

# **New Forest Players Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures**

## **Responsibilities of the Society and Parents**

### **1. At the outset of any production or event involving children the society will:**

- 1.1. Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout.
- 1.2. Identify at the outset the person with designated responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.
- 1.3. 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).
- 1.4. Ensure that children are supervised at all times.
- 1.5. Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case it needs to report a concern.

### **2. Parents**

- 2.1. 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.
- 2.2. All parents have the responsibility to collect, or arrange collection of, their children after rehearsals or performances. It is not the responsibility of the society to take children home.

### **3. Unsupervised Contact**

- 3.1. The society will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.
- 3.2. If possible there will always be two adults in the room when working with children.
- 3.3. If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimise risk.
- 3.4. If an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, he or she may be required to obtain appropriate disclosure checks.

### **4. Physical Contact**

- 4.1. All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.
- 4.2. Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity.
- 4.3. Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

### **5. Managing sensitive information**

- 5.1. Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes. This requirement will be pointed out to Parents before the audition process.

- 5.2. 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.

## **6. Suspicion of abuse**

- 6.1. 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 make your concerns known to the Chairman.
- 6.2. 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.
- 6.3. If a serious allegation is made against any member of the society, that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded.

## **7. Disclosure of abuse, if a child confides in you that abuse has taken place**

- 7.1. Remain calm and in control but do not delay taking action.
- 7.2. 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.
- 7.3. Don't promise to keep it a secret. Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the person with responsibility for child protection. 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.
- 7.4. Reassure the child that 'they did the right thing' in telling someone.
- 7.5. Tell the child what you are going to do next.
- 7.6. Speak immediately to the person with responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the society's committee and in turn any relevant authorities.
- 7.7. 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.

## **8. Rights and Confidentiality**

- 8.1. If a complaint is made against a member of the society, 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 confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 2018. Remember also that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released.
- 8.2. In criminal law the Crown, or other prosecuting authority, has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

## **9. Accidents**

- 9.1. 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.
- 9.2. If a child is injured while in the care of the society, details of the injury will be noted. This will be countersigned by the nominated person with responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.
- 9.3. If a child joins a production with an obvious physical injury a note of this will be made. This will be countersigned by the nominated person with responsibility for safeguarding and child protection as it can be useful if a formal allegation is made later.

## **10. Chaperones**

- 10.1. 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 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.
- 10.2. Chaperones will be made aware of the society's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- 10.3. 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 may be sought.
- 10.4. Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the person with designated responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.
- 10.5. If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the person with designated responsibility for safeguarding and child protection and not allow the child to continue.
- 10.6. During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the stage door and signing them into the building.
- 10.7. Children will be kept together at all times except when using separate dressing rooms.
- 10.8. Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times.
- 10.9. Children are not to leave the theatre unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents.
- 10.10. Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms unsupervised.
- 10.11. Chaperones should be aware of the location of the first aid box and will ensure that children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger.
- 10.12. Chaperones will have a Parent/Guardian contact list.
- 10.13. Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by the society.
- 10.14. Chaperones should have clear arrangements for children after performances. If someone different arrives to collect the child, a telephone call should be made to the parent to confirm the arrangements.

- 10.15. Children should be signed out when leaving and a record made of the person collecting.
- 10.16. If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone or nominated person with responsibility for safeguarding and child protection to stay with that child or make arrangements to take them home.

## **11. Criminal Record Disclosure**

- 11.1. If the society believes it is necessary to obtain criminal record disclosures for chaperones or others, it will inform the individual of the necessary procedures and the level of disclosure required. A Standard disclosure will apply for anyone with supervised access to children. An Enhanced disclosure will be required for anyone with unsupervised access.
- 11.2. The society will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

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