contact details of children and carers, including: Names, Addresses, Contact numbers and Email addresses.
- Changing areas will be separate for male, female and non-binary children; this is also separate from adult performers.
- The use of cameras or mobile phones with camera or video capability in dressing rooms and other inappropriate environments should be expressly forbidden whilst children are changing.
- Children will be kept together at all times except when using separate dressing rooms.
- The Children's Coordinator or Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times.
- Children are not to leave the rehearsal venue or theatre unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents.
- The Children's Coordinator or Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements in the venue, and will ensure that children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger.
- The Children's Coordinator or Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to, and recorded by, the society.
- Children should be signed out of the performance venue when leaving and a record made of the person collecting
- If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child until contact is made.

#### **Basic guidance for members**

##### **You must:**

- Adults should avoid being alone at any time with individual children.
- If it is necessary to be alone with a child, this should be in a room with an open door or with windows; a second adult should be informed under these circumstances.
- Treat all children and young people with respect
- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow; including choice of language.

- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- Encourage young people and adults to be comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned
- Recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- Operate within the organisation's principles and guidance and any specific procedures
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse – see *Appendices A&B*

#### **You must not:**

- Children should never be accompanied to the toilet; adults must wait outside of the toilet area in public view.
- Under no circumstances should a child be physically chastised.
- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or young people
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour / make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- Either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- Show favouritism to any individual
- Rely on your good name or that of the organisation to protect you
- Believe "it could never happen to me"
- Take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach

#### **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 society member with responsibility for Safeguarding (Russell Langdown or Becci Benson). 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 Safeguarding. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually social services or the police, as well as the parents/carers.
- 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.
- 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.

#### **Safeguarding Concerns**

If you observe a behaviour, hear a comment, or have any other safeguarding concerns regarding the behaviour of a child or an adult other than a direct disclosure, the following should be actions:

- Remain calm and in control but do not delay taking action.

- Speak immediately to the person with responsibility for Safeguarding. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually social services or the police, as well as the parents/carers.
- As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was said, using the child's own words where relevant. 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.
- 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.

### **Local Agency Safeguarding Arrangements**

The Local Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (Swindon Safeguarding Partnership) website provides information, guidance and advice for anyone involved in safeguarding the welfare or well-being of children and young people in Swindon. [Swindon Safeguarding Partnership](#)

**Date of next review: August 2024**

#### **Sources:**

Swindon LSCB – *Model Child Protection Policy for Community Groups*

Swindon Children's Services

NODA – Professional support for amateur theatre – *Children in the Theatre*

NODA – Professional support for amateur theatre – *Model Child Protection Policy*

Wyvern Theatre – Contractual Agreement Appendix

**Signs of Abuse**

Childhood is full of activity, and as such all children are liable to get scratches, bruises, bumps and cuts from time-to-time; therefore it is sometimes difficult to tell the difference between injuries suffered as part of a quite normal childhood, and those caused by physical abuse.

One of the best ways to help children is learning to recognise the signs of abuse. While these signs often take the form of physical injuries, behavioural indicators are also important when identifying abuse. The parent or other adult caregiver may also display significant indicators that point towards the presence of child abuse, as will knowledge of a family history.

The list given below is therefore not, in itself, a comprehensive tool for recognising child abuse:

**The Child:****Signs of Physical Abuse**

Aside from direct physical contact, physical abuse can also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. Signs of physical abuse include:

- Black eyes without bruising to the forehead
- Finger tip bruising and bruises in various stages of healing
- Cigarette type burns anywhere, patterned burns (irons), rope burns. Contact burns in abnormal sites.
- Lacerations to the body
- Multiple fractures; any fractures to children under two years old
- Fading injuries noticeable after an absence from school
- Seems frightened of parents, does not want to return home at the end of the day
- Shrinks markedly (backs away) at the approach of adults

- Constantly asks in words/actions what will happen next

### **Signs of Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving the children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Signs of sexual abuse displayed by children include:

- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Pain/itching/bleeding/bruising/discharge to the genital area/anus
- Urinary infections/sexually transmitted diseases
- Persistent sore throats
- Eating disorders
- Self mutilation
- Refuses to change for gym or participate in physical activities
- Exhibits an inappropriate sexual knowledge for their age
- Exhibits sexualised behaviour in their play or with other children
- Lack of peer relationships, sleep disturbances, acute anxiety/fear
- School refusal, running away from home

### **Signs of Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, relative to their actual development or age. Signs of emotional abuse displayed by children include:

- Excessive behaviour, such as extreme aggression, passivity or becoming overly demanding
- Children who self-harm, for instance by scratching or cutting themselves
- Is either inappropriately adult or infantile
- Children who persistently run away from home
- Children who show high levels of anxiety, unhappiness or withdrawal

### **Signs of Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs. This is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Signs of neglect include:

- Frequent absenteeism from school
- Beggars or steals money or food
- Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations or glasses
- Lacks appropriate clothing e.g. for weather conditions, shoes are too small, ill-fitted clothes
- Clothes are consistently dirty
- Teeth are dirty, hair quality is poor and contains infestations
- Hands are cold, red and swollen

- The parent or adult caregiver has failed to protect a child from physical harm or danger

#### **The Parent or Other Adult Caregiver:**

- Denies existence of or blames the child for the child's problems at home or at school
- Sees and describes the child as entirely worthless, burdensome or in another negative light
- Unrealistic expectations of the child i.e. demands a level of academic or physical performance of which they are not capable.
- Offers conflicting or unconvincing explanation of any injuries to the child
- Appears indifferent to or overtly rejects the child
- Refuses offers of help for the child's problems
- Isolated physically/emotionally

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It is important to recognise that the different types of abuse often occur simultaneously. For instance where a child is physically abused, they often suffer emotional abuse as well.

<b>What is Child Abuse?</b>	<b>Appendix B</b>
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HM Government (2010) *Working Together to Safeguard Children* London: The Stationery Office.  
[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/safeguarding](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/safeguarding)

#### **What is abuse and neglect?**

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Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely by a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

#### **Physical abuse**

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Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

#### **Emotional abuse**

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Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capacity, as well as the overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

#### **Sexual abuse**

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Sexual abuse involved forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

## **Neglect**

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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 and development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.