

Policy statement

It is the policy of the Marina Theatre that the welfare of the children and young people is and that everyone who may use or visit the theatre, has a right to protection from physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Children and young people are defined as under the age of 18. We also acknowledge our responsibilities in respect of adult volunteers or visitors who might be deemed to be 'at risk' because they are 'vulnerable'. *(A Vulnerable Adult is defined in accordance with The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order 2002 as a person aged 18 or over who has a condition of the following type: (i) a substantial learning or physical disability; (ii) a physical or mental illness or mental disorder, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs; or (iii) a significant reduction in physical or mental capacity.*

The Marina Theatre is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults. It recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote best practice and to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm, abuse and exploitation.

The Marina Theatre acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. Its staff and volunteers will endeavour to work together to encourage the development of an ethos that embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of all children, young people and adults.

Procedures

Policy Aims

The aim of this Policy is to promote good practice in:

- Providing children, young people and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the Marina Theatre
- Allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues

The Marina Theatre believes that:

- The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is vital, and that of their safety and welfare
- 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 staff and volunteers working for in the Marina Theatre have a responsibility to report concerns to their Line Manager, Chief Executive or dedicated Safeguard lead.

The Marina Theatre has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in our in-house classes or productions from harm.

All children have a right to protection and the needs of disabled children and others who

may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.

Promoting Good Practice

The Marina Theatre will encourage the following:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g., avoid private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment i.e., no secrets)
- Treating all young people/vulnerable adults equally, and with respect and dignity
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with students (e.g., it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child)
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process
- Making performing fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by dance boards such as IDTA. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people should always be consulted, and their agreement gained.
- Ensuring that all material (i.e., scripts /scene content) is age appropriate and never makes a child feel uncomfortable or concerned.
- Keeping up to date with the skills, qualifications and insurance in performing arts.
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people, always aiming to speak in a positive manner and remembering that building confidence and ensuring the child is having a positive experience is always the main aim.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given in an accident report book.
- Informing parents if any child is taken ill or injured during class.
- Never offering or allowing children to be transported home or to events in staff or volunteer car without expressed permission

The following practice not acceptable. A member of staff or volunteer should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves

Guidelines for use of photographic filming

The Marina Theatre does not allow any filming or photographing to take place UNLESS;

- We have signed consent in advance from parents.
- We do not allow parents to take photos of their children in shows, nor to make videos.
- We hire professional, DBS checked photographers and videographers and parents are given the option to purchase photographs of their own child.

- We ask all children to put mobile phones away in bags, completely out of sight before starting a class.

Recruitment and selecting staff and volunteers

The Marina Theatre recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. When undertaking pre-selection checks the following should be included:

- All our staff; freelance / volunteers / assistants, should complete an application form. This will elect information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau (DBS CHECK). DBS are not necessary in all cases as we do not envisage either staff or volunteers being alone with Children or vulnerable adults as a normal part of their day-to-day jobs. If this is the case DBS checks will be mandatory
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo)

Responding to suspicions or allegations

- It is not the responsibility of anyone working at The Marina Theatre in a paid or unpaid capacity to take responsibility or to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. The Marina Theatre will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague/volunteer is or may be abusing a child. When there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:
 - A criminal investigation.
 - A child protection investigation.
 - A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation.

Suspected abuse

Any suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to our Safeguarding lead: [REDACTED] Theatre Operation Manager, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child or vulnerable adult in question and any others who may be at risk.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying or intimidation. The Marina Theatre

- Have a zero-tolerance policy to bullying
- Take all signs of bullying very seriously
- Encourage all children and vulnerable adults to speak and share their concerns•
- Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone of authority
- Create an open environment
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe
 - Speak with the victim and the bully/ separately
 - Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else

- Keep records of what is said (what happened by whom, when etc)

Report any concerns to our Safeguarding lead

