



## THE B.C. Theatre Club

### CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURE

#### Responsibilities of the Festival

At the outset of a production involving children the festival should:

- Undertake a risk assessment i.e. imagine all possible situations (abuse, injury etc) that could occur during the time that children are in the festival environment and monitor the risk.
- Inform all members of the Festival staff of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Identify to the teams the person with dedicated responsibility for child protection. (see notes)
- Inform teams that they, the team, will be responsible for effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting, to ensure that children are supervised adequately and appropriately at all time – see notes on chaperones.
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case it needs to report a concern.
- Obtain a criminal record disclosure if it is predicted that any adult involved with the Festival is likely to require *unsupervised* contact with children.
- Identify the member of the competing team who has Child Protection Responsibility for that team and ensure that the competing team has its own policies in place and obtain a signed statement to that effect and written contact details at home and during the festival for that person. That person must also be asked to confirm that the visiting team has carried out its own risk assessment, disclose the assessment and produce the Team policy on Child Protection which must then be compared.

#### Health & Safety

- Chaperones and children should be advised of “house rules” regarding health and safety and must be notified of areas that are out of bounds.
- If a child is injured while at the Festival, a designated first-aider should administer first aid (supervised if possible) and the injury should be recorded in the Festival’s accident book. This record should be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for child protection and should be stored in line with data protection guidelines.
- If a child joins the production with an obvious physical injury a record of this should be made in the accident book. The record should be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for child protection and should be stored in line with data protection guidelines.

#### Unsupervised Contact

- The Festival should ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.
- There should always be a minimum of two adults in the room when working with children.
- If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps should be taken to minimize risk.

#### Physical Contact

- Adults should only have physical contact with children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity within the festival and the purpose of the contact must be made clear. The local authority may have specific guidelines on this topic.

#### Managing sensitive information

- Written permission from parents must be produced **by the teams/groups** to the Festival Organizers for use of any photographic material featuring children for promotional use or any other purposes.
- The Festival’s web-based materials and activities should be carefully monitored for inappropriate use. I.e. use of appropriate images and the anonymity of children must be maintained.
- The Festival should ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of its staff, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such as criminal record disclosures.



### **Suspicion of abuse**

- If abuse of a child is seen or suspected during the Festival this should be made known to the person(s) with responsibility for child protection. If the person(s) with responsibility for child protection is/are the source of the accusation/suspicion, concerns should be made known to another senior member of the Festival organization and the visiting team.
- Witness records, and a note of the Festival's response, should be made. If a serious allegation is made against any member of the Festival, chaperone, venue staff etc., the festival committee has the right to suspend that individual immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual may be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms etc. and not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production.

### **Appendices for All Festival Staff and Competing Teams**

#### **Disclosure of abuse**

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

- Remain calm and in control but do not delay taking action. Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child to tell you at its own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Do not 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.
- Reassure the child that 'they did the right thing' in telling someone.
- Tell the child what you are going to do next.
- Speak immediately to the designated person with responsibility for child protection. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually social services or the police.
- 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.

#### **Recording**

- In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, the details of an allegation or reported incident must be recorded in writing, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a statutory child protection agency.
- An accurate note should be made of the date and time of the incident and disclosure, the parties involved, what was said or done and by whom, any action taken to investigate the matter, any further action taken e.g. suspension of an individual, where relevant the reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, and the name of the persons reporting and to whom it was reported.
- The record should be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation.

#### **Rights & Confidentiality**

- If a complaint is made against a member of the Festival or a Competing Team he or she should be made aware of his/her rights under the Festival'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 released.
- **In criminal law the Crown or other prosecuting authority has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.**



### **Criminal Record Disclosures**

- If the Festival believes it is in its best interests to obtain criminal record disclosures for Festival personnel it must 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.
- The Festival should have a written code of practice for the handling of disclosure information.
- The Festival should ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.
- Written evidence that each visiting team has considered this question and has in place appropriate rules which must be produced is also required

### **Appendices for Competing Teams**

If you do not already have a CPP policy in place the guidelines below may be helpful.

