

PYRFORD LITTLE THEATRE

Child Protection Policy

Pyrford Little Theatre (PLT) recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Child (Performances) Regulations 1968, the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

PLT recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. PLT is committed to practice which protects children from harm. All members of PLT accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

PLT 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 protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All members of PLT should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

PLT will ensure that:

- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.
- The duty of care to 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 constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism.
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned.
- All adult members of PLT provide a positive role model for dealing with other people.
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
- It will keep up-to-date with health and safety legislation.
- It will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children.
- It will undertake relevant development and training.
- It will hold a register of every child involved with PLT and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

PLT has child protection procedures which accompany this policy.

The role of the Child Protection Officer

- Establish contact with the appropriate Social Services team responsible for child protection
- Provide information and advice to PLT members as and when required
- Liaise with statutory organisations as required
- Where appropriate make referrals to the independent safeguarding authority
- Keep PLT committee informed about any action taken and any further action required
- Ensure records are maintained and stored confidentially

PLT has a dedicated Child Protection Officer who is in charge of ensuring that this child protection policy and procedures are adhered to including referring any allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities. This Officer is **Mr Robin Spice** and he can be contacted on **01483 481495**. In his absence any child protection matters should be brought to the attention of **Jonathan Howell, Chairman of PLT (Tel No. 01483 851337)**.

Suspicious will not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.

It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies. If, for any reason, it is believed that the nominated persons have not responded appropriately to the concerns, the child protection agencies may be contacted directly.

Date: 18 November 2019

Child Protection Procedures

Responsibilities of Pyrford Little Theatre PLT

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

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk through the production process.
- Identify at the outset the person with designated responsibility for child protection.
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting (if necessary in consultation with the local education authority).
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times.
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case it needs to report a concern.

Supervision for activities and services by PLT

PLT will aim to protect children from abuse and our team members from false allegations by adopting the following guidelines:

- Keep a register of all children attending our activities
- Keep a register of all PLT members who attend at the same time as any children
- The registers will include arrival and departure times and the names of others in the building at the time.
- PLT members will record any unusual events. (See Confidential Recording Form at Appendix I).
- Written consent from a parent or guardian will be obtained for every child/person attending PLT activities.
- Matrons (normally parents of the children concerned) will be recruited to chaperone children/young people when they are attending PLT activities.
- All PLT members will treat all children/young people with dignity and respect in both attitude and actions.

PLT Member Conduct

PLT members should not:

- Be alone with young people.
- Unlock or lock up premises without another adult present.
- Transport young people in a car or minibus without another adult being present.
- Take young people to their home.
- Make inappropriate contact with young people i.e. develop relationships outside the club setting.
- Leave young people unattended.
- Leave young people in the presence of adults who are not suitably trained.
- Leave young people in the presence of adults not known to PLT.
- Leave young people in the presence of adults who have not had the relevant DBS checks.
- Show favouritism to young people within the organisation.

Parents

- PLT believes it to be important that there is a partnership between it and parents. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the society and to share responsibility for the care of children. All parents will be given a copy of PLT's Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of PLT to take children home.

Unsupervised Contact

- PLT will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.
- If possible, there will always be **two** adults in the room when working with children.
- If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimise risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area, or in a designated room with a door open.
- If it is predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, he or she may be required to obtain a disclosure and barring service certificate.

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 activity.
- Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

Managing sensitive information

- Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes.
- PLT will ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of its member, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such as disclosure and barring service documentation.

Photographs and images

- As there are risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on websites and theatre programmes, PLT will always consult and obtain the permission of the respective parents before publishing any photographs. Use of names of individuals in photographs will be limited and no additional information will be added that might otherwise help locate children in any of our theatre productions.

E-Safety

- Due to the potential harm that can be caused to children by hurtful or abusive texts/ emails or being enticed to engage in harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings, PLT will never communicate with children via their mobile phones. Communication will always be made directly with the respective parents of children in our theatre productions. In addition, incidents of cyber-bullying by children in our care via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying.

Suspicion of abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of PLT please make this known to the person with responsibility for child protection (Robin Spice). If you suspect that the person with responsibility for child protection is the source of the problem, you should make sure your concerns known to the Chairman of the PLT Committee, Mr Jonathan Howell.
- Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed as well as your response, in case there is follow-up in which you are involved.
- If a serious allegation is made against a member of PLT, chaperone or personnel connected to Pyrford Village Hall, that individual will be asked not to return until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from Pyrford Village Hall and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production.

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 their own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Don't 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 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 have 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 will be recorded, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a statutory child protection agency.
- An accurate note using the Confidential Recording Form (see Appendix I) shall be made of the date and time of the incident or 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. exclusion of an individual, where relevant the reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, the name of the persons reporting and to whom it was reported.
- The record will 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 PLT, he or she will be made aware of his/her rights under PLT'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 2018. 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.

Accidents

- To avoid accidents, chaperones and children will be advised of "house rules" regarding health and 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 PLT, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in PLT's accident book. This record will be countersigned by the person with responsibility for child protection or in his absence his deputy.
- If a child joins the production with an obvious physical injury a record of this will be made in the accident book. This record will be countersigned by the person with responsibility for child protection or in his absence his deputy. This record can be useful if a formal allegation is made later and will also be a record that the child did not sustain the injury while participating in the production.

Chaperones

- Chaperones will be appointed by the PLT director of the production concerned, for the care of children during the production process. 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 12.

- Potential chaperones will be required to supply photographic proof of identity (e.g. passport, driving licence) and two references from individuals with knowledge of their previous work with children, unless already well known to PLT. They will also be asked to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children.
- Chaperones will be made aware of PLT's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Chaperones will 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 disclosure and barring service check will be sought.
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the director of the production. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily, the chaperone should consider not allowing the child/children to continue.
- If a chaperone considers the child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the director of the production and not allow the child to continue.
- Under the Children's Dangerous Performances Act 1879, no child of compulsory school age is permitted to do anything which may endanger life or limb. This could include working on wires or heavy lifting. Chaperones should tell the producer to cease using children in this way and should contact the local authority.
- During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the Hall entrance or other venue entrance and signing them into the building.
- Children will be kept together at all times except when using separate dressing rooms.
- Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times.
- Children are not to leave the theatre unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents.
- Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
- Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms.
- Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures at the Hall or other venue and will 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 PLT.
- Chaperones should examine accident books each day. If an accident has occurred, the director of the production is not allowed to use that child until a medically qualified opinion has been obtained (not just the work of the parent or child).
- Chaperones should have written arrangements for children after performances. If someone different is to collect the child, a telephone call should be made to the parent to confirm the arrangements.
- Children should be signed out when leaving and a record made of the person collecting.
- If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child or make arrangements to take them home.
- If PLT believes it is in the best interests to obtain a disclosure and barring service certificate for chaperones or other personnel, it will 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.

REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE

Confidential Recording Sheet

Organisation:

Name of person reporting:

Name of child/young person:

Age and date of birth:

Ethnicity:

Religion:

First language:

Disability:

Parent/Carer's name:

Home address/Tel. No:

Are you reporting your concerns or reporting someone else's. Please give details:

Brief description of what has prompted the concerns; include date, time, and specific incidents:

Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?

Have you spoken to the child/young person? If so, what was said?

Have you spoken to the parent(s)? If so, what was said?

Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, please give details?

Have you consulted anybody else? Please give details?

Person reported to and date of reporting:

Signature of person reporting:

Today's date:

Action taken:

Notes:

