

SAFEGUARDING POLICY-CHILD PROTECTION

“The welfare of the child is paramount”
1989 Children’s Act

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

Surrey Youth Theatre Godalming is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children and young people in order for them to benefit from and enjoy all the opportunities the Youth Theatre has to offer. To help us do this effectively we have implemented Child Protection and Health & Safety policies which are designed to protect members of our Youth Theatre as well as our staff and volunteers.

We do this by:

- Recognizing that all children have the right to freedom from abuse.
- Recognizing that the welfare of the child is paramount
- Ensuring no child or group of children must be treated any less favorably than others
- Ensuring that our staff are carefully selected and vetted.
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the referral procedures at Surrey Youth Theatre
- Ensuring staff and volunteers accept responsibility for helping to prevent the abuse of children in their care.
- Continuing to develop awareness in all staff and volunteers of the need for Safeguarding and their responsibilities in identifying abuse.
- Responding swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and providing parents and children with the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have.
- Informing children and parents of the policy and procedures as appropriate
- Appointing a nominated Safeguarding Officer who will take specific responsibility for child safety and act as the main point of contact for parents, children and outside agencies.
- Ensuring access to confidential information is restricted to the Safeguarding Officer and/or Director or the appropriate external authorities.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of our Child Protection Policy annually.
- Referring to all associated policies and procedures which promote children’s safety and welfare eg with regards to: health and safety, anti-bullying, protection of children online, and photography
- Ensuring that outside agencies are involved as appropriate.
- Ensuring young people know that there are adults at Surrey Youth Theatre whom they can approach if they are worried.

Surrey Youth Theatre Godalming is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy working environment for all its staff, volunteers, guests, visitors and members while in or working at its premises.

- Children are made aware of the importance of practising each activity safely
- Children are made aware of the importance of listening to instructions
- A member of staff who is first aid trained is always present
- A small first aid pack remains in the building
- Parents are required to fill in a consent form detailing wishes in a medical emergency
- Children are advised to warm up before any strenuous physical exercise
- Children are required to wear sensible footwear and clothing
- Children are made aware of the fire exits in the building
- Children are aware of what to do in the event of a fire
- Children are advised against lifting each other and making unnecessary physical contact

Review and monitoring of policy: Reviewed annually or in instances of legislative change

Last update: September 2024

Distribution: To all volunteers and staff; members of the public on request and parents

- Children must refrain from bringing scooters, skateboards etc into the building
- Children are required to report spillages to a staff member
- Children must not bring anything that may be used as a weapon to youth theatre
- Staff members are expected to check for any hazards before, during and after a session
- Any accidents are to be logged by a member of staff in the building's accident log book which is stored in the locked cupboard in the rehearsal room.

CHILD ABUSE

Potential signs of child abuse:

Staff and Helpers can help to prevent harm by keeping an eye out for the signs or indicators of harm, and then taking appropriate action early.

Staff and Helpers should pay attention to:

- Physical signs of abuse or neglect. This could include bruises, burns, fractures (broken bones) or regular patterns of injuries.
- Behavioural signs of abuse or neglect. This could include showing little or no emotion when hurt, seeming to be afraid of their parents, alcohol or drug abuse, or engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour.
- If the child talks about being abused.

How to Respond:

- Make a formal notification to the Safeguarding Officer or Director if you encounter abuse in the course of your time at SYTG.
- They will talk to you and make a report or fill out an Incident Report Form (Appendix B).
- You are required to make a report each time you become aware of any further grounds for your belief.
- You don't have to prove that the abuse has occurred.
- It is your principal responsibility to report your belief.

Each situation is different and requires a different response. To consider the most effective response to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing, you may need to gather information and facts. This could include:

- Make notes – fill out an Incident Report Form (Appendix B). Date and sign the entry.
- Continue to observe – record what you observe on the additional notes section on the overleaf of the incident Report Form, and date and sign each entry.
- Consult colleagues – get support and advice from the Safeguarding Officer. Compare notes and brainstorm possible strategies.
- Develop action plans based on procedures – Consult procedures and processes about what to do.
- Talk to other agencies about helping the family – collaborate with or engage
- community health services or local government services (see contacts below)
- Talk to the child - do this with respect for the child's or young person's need for privacy and confidentiality.
- Talk to the parents or carers - only do this when it will not jeopardise the safety of the child or young person.

It is NOT the responsibility of the Staff member or Helper to decide whether or not a child is being abused.

Surrey Youth Theatre Godalming's designated Safeguarding Officer is:

Laura Davies, Youth Theatre Director 07738760987 or laura@surreyyouththeatre.co.uk

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