

Ledbury Amateur Dramatic Society Ltd.

POLICY FOR SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

Introduction

Ledbury Amateur Dramatic Society Ltd. (LADS) fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and vulnerable adults within the Theatre environment and during its activities. The aim of this policy is to show how we safeguard and promote our children/vulnerable adults' welfare by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive climate.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has reviewed this policy in accordance with the most recent versions of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.

Legal frameworks

In line with government legislation and statutory guidance the policy will follow the guidance set out in:

- The Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2002
- Working together to safeguard children (2018)
- Keeping children safe in education (2018)

This policy applies to all volunteers and visitors to the Theatre. Where the Board of Directors provides services or activities directly under the supervision/ management of theatre, LADS' arrangements for child protection will apply. Where services or activities are provided separately by another body, the Board of Directors will seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place to safeguard and protect children.

It is the Board of Directors' duty to ensure the policy is reviewed annually and any deficiencies within the Policy addressed immediately.

A child is defined as a young person under the age of 18.

What Is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in the Children Act 1989 and 2004 as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- Undertaking that role to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

What is abuse?

Abuse is 'The violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take many forms and involve a number of factors. It can occur anywhere and the abuser could be a stranger, a carer, a family member or someone else in a position of trust.

Responsibilities

The Board of Directors:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are listened to;
- Ensure it has a director nominated as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who has received appropriate training and support for this role;
- Ensure a safe physical environment;
- Ensure every effort is made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies;
- To ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on all volunteers who will work with children including Disclosure and Barring Service checks. (Refreshed at least every 3 years);
- Recognise that as adults working in the Theatre, we are in a relationship of trust with junior members in our care and acknowledge that it could be considered a criminal offence to abuse that trust;
- Acknowledge that the principle of equality embedded in the legislation of the Sexual Offenders Act 2003 applies irrespective of sexual orientation: neither homosexual nor heterosexual relationships are acceptable within a position of trust;
- The **Designated Safeguarding Lead** as at November 2019 is **Craig Watson** .

Volunteers and Visiting Companies:

- To be familiar with the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and to follow guidelines/ procedures contained within it;
- To act in line with the policy by reporting suspicions to the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- To declare any existing or subsequent convictions.

In addition: **Visiting Companies** will be required to complete a **Safeguarding Assurance** form, with any additional documentation, where there are children under the age of 18 involved; detailing supervision arrangements/ chaperone and DBS checked supervisors.

Disclosure

Volunteers who disclose that they have been convicted of any offence relating to children/ young people (or any related disciplinary sanction) will not be permitted to work on any event which involves contact with young people or vulnerable adults.

Special licence arrangements may be put into place after discussion with the individual and in consultation with LADS Ltd. Officers/ Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Photographing and Videoing

- Productions may be recorded by video and photographs by authorised members but always in full view of all attending;
- Photography and video are not permitted if this contravenes the parent or guardian's wishes;
- **No unauthorised photographs or videos will be published and posted on Facebook, YouTube or any other social media;**
- Letters are sent out for each performance where children are involved to ensure parent/carer permission is given for all use of photos or DVDs.

Mobile Phones

- Members are prohibited from taking photographs and/or recordings on PERSONAL mobile phones in order to protect themselves from potential accusations / allegations of misconduct;
- Any individual bringing a personal device into the theatre must ensure that it contains no inappropriate or illegal content;
- Children are not permitted to use mobile phones during rehearsals/ youth theatre or during performances.

Whistle Blowing

If members ever have any concerns about people working in the theatre, paid or unpaid, they have a duty to inform the Board of Directors accordingly. This can be done in writing or verbally, but members should be able to discuss issues in the confidence that any such matter will be dealt with sensitively and with the necessary degree of confidentiality.

Procedures

- It is the responsibility for Directors/ Producers to keep a register of all children involved in any production or event within the theatre, with a contact name and number to be kept readily to hand in case of emergency;
- It is the Director or Producer/ Society member's responsibility to ensure every child's safety and only allow collection by adults known to them after the activity; the Director/ Producer/ Society member responsible for the activity **will not leave children alone to wait for collection;**
- There will always be at least two adults present with any group of children, at least one of whom should be female;
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour towards a child, whether by adults or other children in the group;
- The Board of Directors will appoint a suitably trained **Designated Safeguarding Lead** to whom any suspicions or allegations of abuse must immediately be reported. It is the responsibility of the nominated person to investigate the allegations and after discussing the issue with the child's parents/guardians they may escalate to the appropriate agency. Any person against whom allegations have been made will be stopped from working with children unless and until the above agencies have agreed they may continue such work.

Good Practice Guidelines

- You must be aware that someone might misinterpret our actions even if they are well intentioned;
- No contact should be made with under 18s using personal emails/ texts/ social media or mobile numbers;
- All contact with under 18s should be through their parent's email or phone
- You must respect all children as befits their age;
- You must be aware of how your speech; tone of voice and body language may be perceived. In particular you should never scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child;
- You must be aware that children may not see the physical danger associated with activities and theatre equipment that an adult would recognise. You should therefore ensure that equipment is safely stored and used, that children are warned of any danger, and that any horseplay which could lead to injury is immediately stopped;

- All activities involving children should be risk assessed and approved by the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- You must supervise the children carefully and do not permit bullying or ridiculing;
- You should control and maintain discipline without any physical punishment: there must be no smacking or other physical chastisement;
- You must respect a child's right to privacy; in particular, do not invade a child's privacy whilst washing or toileting;
- Do not touch a child inappropriately or intrusively;
- Do not show favouritism to any one child and do not allow children to involve you in excessive attention-seeking;
- Ensure you are not left alone with a child, in particular:
 - never give a lift to a child when alone;
 - do not take a child alone backstage or to any other part of the theatre;
 - never invite a child back to your home or to any other place.
- The following are **guidelines** for adults who may be taken into a child's confidence about abuse suffered or allegations involving abuse:
 - remain calm and listen carefully;
 - never trivialise or exaggerate the issues;
 - allow the child time to speak and do not interrupt or make suggestions that could imply you are making an investigation;
 - do **not** interrogate or question, other than to clarify your understanding. (If the matter is to be investigated further, this will be done by professionals.)
 - do not ask the child to repeat themselves over and over; they may think you do not believe them;
 - re-assure the child that you are glad they have told you what has happened and that it was right to tell;
 - be honest and tell the child that you cannot keep it a secret: you must talk to someone else who can help;
 - as soon as is practical, write down everything the child told you and notify the nominated person. What has been written down must be totally confidential between you and the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
 - unless the parents are the subject of the complaint, they should be advised on collecting the child of what the child has said.

'Prevent Strategy' - Vulnerability to radicalisation or extreme viewpoints

Ledbury Amateur Dramatic Society Ltd. recognises its duty to protect our children from indoctrination into any form of extreme ideology which may lead to the harm of self or others. The Board of Directors vets all visitors carefully and will take firm action if any individual or group is perceived to be attempting to influence members of our community, either physically or electronically. Our definition of radical or extreme ideology is 'a set of ideas which could justify vilification or violence against individuals, groups or self.'

Reviewed & updated – July 2017/ April 2018/ November 2019