



# ACT Youth Theatre: Child Protection, Health & Safety Policy and Procedures

16 Greengarth, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA2 4PW. 07582 022 047

ACT Youth Theatre has a duty of care to safeguard all children under 18 engaged in its activities and will take steps to ensure their safety and protection by adhering to the guidelines set out in this document.

ACT Youth Theatre abides by the legislation set out within the Children's act 1989 & 2004 and within the Children (Performance and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014.

## **Teachers/supervising adults/Chaperones/volunteers must:**

- Ensure an accurate attendance register is completed at the start of each session.
- When rehearsing at a theatre or venue outside our regular classes, staff must ensure that students are **signed** in and out by a parent or guardian – a tick will not suffice.
- All children must be supervised until collected by a parent or someone specifically authorised by the parent. A member of staff will sign-out each student as they leave. A staff member must remain on the premises until all the pupils have left.
- Rehearsal and performance spaces should be thoroughly checked for hazards and, if possible, all hazards should be removed before the session proceeds. Any obstacles or hazards that cannot be removed must be pointed out to the children as something to avoid.
- When working in a new venue the children must be made aware of where emergency exits are situated, and the fire safety procedures required for that venue.
- Accidents or injuries requiring treatment should be written in the Accident Book by the supervisor present with a note of the date and time as soon as they have been dealt with and the parents informed.
- Medication: Staff should be informed in a letter signed by a parent of any medications required to be taken by students while they are in our care.
  - If possible, the parent will keep the medication and come to administer it to the student themselves.
  - No child should be given medication by a member of staff/supervisor or volunteer unless this has been agreed in a letter of instruction signed by a parent.
  - All medications should be kept securely out of the reach of students.
- Plasters should not be applied unless the child answers “Yes” to the question, “Do your parents allow you to wear a plaster?”
- All details, that ACT has been made aware of, of any allergies or special medication required are on record in the Pupil Details file held by Jennifer Heron.
- If anyone needs the emergency services, notify the parents as soon as possible and tell the services when they arrive what special medication the child usually takes.

## **Always try to:**

- Treat all young people with respect and dignity
- Put the welfare of each young person first
- Be an excellent role model

- Give enthusiastic constructive feedback rather than negative criticism

### **Good Practice Guidelines**

All teachers/supervising adults/Chaperones/volunteers should try to demonstrate exemplary behaviour not only to protect the children in their care but also to protect themselves from false allegations. These are specific examples but no guidelines can cover every eventuality. In some cases you may need to use your own judgement as a responsible adult.

- Avoid being alone with any child, especially behind a closed door. Get someone else to sit in and leave a door open, or re-locate to a more visible area.
- Ensure that if any form of physical support or contact is required, it should be provided openly and with due care to current professional practices, giving appropriate explanation where necessary and seeking the young person's approval and agreement
- Inform each child who the appropriate person or people are to speak to if they have any questions/concerns.
- If group changing and dressing is being supervised, teachers, supervising adults, Chaperones and volunteers will work in an appropriately open environment, with at least one member present having a DBS check.
- Never do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves
- If a young person needs to be escorted to the toilet or changing area, maintain a suitable distance in a visible public area wherever possible or ensure you are never in a private or unobserved situation
- All parents/guardians will complete and sign a registration form which will include a clause stating if the parent/guardian permits their child to be included in ACT photographs, videos etc. that may be used for advertising purposes.

### **Practices to be avoided**

The following should be avoided except in emergencies (eg if a child sustains an injury requiring hospital attendance or if the child is not collected from class or rehearsal). It should be with the full knowledge and consent of another staff member and/or the child's parents.

#### **Avoid:**

- Transporting a child to or from an event
- Arranging a meeting outside class times without the specific agreement of the parent
- Spending an excessive amount of time alone with children away from others

#### **Never sanction the following:**

- Rough games or play-fighting
- Any form of inappropriate touching
- Bad language
- Anyone, including children, making sexually suggestive comments, even in fun
- Never allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon

## **Recruitment and training of staff, Chaperones, and volunteers**

- Teachers must have appropriate DBS check as a basic minimum and be able to supply further evidence of good character.
- Ensure all Chaperones are registered with the local authority in which they reside and have an enhanced DBS check.
- Teachers must have proven relevant professional qualifications or expertise which will be independently verified.
- Teachers must be a good role model to pupils and seek to uphold the standards of their profession at all times.
- All supervising adults and volunteers with substantial access to children must have appropriate criminal record clearance or work alongside someone who has.
- All persons with substantial access to children must read, sign and retain a copy of this Policy.

## **Responding to allegations or suspicions**

It is not ACT Youth Theatre's responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place, but there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

## **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 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 Abuse may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates or induces illness in a child.
- **Sexual Abuse** – Forcing or enticing a child/young person 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 the 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.

### **Legislation, Policy, and Guidance**

ACT Youth Theatre will adhere to the relevant legislation when working with children and young people under the age of 18 as outlined in the following:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

### **Suspicion of Abuse**

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused should be reported to **Pauley and/or Jennifer Heron 07582 022 047**, or to **the Child Protection Officer, Emma Butcher 07503163898**, who will refer the allegation to Children's Services Social Care, who may involve the police. If the Child Protection Officer is not available, go direct to **Children's Services Social Care 0333 240 1727** or the **police 101 (non-emergency)**.

### **Disclosure of Abuse**

If a child tells you that they or another young person is being abused:

- Always stop and listen straight away, show that you take their allegations seriously.
- Encourage the child to talk but never ask leading questions, interrupt or ask the child to repeat itself.
- Never promise to keep what is said confidential or a 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.
- Record what has been said accurately and as soon as possible. Use the child's own words. Make a note of the time, location, whether anyone else was present, and of the child's demeanour.
- Ensure that your concerns are reported immediately to either Pauley, Jennifer or Emma (child Protection Officer).
- Do not confront the alleged abuser.

### **Handling Allegations**

- If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff it must be reported as a matter of urgency to the child protection officer who will refer to Children's Services Social Care. If the allegation is against the child protection officer, then the information should be reported to Pauley or Jennifer Heron or directly to Children's Services Social Care.
- The alleged perpetrator should not be made aware of the allegation at this point.

### **Recording**

- In all situations the details of an allegation or reported incident must be recorded. Make accurate notes of time, dates, incident or disclosure, people involved, what was said and done and by whom, action taken to investigate, further action taken, e.g. suspension of individual and if relevant: reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, name of person reporting and to whom it was reported.  
**The Record must be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know.**

- **DO NOT worry that you might be mistaken; you have a responsibility to pass on your concerns following a disclosure. Never think that abuse is impossible, or that an accusation about a person you know well and trust is bound to be wrong.**
- For children, parents, teachers and volunteers needing support to deal with the aftermath of abuse, the British Association for Counselling Directory is available:  
Tel: 01788 550899 [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk) email [bac@bacp.co.uk](mailto:bac@bacp.co.uk)  
British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ.

#### **Bullying and Cyberbullying during ACT Youth Theatre sessions and events:**

- If bullying is suspected, follow the same actions as in “Suspicious of Abuse” and “Disclosure of Abuse” above.
- Take all signs of bullying very seriously

#### **Action towards the bully/bullies:**

- Talk and explain the situation and try to get the bully to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek a genuine apology to the victim.
- Inform the bully’s parents
- Insist on the return of “borrowed” items or that the bully compensate the victim
- Provide support for the reporting teacher/supervisor/volunteer
- Encourage and support the bully to change behaviour
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress
- Inform all organisation members of action taken
- Keep a written record of action taken

#### **Concerns about bullying and cyberbullying outside of ACT Youth Theatre sessions and events:**

- Report your concerns to the Child Protection Officer who should contact Children’s Services Social Care or the police as soon as possible. If the Child Protection Officer is not available, go direct to Children’s Services Social Care or the police immediately.
- Children’s Services Social Care will decide how to involve the parents/carers and all information should be confidential on a need to know basis only.

#### **Mobile Phones and other recording devices:**

- **In Class:** Mobile phones should be kept with students’ personal belongings in their bags unless authorised by the teacher in charge to be used to aid the work being done (e.g. to listen to music for dance/singing or to use internet for research etc.) This will be determined by the teacher in charge of that particular lesson.
- **At Break Times:** Students can use their phones during break times at class, but where possible they should be encouraged to engage in social interaction with their peers instead.
- **Rehearsals taking place at Theatres and venues where students are situated in Changing/Dressing Rooms:** mobile phones and any other devices with cameras (such as ipads etc.) are strictly not allowed in the dressing rooms.  
Chaperones will give each group of students time outside of the dressing room area at which

time they can take pictures.

If a student is seen using a mobile or camera device in the dressing room area they will be asked to put it away. If a child has to be told more than 3 times the device will be confiscated and kept by a chaperone until the end of the day.

### **Covid 19**

In the light of the Covid 19 Pandemic all tutors, workshop leaders, and chaperones should:

- Encourage students to wash/sanitize their hands frequently, particularly before eating.
- When backstage at a performance all shared props and costumes must be sanitised between uses.
- Where possible, ventilate the workspace by opening windows/doors etc.

### **Child Protection Contacts:**

- Jennifer and Pauley Heron: 07582 022 047
- Child Protection Officer: Emma Butcher 07503163898
- Children's Services Social Care: 0333 240 1727
- Police: 101 (non-emergency).
- NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000
- British Association for Counselling: 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ  
Tel: 01788 550899; Email: [bac@bacp.co.uk](mailto:bac@bacp.co.uk); Web: [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)

**I certify that I have read and understood all of the guidelines, policies and procedures contained in this document and will make every effort to uphold them at all times.**

**Signed..... Date.....**

**Name: ..... (Print)**

**Position:.....**

\*Please detach this page and return to Pauley or Jennifer Heron.

**ACT Youth Theatre: Child Protection, Health & Safety Policy and Procedures – Acknowledgement**

I certify that I have read and understood all of the guidelines, policies and procedures contained in the ACT Youth Theatre: Child Protection, Health & Safety Policy and Procedures document and will make every effort to uphold them at all times.

Signed..... Date.....

Name: ..... (Print)

Position:.....