

Parish Players Child Protection Policy

Parish Players is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children (i.e. members under the age of 18 and any other children involved in a production) and has therefore drawn up these procedures to ensure that young people are protected as far as is reasonably possible.

We recognise that every member has a duty and responsibility toward other members, particularly under 18s, and therefore require all members to read our Child Protection Policy and agree to abide by it.

Parish Players has a designated Child Protection Officer responsible for ensuring that the child protection policy and procedures are followed. That person's name is Andrea Matsell and she can be contacted at andrea.matsell@googlemail.com.

Parish Players child protection policy is based on information and guidance from NODA and the NSPCC.

The Committee

At the beginning of any production involving children (on or off stage) the committee will:

- Undertake a risk assessment & monitor risk throughout the production process
- Identify the person with designated responsibility for child protection
- Draw up a list of every child involved in the production and retain a contact name and number at every rehearsal/performance in case of emergency
- Ensure that the dates and expected finish times of rehearsals and performances are communicated by the director, in advance, to all members involved in the production

The Parents

- Parish Players have many parent & child members, and would encourage any parent who may be interested in getting involved with the group.
- All parents will be given a copy of our Child Protection Policy & other relevant information.
- Parents are responsible for making arrangements for their child to travel to and from rehearsals. It is not the responsibility of Parish Players to take children home.
- Parents are free to wait for their child inside the rehearsal room if they wish.

Unsupervised Contact

- Unsupervised contact means when only one adult is present with one or more children.
- Most activities will be in groups of various sizes. However, if unsupervised contact is unavoidable (e.g. rehearsing a solo song), care will be taken to avoid risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area or in a designated room with the door open.

Physical Contact

- All adults will maintain an appropriate distance from children
- Even when physical contact is absolutely necessary in relation to a particular dramatic activity, all members will be sensitive to the feelings of others, particularly children

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Dressing Rooms

- Dressing rooms will be single sex
- Each dressing room will have a nominated supervisor, responsible for ensuring the smooth running of the dressing room
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Managing Sensitive Information

- Parental permission will be sought for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes
- Personal information such as age or school, will not be given alongside photographs in programmes or similar
- Photographs & personal information will not be shared with a third party without parental permission

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 person with responsibility for child protection. If you suspect that the person with responsibility for child protection is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the Chairman.
- 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 any member of the society, venue staff etc., that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the rehearsal rooms etc. 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 inform the Chairman and 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 will be recorded, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a statutory child protection agency.

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- An accurate note 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 eg. 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 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 the society he or she will be made aware of his rights
- 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

The obtaining of a criminal record disclosure is not mandatory for organisations outside of the regulated sector – in other words, there is no legal requirement for amateur societies to carry out police checks. However, if the committee feel it is in Parish Players best interests to obtain criminal record disclosures for any person 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.)

Last reviewed: September 2013