



West End Stage Stars
Child Protection and
Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

These procedures have been designed to ensure that the welfare and protection of any child and/or young person who accesses the services provided by West End Stage Stars. The procedures recognise that child protection can be a very difficult subject to deal with to the extent that it is sometimes easier to close your eyes to what is happening or believe that it is somebody else's problem to deal with.

West End Stage Stars is committed to the belief that protecting children and young people is everybody's responsibility and therefore the aim here is to provide guidelines that will enable all workers/ members and volunteers to act appropriately to any concerns that arise in respect of a child/young person.

West End Stage Stars is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. It recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. West End Stage Stars acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. Paid staff and volunteers will endeavour to work together to encourage the development of an ethos which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children, young people and adults.

West End Stage Stars recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014, the Children Act 1989 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 (in Scotland Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003). Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013

Policy Statement

West End Stage Stars believes that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount;

- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/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;
- All members and employees of the organisation should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

West End Stage Stars will ensure that:

- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.
- The welfare of each child 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 will not be accepted or condoned.
- All adult members of the organisation provide a positive role model for dealing with other people.
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
- It will keep up-to-date with health & safety legislation.
- It will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children.
- It will undertake relevant development and training.
- It will hold a register of every child involved with the organisation

and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

West End Stage Stars has a dedicated Child Protection/Welfare Officer, who is in charge of ensuring that the child protection policy and procedures are adhered to. That person's name is Laura Ellis and she can be contacted on 07920487169.

West End Stage Stars will aim to have a personal police officer present when possible to ensure the complete safety and protection of your child. West End Stage Stars personal police officer will be PC Nicholas White of Surrey Police, he will also be one of West End Stage Stars first aiders on site.

In implementing this child protection policy West End Stage Stars will:

- Communicate to all workers/members their legal moral responsibility to protect children any young people from harm, abuse and exploitation.
- Communicate to all workers/members/volunteers their responsibility to work to the standards that are detailed in the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board and the need to work at all times towards maintaining high standards of practice in protection of children.
- Ensure that all workers/members understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a child or young person, or a worker's conduct towards a child/young person, to the organisation's named person for child protection
- Ensure that the organisations named person for child protection understands his/her responsibility to refer any child protection concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (i.e. Police and/or Children's Social Care)
- Ensure that any procedures relating to the conduct of workers/

members are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner

- Facilitate opportunities for children and young people to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues in connection with the service they are provided with and to have access to the organisation's Complaints Procedure.
- Facilitate involvement of parents or carers in the work of the organisation and to make child protection policies and procedures available to them.

Monitor and review the policy and procedures

The implementation of procedures should be regularly monitored and reviewed. The welfare officer should regularly report progress, challenge, difficulties, achievements, gaps and areas where changes are required to the management committee.

The policy should be reviewed annually or whenever there is a major change in West End Stage Stars or in relevant legislation.

Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender, race, or ability.

There are four main types of abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person.

Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person at any age. The

effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood.

Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse has occurred.

Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse: Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, and burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

In performing arts situation physical abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training disregard the capacity of the child's immature and growing body.

Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the Child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate. It may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying) causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse in performing arts may occur when the young person is constantly criticised, given negative feedback, expected to perform at levels that are above their capability. Other forms of

emotional abuse could take the form of name calling and bullying.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

In performing arts, activities which might involve physical contact with young people could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Also the power of the tutor over pupils, if missed, may lead to abusive situations developing.

Neglect: Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or a carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, (including exclusion from home or abandonment) failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers) or the failure to ensure access to the appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsive to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect in performing arts could occur when a tutor does not keep the young person safe, or exposing them to undue cold/heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

Bullying: Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else – such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone.

It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both

physically and emotionally.

Bullying that happens online, using social networks and mobile phones, is often called cyber bullying. A child can feel like there's no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night.

It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti threats, abusive text messages), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group) or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

In performing arts bullying may arise when a parent or tutor pushes the young person too hard to succeed, or a rival performer or official use bullying behaviour.

Child Sexual Exploitation: Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, drugs, alcohol, accommodation or gifts as a result of them performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can also occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet or mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. Child sexual exploitation is a hidden crime. Young people often trust their abuser and don't understand that they're being abused. They may depend on their abuser or be too scared to tell anyone what's happening. Children who work in entertainment may be sexually exploited in return for offers of TV, film or modelling/ photographic work and roles in professional stage productions.

Suspicion of abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of West End Stage Stars, please make this known to the person with responsibility for child protection.
- If you suspect that the person with responsibility for child protection is the source of the problem, you should make your

concerns known to the local authority designated officer.

- 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 West End Stage Stars, chaperone, venue staff etc., action will be taken to ensure the individual does not have further contact with the child until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms, filming location, TV Studio, etc. and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production.

Disclosure of abuse

If a child confides in you 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 child protection. 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 child protection. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually Children's Social care or the Police.
- Never investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where

a child makes a disclosure.

- 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.

Parents

- West End Stage Stars believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and the organisation. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the organisation and to share responsibility for the care of children.
- All parents will have access to a copy of West End Stage Star's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedures.
- All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. West End Stage Star's has a responsibility to ensure suitable arrangements are in place to take children home.

Unsupervised Contact

- West End Stage Stars 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 minimise 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 may be required to obtain a criminal record disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

- All children will be chaperoned at all times.

Gifts made to the children

- Gifts of any sort, including sweets and chocolates given to the children must be made via the chaperone and with consent of the parents.
- Chaperones will be mindful of any allergies/food intolerances in the group before accepting gifts for the children.
- Favouritism of any child(ren) is not appropriate.
- All gifts should be made to all the children rather than any specific child(ren).

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 information

- West End Stage Stars has a policy and procedures for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images of children.
- Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes.
- West End Stage Stars web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.
- West End Stage Stars 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.

Procedures relating to performances at West End Stage Stars

Photographs and images of children

- There are risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on web sites and in other publications such as theatre programmes. Photographs can be used as a means of identifying children when they are accompanied with personal information, for example, "this is X who goes to such-and-such a school and who likes playing football". This information can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to start to 'groom' that child for abuse. Secondly the content of the photo can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. There is evidence of this adapted material finding its way on to child pornography sites.
- West End Stage Stars will assess the potential risks to the child when making decisions about the type of images they wish to use and the way they are used. Organisations should ensure that parents support the policy. Use of names of individuals in a photograph should be limited and it is sensible to avoid use of any additional information that might help locate the child. Using only images of children in suitable dress may reduce the risk of inappropriate use. Parental permission to use an image of a young person must be sought in advance.
- If parents or other members of the audience are intending to photograph or video an event they should be made aware of the organisation's policy. The use of cameras or mobile phones with camera or filming capability in dressing rooms and other inappropriate environments should be expressly forbidden.

E-Safety

- Most of our children will use mobile phones and computers. They are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. However, we know that some men, women and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range

from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings.

- West End Stage Stars will not communicate with children via their phone, but with their parents.
- Cyber-bullying by children, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying.

Accidents

- To avoid accidents, chaperones 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 West End Stage Stars, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the organisation's accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for child protection.
- If a child joins the production 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 child protection. This record can be useful if a formal allegation is made later, and will also be a record that the child did not sustain the injury while participating in the production.

Useful Contacts

Child employment office 01483 517838

Child employment manager

01483 518464 07971 664861

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

0300 470 9100

Children's Services emergency duty team (out of hours)

01483 517898

Laura Ellis - Principal

07920487169

info@westendstagestars.com

In all cases if you are not sure what to do you can gain help from the NSPCC 24 hour helpline one: 0808 800 5000

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West End Stage Stars Child Protection and Safeguarding Statement and Declaration

As a company working not only for the development of young professional performers but also for the development and empowerment of children and young people, child protection is very important to us.

This statement sets out a policy which requires all adults who seek to be involved with West End Stage Stars to accept the duty to safeguard the welfare of children with whom they come into contact.

Protecting children and young people from abuse is an integral part of the policy and practise of all adults working with West End Stage Stars during all West End Stage Stars activities including publications and websites made available in it's name.

West End Stage Stars recognises the need to demonstrate to parents, the wider community and to young people themselves, the importance we give to the child protection issue.

This means that we do not countenance any form of physical violence or abuse, whether committed by or inflicted upon either adults or young people. It also means that we do not countenance verbal insults or destructive criticism. West End Stage Stars encourages respect for others' background, appearance, personality, abilities, opinions or preferences. Adults must accept the responsibility to exercise due care in all activities, so that young people are not exposed to risk through adult negligence or incompetence.

Child Protection requires good child-care and good group-work practise.

Last updated June 2023

DECLARATION

I have read and understood the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Name:

Signature:

Date: