

WOODCOTE AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY (See also attached Procedure & Annex A)

Woodcote Amateur Dramatic Society recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Child (Performances) Regulations 1968, the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000.

The Society recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it is physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. The Society is committed to a practice which protects children from harm. The Society accepts and recognises its responsibility to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

CHILDREN

Every child under the age of 16 involved with the Society will be the child or grandchild of a member or, if this does not apply, will be sponsored by a member. The Society will not take responsibility for children under the age of 16 who are not participating in a rehearsal or performance.

THE SOCIETY

We believe that:

- a. the welfare of the child is paramount
- b. all children have the right to protection from abuse
- c. all suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- d. the Society should be clear on how to respond appropriately

We will endeavour to ensure that:

- a) all children be treated equally and with respect and dignity
- b) the welfare of each child is paramount
- c) a balanced relationship based upon mutual trust will be built
- d) enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism
- e) bullying will not be accepted or condoned
- f) all adult members of the society provide a positive role model for dealing with other people
- g) action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour
- h) the Society will keep up to date with health and safety legislation
- i) the Society will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children and will update this policy as required
- j) the Society will hold a register of every child involved with the society and will retain a contact name and number in case of emergencies

The Society has child protection procedures which accompany this policy. This policy should also be read in conjunction with our Health and Safety Policy.

The Society has a dedicated "Junior Contact", who is in charge of ensuring that the child protection policy and procedures are adhered to, or secondly our Chairperson.

Contacts are – Chairperson – Marcia Spiers
Junior Contact – Cordelia McDowell

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

1. The Responsibilities of the Society

Before any production and throughout rehearsals and workshops the Society will endeavour to:

- a. Identify the person/s designated as “chaperone” who will take responsibility for the children whose parents or sponsors are not present during the rehearsal/production period
- b. Ensure that children are supervised at all times
- c. Ensure knowledge of local services and contact numbers in the case of an emergency

2. Un-supervised Contact

- a. Ensure that two adult members are present at all rehearsals and adequate chaperones during performances
- b. Wherever possible, no adult will have lone unsupervised contact with children. If this is unavoidable, then it will be carried out in a public area or designated room with a door open (where required adequate personal checks will be carried out).

3. Physical Contact

- a. Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

4. Sensitive Information/Material

- a. Any photographs taken of children will be stored safely and the society will not undertake to publish details that would reveal the identity/address/school etc. of the children
- b. Written consent will be gained from parents - prior to taking photographs – of children – for promotional or other purposes
- c. Parents will be informed of any sensitive material in any play in which their child is involved
- d. The Society’s web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use
- e. The Society 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 personal checks

5. The Responsibilities of the Parents or Sponsors

- a. To work as a partnership with the society to share responsibility for the children
- b. To ensure safe delivery of their child into the premises and collection from the premises

Note 1: No child will be allowed to leave unaccompanied by the parent or sponsor. The society will only accept responsibility for the child whilst on the premises (once a child reaches 15 years of age parents may sign a waiver if they wish their child to leave the premises unaccompanied to make their own way home).

6. The Responsibilities of the Children

- a. To treat all junior and adult members with respect

7. Suspicion of Abuse

- a. If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of the society, please make this known to the Junior Contact or the Chairperson
- b. 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.

- c. If a serious allegation is made against any member of the society, the society undertakes to contact the police immediately.

8. Disclosure of Abuse

If a child confides in you that abuse has taken place:

- a. Remain calm and in control but do not delay taking action.
- b. 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.
- c. 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 you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help.
- d. Reassure the child that "they did the right thing" in telling someone.
- e. Tell the child what you are going to do next.
- f. Speak immediately to the person with responsibility for child protection. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities.
- g. 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 and any names involved or mentioned, and who you gave the information to. Make sure you sign and date you record.

9. Recording

- a. In all situations, whether or not shared with a child protection agency, the details of allegations or reported incidents will be recorded
- b. Accurate notes of times, dates, incident or disclosure, parties involved, what was said and done and by whom, action taken to investigate, further action taken, e.g. suspension of individual and of relevant; reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, name of person reporting and to whom it was reported.
- c. The record will be stored securely and shared only by those who need to know

10. Rights and Confidentiality

The society recognises both alleged abuser and the child who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act and subsequent legislation.

11. Parents and Chaperones

- a. To avoid accidents, parents, sponsors, chaperones and children will be notified of "house rules" regarding health and safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds. Children will be advised of appropriate clothing and footwear requirements.
- b. If a child is injured while in the care of the society, the child will be made as comfortable as possible until emergency services arrive. In all instances first-aid will be administered and the injury will be recorded in an accident book which will be counter-signed by the Junior Contact.
- c. If a child joins the production with an obvious injury then this will be recorded in the accident book and counter-signed by the Junior Contact as an injury not sustained whilst under the care of the Society.
- d. Sponsors and Chaperones are expected to exercise the care that would be expected of a good parent.
- e. The maximum number of children under a chaperone's care is 12.
- f. Chaperones will be members of the Society.
- g. Members will be made aware of the Society's Child Protection Policy and Procedures and Health and Safety for Children.
- h. If a member is not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the Committee.
- i. If a member considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, they should bring this to the attention of the Producer.

- j. No member should allow the children to carry out anything dangerous to their person.
- k. Children will normally be kept together at all times unless separated for changing or washroom arrangements.
- l. Members should be aware of where the children are at all times.
- m. Children under the age of 14 will go to the toilet in pairs or with the designated chaperone.
- n. During the performance, a list of those members present will be maintained.
- o. Children are not to leave the premises unsupervised unless in the company of their parents or sponsors.
- p. If a parent has not collected a child, a member will stay with the child or make arrangements for them to be taken home.

Annex A

Here is some helpful information established with Oxfordshire County Council, pertaining to children in **amateur** drama. (Last updated - April 2013)

1. The Law says children (under 16) may perform for 4 **days** in 6 months without needing licences. Children who are being paid and have to take time off school should always have a licence.
2. Also they can do several performances per day (not in school time, and with at least 45min/1.5 Hrs between), so for example children in a Wed to Sat run + Sat matinee, ie: 5 or 6 performances over 4 days do not need Licences. (School productions do not count in the 4 days).
3. **If any children need to be licenced** – this can be individual licenses for each child, or a group can now apply for a BODY OF PERSONS approval which covers all the children for a particular production.

In addition, if any children need to be licensed then the law requires:-

- They must be supervised by a licenced chaperone or their own parent. (No parent can supervise someone else's child unless they are a registered chaperone.)
- No more than 12 children per chaperone depending on age and sex as appropriate.
- Separate changing areas for boys and girls and adults. (Use common sense here, ie: curtain, change in shifts or change at home.)
- Signing in and out list. (appropriate form in Children in Entertainment booklet **)
- Incident report to be completed when necessary (appropriate form in Children in Entertainment booklet **)

A County Council officer could possibly visit to check the above and facilities.

4. **Other** recommendations

- Name of company first aider and location of first aid box.
- Accident report book.
- Fire escape route

5. **The rehearsal period** (prior to performance dates) is NOT covered by regulations.

- Chaperones are NOT required but recommended
- A suitable adult can chaperone the children
- Good practice to have parent details and ensure safety of children at all times.

If no children need licenses then they are not covered by the regulations but good practice should prevail as above.

The authorities cannot “**stop the show**”, but they can prevent the child/children from performing if the Group are in contravention of the Children in Entertainment regulations.

6. **Contact details** :-

- Application Form for Child Performing Licence and Chaperone Licence from Oxfordshire County Council Administrative Office (Specialist) on: Tel: 01865 323513
- Sue Collington : Administrative officer (specialist), Inclusion, access & engagement.
Email: ChildPerformanceLicence@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Oxfordshire County Council Children's Performances Website:-
www.Oxfordshire.gov.uk/links/public/PerformanceLicences

- Paul Massie: (Educational Social Worker – the person who comes to inspect that Children in Entertainment regulations are being carried out properly) 01865 323513.
Email: paul.massie@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Both these people are always very helpful and ready to assist in any matter or query you may have with any of the issues in these guidelines. Please do not hesitate to contact them with your questions.

7. DBS Checking

Disclosure and barring checks can be obtained through your Drama Group. A DBS check is applied for from an organisation or individual. It does not have to be the Oxfordshire County Council. It is valid for 3 years. The cost via OCC is currently £51.00 for each application. Individuals can apply for a Chaperone licence.

A DBS check is needed for someone to apply for a Chaperone Licence. (They usually only apply to the County you are applying through and is valid for 3 years.)