#### **Chaperones**

- Chaperones should be appointed by the team for the care of children during the Festival. 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 10 (as suggested by Arts Council of England)
- Potential chaperones should be required to supply photographic proof of identity (e.g. passport, driving licence) and two references (with names and addresses) from individuals with knowledge of their previous work with children, unless already well known to the team.
- Chaperones must be made aware of the Festival's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Chaperones should 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 should be sought. See notes below.
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the Festival staff. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily the chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue.
- During performances, chaperones should be responsible for seeing children have signed into the building.
- Children should be kept together at all times except when using separate dressing rooms.
- Chaperones should be aware of where the children are at all times.
- Children are not to leave the theatre unless in the company of their parents or chaperones.
- Children should be adequately and appropriately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
- Children should not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms unchaperoned.
- Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures in the venue, and should ensure that children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger.
- Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by the Festival.
- You must produce all policies and documents requested of you and provide a certificate in writing identifying your Responsible person, chaperones etc with home and festival contact details

**NOTE: Whilst every care has been taken in the preparation of this document it is not intended to be a complete guide to the law. Festivals and Teams should seek appropriate advice on specific problems.**



**Notes on above:**

**Dedicated or Named Person**

This is a responsible member of the Festival staff who deals with all the issues and allegations regarding child protection. The person should know how to behave in case of an incident and have contact numbers and names for the relevant authorities. (Social services, police). Each team should also have a dedicated or named person with such responsibility who is identified with full contact details to the Festival dedicated or named person

**Policies and procedures**

These should be reviewed every year.

The policy should be dated

A contact name and address should be on the policy

A copy of the CPP policy and procedures should be somewhere visible

The Competing teams must produce copies of their equivalent policies to the Festival Dedicated Person who will compare and check them. In case of conflict the Festival policy and personnel will prevail during the festival and in particular on festival premises.

**Disclosures**

A disclosure is the official document containing information on working with children held by the police and government agencies.

**Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)**, which acts for England and Wales, offers two types of disclosure- standard and enhanced

**Disclosure Scotland** offers 3 types of disclosure – basic, standard and enhanced

**Standard disclosure apply to both agencies:**

**Standard** – this provides information of both spent and unspent convictions and states if the individual is banned from working with children

**Enhanced** – this provides all information in the standard disclosure as well as any information from the local police records which a chief of police feels is relevant.

It would be prudent to obtain an enhanced disclosure for anyone in contact with children.

**PECS**, which works for Northern Ireland, offers one type of disclosure, which provides criminal records, as well as any relevant information held by other UK agencies.

More information available on [www.disclosure.gov.uk](http://www.disclosure.gov.uk)

**Applications for Disclosure:**

NODA has offered to act as counter-signatory for members of NDFA who wish to make a Criminal Record Board Disclosure Application, and they charge an administration fee of £25 per application. NODA also offer Associate Membership to NDFA members, which results in a reduced fee per application of £10.

For more information please contact NODA, 58-60 Lincoln Road, Peterborough, PE1 2RZ  
Tel. 0870 770 2480 Fax. 0870 770 2490 [www.noda.org.uk](http://www.noda.org.uk)

**Useful contacts and websites:**

**Arts Council of England**

Email: [enquires@artscouncil.co.uk](mailto:enquires@artscouncil.co.uk)

**Scotland disclosure**

[www.disclosureScotland.co.uk](http://www.disclosureScotland.co.uk)

**Criminal Records Bureau, England & Wales**

[www.crb.gov.uk](http://www.crb.gov.uk)

**PECS (Pre-employment Consultancy Service) Guide Making the right choice**

[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)

**NSPCC – two booklets – `step by step guide to organizations to safeguard children`  
020 7825 2775**

Email: [infounit@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:infounit@nspcc.org.uk)

[www.nspcc.org.uk/inform](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform)