

The Lowestoft Players – Child Protection Procedures

FOR ALL MEMBERS

Responsibilities of the Society:

At the onset of any production involving children the society will:

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process
- Engage in the effective recruitment of chaperones, including appropriate vetting
- Know how to get in touch with 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, all parents shown where the society's Child Protection Policy is displayed.
- All parents have a responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after all rehearsals and performances

Unsupervised Contact:

- The society will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children
- If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, then contact will be carried out in a public area or in a room with the door open

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 dance/routine

Managing Sensitive Information:

- Parents will be advised that the society intends to use photographic material for promotional purposes
- The society's web-based materials and activities will be carefully 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 child protection officer. If you suspect that the person with responsibility for child protection is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to :
REDACTED
- Please make a dated record of what you witnessed as well as your response, in case there is a follow up in which you are involved
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of the society, the individual will be suspended until the investigation is concluded, they will be excluded from rehearsals, theatre etc

Disclosure of Abuse:

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

- Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child to tell you at their own pace, ask questions only for clarification
- Don't promise to keep it a secret. Use the first opportunity you have to share it with the child protection officer. Make it clear to the child 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
- As soon as possible after disclosing the conversation, make a dated record of what was said, using the child's own words

Recording:

- In all situations, including those in which the cause for 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 record shall be made of the time and date of the incident or disclosure, the parties involved, what was said or done and by whom, and any action taken to investigate the matter, any further action taken eg. Suspension of an individual, where relevant the reasons why the matter was not referred to the statutory agency, and the name of the person reporting and to whom it was reported
- The record will be stored securely and share only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation

Right & Confidentiality:

- If a complaint is made against a member of the society he or she will be made aware of his rights under the society's disciplinary procedures
- 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 1998. Remember also that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being held
- In criminal law the Crown or other prosecuting authority has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Accidents:

- To avoid accidents, chaperones and children will be advised of the '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 that will be undertaken
- If a child is injured while in the care of the society, first aid will be administered and the injury recorded in the society's accident book. The entry will be signed by the person who has responsibility for child protection

Criminal Record Disclosure:

- An enhanced disclosure is required for anyone with unsupervised access to children
- By law the chaperone is acting in *loco parentis* and should exercise the care which a good parent might be expected to give to a child. The maximum number of children in a chaperones care should not exceed 12
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the committee
- If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the Director and not allow the child to continue
- Under the Dangerous Performance Act no child of compulsory school age is permitted to do anything which may endanger life and limb. This could include working on wires or heavy lifting. Chaperones should tell the Director to cease using children in this way, and should contact the local authority
- Children are not allowed to leave the theatre unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents. Children will be adequately supervised while going backwards and forwards to the toilet
- Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms