



cygnets

CYGNETS is a not-for-profit group developing skills in the performing arts, providing performance opportunities, and using theatre, music and dance to increase confidence, improve self-esteem and aid personal and social development

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

Responsibilities of the Group

At the outset of any production, course, performance or rehearsal involving children the Group will:

- Undertake a Risk Assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process;
- Identify at the outset the person with designated responsibility for Safeguarding/DSL
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting (if necessary, in consultation with the local education authority);
- Ensure that children are all signed in and out at rehearsals and performances;
- Ensure a register is taken at the beginning of each rehearsal or performance;
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times;
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case it needs to report a concern.

Parents

- The Group believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents/guardians and the Group. Parents/guardians are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the Group and to share responsibility for the care of children.
- All parents will be given a copy the Group's **Safeguarding Policy and Procedures**.
- All parents/guardians have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. It is **NOT** the responsibility of the Group to take children home. The Group personnel/ chaperone /DSL must stay until all the members have been collected.

CYGNETS (Cheshire Youth Group for New and Emerging Talent on Stage)

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Unsupervised Contact

- The Group will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.
- If possible, there will always be two adults in the room when working with children.
- If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to **minimize risk**. For example, work will be carried out in a public area or in a designated room with a door open.
- If it is predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, he or she **will** be required to obtain a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service).

Physical Contact

- All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.
- Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity.
- Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

Managing Sensitive Content

- The Group has a policy and procedures for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images of children.
- Permission will be sought from the parents/guardians for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes.
- The Group's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.
- The Group will ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of its members, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such as criminal record disclosures.

Suspicion of Abuse

- If abuse of a child is seen or suspected whilst in the care of the Group, this should be made known to the person with responsibility for Safeguarding / DSL. If you suspect that the person with responsibility for Safeguarding 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 Group, chaperone or parent helper, etc., **that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded**. The individual will be **excluded from the theatre; rehearsal rooms etc.** and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production.

Disclosure of Abuse

If a child confides 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 Safeguarding. 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 Safeguarding. It is that person's responsibility to 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 Safeguarding agency.
- 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 and Confidentiality

- If a complaint is made against a member of the Group, he or she will be made aware of their rights under the Group's disciplinary procedures.
- 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.

Accidents

- To avoid accidents, chaperones, helpers and children will be advised of “house rules” regarding Health and Safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds. Children will be advised of the clothing and footwear appropriate to the work that will be undertaken.
- If a child is injured while in the care of the Group, a designated first-aider should administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the Group’s accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for Safeguarding. The parent will be informed of the accident and must countersign the accident book.
- If a child joins the production, course, performance or rehearsal with an obvious physical injury, a record of this will be made in the accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for Safeguarding. This record can be useful if a formal allegation is made later, and will be a record that the child did not sustain the injury while at a Group event.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service)

- The Group believes it is in its best interests to obtain an Enhanced DBS for all personnel and volunteers in contact with and working directly with the children. It will inform all individuals of the necessary procedures and the level of disclosure required.
- The Group will maintain confidentiality in the handling of disclosure information, and will aim to ensure that information obtained in the disclosure is not misused.

Chaperones for Productions

- Chaperones will be appointed by the Group/appointed persons for the care of children during the production process. By law the chaperone is acting *in loco parentis* and should exercise the care which a good parent/guardian might be reasonably expected to give to a child. **The maximum number of children in the chaperone’s care shall not exceed 12.**
- Potential chaperones must be appointed and approved by the Group. They will be required to have an Enhanced DBS and provide proof of this to the Group for their records.
- Chaperones will be made aware of the Group’s **Safeguarding Policy and Procedures**.
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the director/stage manager/person responsible for Safeguarding.

- If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the director/stage manager so that a decision can be taken as to whether to allow the child to continue.
- No child of compulsory school age is permitted to do anything which may endanger life or limb. This could include working on wires or heavy lifting. If the chaperone feels there is a danger, they should speak to the person responsible for safeguarding, who will discuss their concerns with the Director/Stage Manager.
- During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children as they arrive and signing them into the building.
- Children will be kept together at all times except when using separate dressing rooms.
- Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times.
- Children are not to leave the theatre unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents/guardians or another designated person.
- Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
- Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements, fire procedures and first aid procedures in the venue and will ensure that children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger.
- Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by the Group.
- Children should be signed out when leaving and a record made of the person collecting.
- Cast members over compulsory school age, after the end of Year 11 of schooling, may sign themselves out.
- If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child until the parent arrives.

These Safeguarding Procedures are applicable to and focus on, children of compulsory school age and below. A child is required to attend school unless they are over the age of 16 on 31st of August, or until the last Friday in June after their 16th birthday.

Adopted 1st January 2010

Current Review 1st September 2019