



**CHILD PROTECTION
AND
SAFEGUARDING
POLICY**

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OVERVIEW

It is the policy of *Interesting Theatre* that the welfare and safety of all children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount, regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity. Everyone who may be involved or associated with *Interesting Theatre* has a right to protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.

PRINCIPLES:

- *Interesting Theatre* respects the rights, wishes and feelings of the children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom we are working and their safety and wellbeing will always be paramount.
- *Interesting Theatre* takes all reasonable, practicable steps to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect.
- Everyone working with children, young people and vulnerable adults is in a position of trust in respect of the children with whom they work.
- *Interesting Theatre* will promote the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults who use the Theatre, for whatever purpose, by ensuring that all members are clear as to their responsibilities in respect of child protection and safeguarding by the circulation of our policies and procedures via the Theatre website giving details of how to obtain hard copies.
- *Interesting Theatre* members have a duty to report any concerns of child abuse to the Safeguarding Officer without delay.
- All *Interesting Theatre* members are responsible for complying with this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and they should act on any concern, no matter how small or trivial it may seem.
- This policy is split into two parts – Child Protection and Safeguarding. All members are expected to be familiar with the contents of both policies. Further guidance is included in the Appendices – *Reacting and Listening to Disclosures* and *Good Practice Guidelines*.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and all forms of clubs and societies. It is known that some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with children in order to harm them.

All *Interesting Theatre* members who come into contact with children and young people during the normal course of their duties should be able to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and know how to share that information.

Additionally, *Interesting Theatre* recognises that it has both a moral and legal obligation to ensure that when members are given responsibility for children they should provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

***Interesting Theatre* will ensure that it, and all individuals within the organisation, use their best endeavours to protect all children from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment and respect their rights, wishes and feelings**

***Interesting Theatre* is compliant with the national legislation regarding children at work and children in performance and is in regular contact with Warwickshire County Council on these matter**

DEFINITIONS

Child: A child is defined as a young person who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education,

is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

In respect of performing licences, a Child is a young person under the age of 17, and remains of compulsory school age until the last Friday in June following their 16th birthday.

Abuse – Someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Type of Abuse or Neglect	Definition
Physical abuse	The use of physical force, such as hitting, kicking, shaking, burning, or other show of force against a child
Sexual abuse	Involves engaging a child in sexual acts; includes fondling, rape, and exposing a child to other sexual activities
Emotional abuse	Refers to behaviors that harm a child's self-worth or emotional well-being, such as name calling, shaming, rejection, withholding love, and threatening
Neglect	The failure to meet a child's basic needs, including housing, food, clothing, education, and access to medical care

GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND POLICY

- *Interesting Theatre* is committed to providing a safe environment where children are able to participate in any theatre activity without fear of abuse or harm, giving young people the ability to express their views on any issues or decisions that affect them.
- *Interesting Theatre* will take seriously any concern raised and treat it sensitively. Referrals made by a member, member of the public or contracted Service provider cannot be anonymous. Those making a referral should be reminded to then keep details of their referral confidential and to deal with the data they know or suspect without breaching any Data Protection Act protocols.

- *Interesting Theatre* will work in co-operation with Warwickshire County Council and will respond positively to any recommendations regarding the improvement of its safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Child abuse does happen and *Interesting Theatre* is committed to taking positive steps to prevent such abuse of children involved in theatre activities.
- It is the responsibility of **all members** of *Interesting Theatre* to be aware of and adhere to the child protection policies and procedures currently in force.
- Any allegations against people who work with children/vulnerable adults will be shared with the Local Authority Designated Office (LADO) within one working day of being received.
- *Interesting Theatre* has a designated Safeguarding Officer, whose responsibilities are outlined later in this document.
- *Interesting Theatre* recognises its legal obligations to ensure adults in regular contact with children must be Chaperones approved by Warwickshire County Council. The minimum ratio of Chaperones to children is 1:12.
- It is the policy of Interesting Theatre that any adults who undertake regular duties as Youth Workshop leaders or helpers, either voluntarily or paid, will be Chaperones approved by Warwickshire County Council before they are able to work with any youngsters without close supervision.
- Directors and Stage Managers who use children in any capacity in a production will be given advice and training on child protection matters.
- The Safeguarding Officer/Lead Chaperone and Director will maintain a register of all children involved in rehearsals or performance activities, and the names and emergency contact numbers should be readily to hand at any time. The contents of registers and contact details are not to be divulged to unauthorised persons and must be treated in accordance with data protection legislation.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN

All adults working with children will ensure that:

- Children are treated with respect

- They respect a child's right to privacy
- They encourage children to respect and care for others
- They take action to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour
- They refer (not investigate) any suspicions or allegations of abuse to the Safeguarding Officer or to a Theatre Director
- They have received copies of the 'good practice guidelines' and 'Reacting and Listening to Disclosures'
- They are aware of the requirements for DBS checks and Children in Performance guidelines.

SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

Interesting Theatre will appoint a suitably qualified Safeguarding Officer who should be a Chaperone approved by Warwickshire County Council and is responsible for;

- Advising *Interesting Theatre* on best practice in respect of Child Protection and Safeguarding matters, including all statutory legislation.
- Ensuring the Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Procedures are current and up to date.
- Ensuring that those concerned are aware of the policy and procedures and have read and understood it
- Seeking advice and guidance from the local authority, social workers and police Safeguarding Officers
- Agreeing procedures with the Company trustees and the local authority on how best to deal with allegations of impropriety or abuse by a child against a member of the company.
- Appointing chaperones and helpers for children in performance and ensuring that duties of chaperones and helpers are maintained and up to date.
- Ensuring that applications for appropriate children in performances licences are made (A child performance licence must be obtained if a child under compulsory school leaving age, all children performing in *Interesting Theatre* productions will be licenced unless exempt by government policy)

- Ensuring suitable provision of dressing room accommodation for productions when children are used in performances
- Be present at all show inspections carried out by Warwickshire County Council (It is the practice of Warwickshire County Council (WCC) to send a 'Children in Performance Inspector' to any show that has children involved on stage, they have the right of access and the authority to close a show).
- Safeguarding Officer to attend all auditions that involve children

GUIDANCE FOR SHOW DIRECTORS

- Show Directors should let the Safeguarding Officer know of their intention to have children in their shows before putting it forward for production and let the Safeguarding Officer know as soon as their show is passed for production if they are using children in their shows.
- Directors should involve the Safeguarding Officer/Lead Chaperone in the audition process.
- Directors to share the script and a rehearsal schedule as soon as possible. Rehearsal finish times should be between 9 and 9.30 depending on age of children during school term time. Changes to the rehearsal schedule must be given to the Lead Chaperone/Safeguarding Officer and parents in plenty of time before the changed rehearsal.
- Directors who are expecting children to be working at heights over 6 feet must have the set inspected by Warwickshire County Council Health & Safety Inspectors
- Internal or external communications referring to arrangements for children in the care of *Interesting Theatre* are subject to oversight by the Safeguarding Officer, who may enlist advice from the trustees.

DUTIES OF CHAPERONES AND HELPERS

- The Safeguarding Officer will attempt to the best of their ability to make sure that all adults supervising children are chaperones; this may not always be possible.

- Each show should have a lead Chaperone, who is to attend performances and all rehearsals that the children are involved in where possible.
- Safeguarding officer to make sure that the Lead chaperones has the emergency contact details of the children (emergency contact details form also holds details of the child's doctor and any medical conditions). Lead Chaperone is to hold any medication i.e. inhalers etc. for the children in their care.
- If a child needs hospital treatment, then a chaperone is to take them to the hospital after contacting parent(s) and arranging to meet them at the hospital. Chaperone to take emergency contact details with him/her.
- Chaperones/helpers are to make a note of any accidents in the accident book and inform the parents when they collect the child. Any incidents/accidents are also to be written down in an incident/accident book held by the Lead Chaperone.
- Chaperones/helpers are to make sure that children are signed in by parents when arriving at the premises and signed out when leaving the premises.
- Registers are to be kept by the lead chaperone and handed to the Safeguarding Office after the last performance.
- Chaperones are to escort children around the premises (toilets, dressing room, etc.)

COLLECTION OF CHILDREN FROM THEATRE ACTIVITIES

- It is the responsibility of the parent, or guardian, to ensure that children get home safely from theatre activities. The Lead Chaperone must be informed by a child's parent/guardian if they will be collected by another adult or are not being collected.
- It is the responsibility of the parent, or guardian to sign their child/children in and out of the Theatre on a registration sheet supplied by the Lead Chaperone. This sheet should be kept by the Lead Chaperone with time of arrival and departure also shown on the sheet.
- In accordance with the 'Children in Performance Act' any child who is not collected one hour after the designated time and, after all reasonable efforts have been made to contact the child's parent/guardian, Social Service should be called and the child should be declared abandoned.

- Adults/Chaperones must not take it upon themselves to take the child home.

