

New Era Players – Safeguarding Policy

New Era players recognises that it has a duty of care under the Children and Young Person's Act 1963, the Child(Performances) Regulations 1968, The Protection of Children Act 1999 and The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

The society recognises that abuse can take different forms: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. The society is committed to practices that protect children from harm. All members of the society accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm and support this policy when becoming members of the society.

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 be protected from abuse.
- All allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and acted upon swiftly and appropriately.
- All members of the society should be aware of how to respond appropriately.

The society will ensure that:

- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity
- The duty of care for children will always be put first
- A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers the children to share in the decision making process
- Enthusiastic and instructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned
- All adults in the society will provide a positive role model when dealing with other people
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour
- It will keep up to date with relevant legislation linked to the safe running of the society, including child protection
- It will keep contact details for parents of children involved in a production with the adult leading a rehearsal or performance, in case of emergencies. Direct contact with children and young people will only be made with prior agreement with parents.

The society has a dedicated Child Protection Officer who will ensure that this policy is adhered to. *This person is Stephen Bennett and can be contacted on 01264 360255.*

This policy will be monitored by the Executive Committee and will be reviewed annually.

Date: August 2016

Signed:

New Era Players Safeguarding Procedures

Responsibilities of the Society

At the outset of any production involving children under the age of 18, the society will:

- Assess any risk and monitor this throughout the rehearsals and performance
- Ensure all involved know the person responsible for Child Protection
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals responsible for the child's welfare, including appropriate vetting (possibly in conjunction with the Local Authority Children's Services)
- Ensure that the children are supervised at all times
- Know how to get in touch with the Local Authority Social Services (Children's Services) in case the need arises.

Parents:

- The society believes that it is important to build a partnership between parents and the society.
- Parents of children involved in a production are encouraged to take an active part in the care of the children when being involved with the society. All parents of children involved in a production will be given a copy of the Child Protection Policy
- All parents should collect or arrange to have their children collected, after rehearsals and performances; it is not the responsibility of the society to transport children.

Unsupervised Contact

- The society will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with a child.
- If possible, there will always be two adults in an area when working with children.
- If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, then all steps will be taken to minimise risk; eg in an open area or an area with an open door or clear visibility.
- If it is predicted that an adult will need unsupervised contact with a child, then they will be asked to undertake a CRB check.

Physical Contact

- All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.
- Members of the wardrobe team will ensure that they always have a second adult present when trying on and fitting costumes.
- Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary for the particular activity
- Adults will seek the permission of the child before any contact and explain the purpose

Managing Sensitive Material

- The society will seek the permission of parents before using any images of children for publicity or on the website and will monitor the same for inappropriate use
- The society will ensure confidentiality when storing or managing confidential information such as CRB checks.

Suspicion of Abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child whilst in the care of the society, please make it known to the person responsible for Child Protection
- If the person you suspect of abuse of a child is the Chairman, you should make your concerns known to the Vice-Chair
- Please make a clear and concise record of your concern when reporting suspected abuse, as this could be used in later proceedings

- If an allegation is made against a member of the society or a chaperone, then they will be removed from their role immediately and have no more contact with children or the theatre while investigations are under way.

Disclosure of Abuse

If a child discloses to you that abuse has taken place:

- Remain calm and in control but do not delay reporting the disclosure
- Listen carefully to what is being said. Make clear and concise notes only of what the child has said. Make sure that you date and sign your account. Allow the child to talk at their own pace and do not ask leading questions; only ask questions to clarify a point
- Do not promise absolute confidentiality – it is important that the child knows that their concerns are taken seriously but that you will have to report the information to the person responsible for Child Protection, who will inform the relevant authorities
- Do not make promises that you cannot keep
- Make sure that you tell the child that they ‘did the right thing’
- Tell the child what you are going to do next
- Any written accounts will only be made known to, and held by, those who need to know.

Rights and Confidentiality

- Both the child making the allegations and the accused have right of confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998
- Any information leaked could jeopardise any future criminal proceedings
- The accused is assumed innocent until proven guilty

Accidents

- To avoid accidents, children and chaperones will be made aware of safe conduct around the theatre and areas that should not be accessed
- Suitable clothing and footwear will be advised to be worn
- If a child is injured in the theatre then appropriate first aid will be administered and the accident recorded and brought to the attention of the Executive Committee. The child’s parent will be advised. If the accident is deemed serious enough, then an ambulance will be called immediately before parents are contacted.
- It is the duty of a parent to inform the society of any previous injury a child has before embarking on a production.

Criminal Records Disclosures

It is the society’s policy, that the director and technical director, as well as the person responsible for Child Protection, will have undertaken a CRB check and will only be allowed to undertake that role where children are involved, if the result is negative. This will also apply to chaperones or other adults responsible for the supervision of children during a production.

Chaperones

- A chaperone is acting ‘in loco parentis’ and should take the same care of a child that its parent would
- The maximum number of children supervised by a single chaperone will not exceed 12
- If a chaperone is not known by the society, then they will need to provide all the necessary evidence needed for a CRB check
- They will be made aware of the society’s Child Protection Policy and procedure
- Chaperones will not normally have unsupervised access to children in a production
- Under the Dangerous Performances Act, no child of compulsory school age is allowed to do anything that may endanger life and limb. If anyone thinks that the conditions in which a child is expected to work are insufficient, then they should inform the supervising adult. If this is

ignored, then they should remove the child and contact the Executive Committee or, failing that, the Local Authority.

- Children will be kept together at all times when waiting for their involvement in a production and chaperones should know where they are at all times
- Children should not leave the theatre without chaperones unless accompanied by their parents or an adult agreed by their parent in advance
- Where possible, children should have their own area to change or come in their costume
- Chaperones should inform the society of any accidents and know where safety equipment is in the theatre
- Children should be signed in and out of the theatre in the same way as adults
- If a parent is late or has not collected a child, then the chaperone should stay with the child and ideally a second adult should be present until the child is collected.

Saturday, September 10, 2011