

# Child Protection Policy & Procedures

## Our Commitment

Unleashed Theatre Company (UTC) is committed to practices that protect children from harm and creates a 'safer' environment that promotes well-being and security. In so doing, UTC recognises its duty of care under The Children and Young Persons Act 1963, The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014, the Protection of Children Act 1999 and The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

Trustees, staff and volunteers in this organisation recognise and accept our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues that may cause harm to children and promote the concept of the individual's right to be treated with respect and dignity and live in safety.

## Definition

A child is defined as anyone up to the age of 18 years.

## Purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide advice for volunteers and staff working with us to meet our commitment ensuring children feel safe and respected and their parents are confident about their child's welfare.

We have interpreted and taken guidance from other agencies to take preventative measures to protect children from abuse: physical; sexual; psychological/emotional; financial or material; neglect and acts of omission and impairment to their personal and social development.

## UTC believes that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability status, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs, 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 by the production team (especially chaperones) in their role as mandated reporters.
- All trustees, volunteers, members and employees of UTC should be clear on how to respond appropriately to a suspicion or allegation of abuse.

## UTC will ensure that:

- All children are 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 is not be accepted or condoned.
- All adult members of UTC provide a positive role model for dealing with other people.
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
- It keeps up-to-date with all related legislation.
- It keeps informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children.
- Designated persons undertake relevant development and training.
- It holds a register of every child involved and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.
- All staff members and trustees and appropriate volunteers who have direct contact with children have been properly checked and have undertaken Child Protection training.

This policy will be monitored regularly by the trustees subject to annual review.

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# Child Protection Procedures

This document is designed to accompany and support the Child Protection policy. Children are defined as those under the age of 18.

## Responsibilities of UTC

At the onset of any production involving children UTC will:

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process.
- Identify and check at the onset the license of the designated chaperone\.
- Engage in effective recruitment and continual checking of licensed chaperones.
- Ensure children are supervised at all times and maintain a safe and appropriate distance.
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority and social services in case it needs to report a concern.
- Always work in an open environment, encouraging no secrets and unobserved private situations.
- Record any accidents and/or injuries sustained accurately according to the venue's accident policy.
- Ensure the language used around children and young people is appropriate at all times.
- Never permit unsupervised contact with a child.

## Responsibilities of Parents:

- Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of UTC and to share responsibility for the care of their child.
- It is the responsibility of parents to ensure their child attends rehearsals and is collected at the end or gives written permission for their child to make their own way home, if they are over 16. It is NOT the responsibility of the chaperone or UTC to take children home.
- Parents must complete and sign a parental permission slip form before their child will be allowed to participate in the activities of UTC.

## Responsibilities of Chaperones:

Under UK law in the absence of a parent/legal guardian children up to the age of 16 must be accompanied by a licensed chaperone whilst performing in public. A chaperone acts in loco parentis and should exercise the care a good parent would expect to give those children. A chaperones' primary duty is to ensure the health, safety and education of all children in their care, whilst ensuring no child is discriminated against.

UTC will ensure that:

- A person acting as a chaperone is officially licensed and the license is checked by UTC.

- The licensed chaperone wears their official chaperone card (on a lanyard) at all times.
- In line with legislation the number of children in the chaperone's shall not exceed 12
- During the performances the licensed chaperone/s is/are to remain in sight of the child/children and be able to account for their whereabouts.
- Chaperones must not permit the child/children to be in or enter the same space as adults when dressing.
- Chaperones will not consume alcohol or other awareness altering substance whilst entrusted with a child/children.
- Children should be signed out when leaving and a record made of the parent/guardian with whom they depart.

### Abuse

All staff and volunteers working with children will undergo safeguarding training. All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly in accordance with safeguarding training and relevant guidelines