Mobile Phones/Electronic Devices

The use of mobile phones and electronic devices that have access to the internet are not to be used during rehearsals and the dressing rooms.

MAXIMUM DAYS PERMITTED TO PERFORM

A child may not take part in a performance, or rehearsal, on more than **five days** in any **seven-day** period for **broadcast or recorded performances**. A child may not take part in a performance, or rehearsal, on more than **six days** in any **seven-day** period for other performances.

For a combination of **broadcast/recorded and other performances**, the limit for a child's performance is as per broadcast and recorded performances: no more than **five days** in any **seven-day** period

The following is a summary guidelines based on statutory regulations and current best practice

Topic	Age 0 – 4	Age 5 to 8	Age 9 and over
Max. Number of hours at performance or rehearsal.	5 hours	8 Hours	9.5 hours
Earliest and latest permitted times at place of performance or rehearsal	7 a.m. to 10 p.m.	7 a.m. to 11 p.m.	7 a.m. – 11 p.m.
Max. period of continuous performance or rehearsal	30 minutes	2.5 hours	2.5 hours
Max. total hours of performance or rehearsal	2 hours	3 hours	5 hours
Minimum interval for meals and rest	Any breaks must be for a minimum of 15 minutes. If at the place of performance or rehearsal for more than 4 hours, breaks must include at least one 45 minute meal break	4 - 8 hours, they must have one meal break of 45 minutes and at least one break of 15 minutes 8 hours or more, they must have the breaks stated above plus another break of 15 minutes.	4 - 8 hours, they must have one meal break of 45 minutes and at least one break of 15 minutes 8 hours or more, they must have the breaks stated above plus another break of 15 minutes.
Education	N/A	3 hours per day (maximum of 5 hours per day). 15 hours per week, taught only on school	3 hours per day (maximum of 5 hours per day). 15 hours per week, taught only on school

		days. Minimum of 6 hours in a week if aggregating over 4 week period or less	days. Minimum of 6 hours in a week if aggregating over 4 week period or less
Minimum break between performances	1 hour 30 minutes	1 hour 30 minutes	1 hour 30 minutes
Maximum consecutive days to take part in performance or rehearsal	6 days	6 days	6 days

RAISING CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD

In what circumstances to Refer

In circumstances where you have concerns that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm to his or her health or development, or where a child gives information detailing abuse (Appendix 1 – Reacting and Listening to Disclosures), the following principles must be adhered to:

- In an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call 999
- Report your concern to the Safeguarding Officer or Show Director as quickly as possible – immediately when there is evidence of physical or sexual abuse and certainly by the end of the day
- Do not start your own investigation
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- Complete a record of concern, using a Green form
- Seek support for yourself if you are distressed or need to debrief

Green Form – Logging a Concern about a Child

Green forms to be completed if you have any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child.

Forms available from the Safeguarding Officer, Show Director and in all dressing rooms.

Complete form with as much details as possible. Stay factual – what did you see, hear? Record children’s actual words in quotation marks.

Hand your form back to the Safeguarding Officer, who will decide on the appropriate course of action.

If you cannot share your concerns with the Safeguarding Officer or Show director, report your concerns to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 01926 414144.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST PEOPLE WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Inform the Safeguarding Officer or Show Director at once where there are concerns someone who works (paid/unpaid) with children may have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that they may pose a risk of harm to children.

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Interesting Theatre will ensure that it, and all individuals within the organisation, use their best endeavours to protect and vulnerable adults from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment and respect their rights, wishes and feelings

DEFINITION OF A VULNERABLE ADULT

A vulnerable adult is defined as a person aged 18 or over:

“Who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness: and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm.”

This may include:

- People with a learning disability
- People who experience mental ill health
- Disabled people
- Older people
- People who are experiencing short or long term illness

However, it is important to note that inclusion in one of the above groups does not necessarily mean that a person is implicitly vulnerable. In some instances, a vulnerable adult may be someone who is experiencing domestic violence and is unable to protect him or herself by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness. It is also important to note that the

perpetrator of the abuse could, in some circumstances, be regarded as a vulnerable adult themselves.

PRINCIPLES:

- *Interesting Theatre* is committed to safeguarding the well-being of vulnerable adults and recognises all people have the right to protection from abuse.
- Members who come into contact with young and vulnerable adults during the normal course of their duties should be able to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and know how to share that information.
- *Interesting Theatre* will take seriously any concern made and treat it sensitively.
- *Interesting Theatre* will not tolerate harassment of any member, contractor or young and vulnerable adult who raise concerns of abuse.
- *Interesting Theatre* will work with Warwickshire County Council regarding the improvement of its safeguarding policy and procedures.
- It is of greatest importance that any member who receives allegations of reports of abuse does not keep these to themselves and follows the company's policies.
- Any member of the company who suspects that a vulnerable adult has been abused in any way must immediately report this to the Safeguarding Officer.
- It is essential that any allegation is deal with very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the vulnerable adult and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

RAISING CONCERNS ABOUT A VULNERABLE ADULT

In what circumstances to Refer

In circumstances where you have concerns that a vulnerable adult is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm to his or her health or development, or where a vulnerable adult gives information detailing abuse (Appendix 1 – Reacting and Listening to Disclosures), the following principles must be adhered to:

- In an emergency take the action necessary to help, for example, call 999

- Report your concern to the Safeguarding Officer or Show Director as quickly as possible – immediately when there is evidence of physical or sexual abuse and certainly by the end of the day
- Do not start your own investigation
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- Complete a record of concern, using a Green form
- Seek support for yourself if you are distressed or need to debrief

Green Form – Logging a Concern about a Vulnerable Adult

Green forms to be completed if you have any concerns about the safety or welfare of a vulnerable adult.

Forms available from the Safeguarding Officer, Show Director and in all dressing rooms.

Complete form with as much details as possible. Stay factual – what did you see, hear? Record the actual words in quotation marks.

Hand your form back to the Safeguarding Officer, who will decide on the appropriate course of action.

If you cannot share your concerns with the Safeguarding Officer or Show director, report your concerns to the police on 101 for non-emergencies or call Adults' Social Care on 01926 412080..

CONTACT DETAILS

External Contacts

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub	01926 414144
Local Children's Social Care Office Rugby Children's Team Oakfield Park 32 Bilton Road Rugby CV22 7AL Phone: 01926 413389	
Emergency Duty Service	01926 886922

Interesting Theatre Contacts

If you require advice or information on Child Protection matters or a child has approached you, you should contact one of the following:

Position	Name	Telephone
Safeguarding Officer	Lauren Tate	
		Email: laurentate1988@hotmail.co.uk
Company Director	Alan Pavis	
		Email:

APPENDIX 1: REACTING AND LISTENING TO DISCLOSURES

Reacting and Listening

During their conversations with children or vulnerable adults, members will:

- Allow them to speak freely
- Remain calm and not overreact – the child/adult may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting their listener Give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I’m glad you told me’; ‘I believe you’; ‘It’s not your fault’; ‘We are going to do something about it’
- Not be afraid of silences – members must remember how hard this must be for the child/adult
- Under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what does the child’s mother think about all this; (however, it is reasonable to ask questions to clarify understanding and to support a meaningful referral if that is required, e.g. when did this happen, where did this happen?)
- At an appropriate time tell the child/adult that in order to help them, the member of the company must pass the information on
- Not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused
- Avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ or ‘I can’t believe what I’m hearing’ may be the staff member’s way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong; Tell the pupil what will happen next
- Let the child/adult know that someone, usually the Safeguarding Officer, will come to see them before the end of the day
- Report verbally to the Safeguarding Officer

- Write up their conversation as soon as possible on the record of concern Green form and hand it to the Safeguarding Officer
- Seek support if they feel distressed or need to debrief.

APPENDIX 2: GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

The guidelines below should be followed by all members who are in contact with children to prevent them from harm.

- Respect all children, as befits their age
- Do watch speech, tone of voice and body language
- Do control and maintain discipline WITHOUT physical punishment, i.e. NO Smacking
- Do make sure another adult is around during workshop or rehearsal sessions
- Do not invade a child's privacy whilst washing or toileting
- Every group should have a female helper
- Each child should be aware of a leader with whom they can speak, in confidence
- Do not play rough physical or sexually provocative games
- Do not be sexually suggestive about or to a young person even in fun
- Do not touch inappropriately or intrusively
- Do not scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child or young person
- Do not show favouritism to any one child
- Do not allow children to involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly physical or sexual in nature
- Never give a lift to a young person or child when alone. When this is not avoidable, ask the child to sit in the back of the car
- Do not share sleeping accommodation with young people
- Do not invite a young person back to your house, alone.
- Supervise the children carefully, and do not permit bullying or ridiculing
- Do not allow unknown adults access to children
- Changing facilities for children and young people will be appropriate to the age of the child and the size of the cast. Discussions may take place with the child or young person and/or their parent/guardian regarding this situation.