

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Carnon Downs Drama Group (the 'Group') is committed to providing a safe environment where children and adults can come to enjoy working together to produce high quality amateur productions. To enable us to continue to do this, our Child Protection Policy and Procedures sets out in detail how both adults and children are expected to act while we are together.

The Policy is first and foremost to protect children from harm, but it is also there to give adults firm guidance and to protect them from accusations. It is also to protect the Groups reputation as a safe place for children and adults. Everyone in the group must be committed not only to be aware of the content of these documents, but also to ensure that they and their fellow members carry out the actions within them at all time.

The Group recognises that abuse can take many forms, namely: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. The Group is committed to practice which protects children from harm. The Group accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm. The Carnon Downs Drama Group recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

The Group believes that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, 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 of the Group should be clear on how to respond appropriately.
- The Group is committed to maintain and promote a practice that:
- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.
- The duty of care to children is paramount.
- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism.
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned.
- All adult members of the Group will, at all times, act as positive role models when 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 relating to the protection of children.
- It will undertake relevant development and training.
- It will hold a register of every child involved with the Group and will retain a contact name and telephone number close at hand in case of emergencies.

The Carnon Downs Drama Group has two dedicated Child Protection Officers who are in charge of ensuring that the Child Protection Policy is adhered to. Their contact details are as follows if you have any queries:

They are: Elaine Gummow: 01872 870216 and Paul Barker: 01872 870256

This policy will be regularly monitored by the committee of the Group and will be subject to annual review.

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

CARNON DOWNS DRAMA GROUP'S (THE 'GROUP') RESPONSIBILITIES

At the outset of any production 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 Child Protection [Child Protection Officer].
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting where necessary.
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times.
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority's Children's Services department in case it needs to report a concern.
- The Group will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.
- If an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, he or she may be required to undertake a DBS [Disclosure and Barring Service] check.

THE PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Group believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and the Group and parents are encouraged to be involved in the Group's activities and to share the responsibility of the care of children. All parents will be given a copy of the Group's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- All parents 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 a child home.
- Parents who wish their child to walk / make their own way home unaccompanied MUST provide prior written permission.

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.
- Children will be given the opportunity to decline such an activity if they are not happy/comfortable proceeding with such an activity.

MANAGING SENSITIVE INFORMATION

- Permission will be sought from the parents 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.
- In accordance with the GDPR Regulations [2018] 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 – please refer to our website [www.carnondownsdrama.co.uk] for details of our policy.
- On leaving the Group all confidential information will be destroyed.

SUSPICION OF ABUSE

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child whilst in the care of the Group, 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 Group's Chair.
- Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed as well as your response in case there is a follow-up in which you are involved.
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of the Group, chaperone, venue staff etc. the individual will be excluded from the theatre area, rehearsal rooms etc. and will have no unsupervised contact with any other children in the production. The individual will be excluded from any of the Group's activities until the investigation is concluded.

DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

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

- Remain calm and in control but do not delay in 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 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 ALWAYS be recorded.
- 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 e.g. 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 the Child Protection Officer who will take the appropriate action.

RIGHTS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- If a complaint is made against a member of the Group he or she will be made aware of this.
- 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.

ACCIDENTS

- To avoid accidents, chaperones and children will be advised of 'house rules' regarding health & safety and will be notified of any 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 will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the Group's accident book. The first aid kit and accident book will be checked on a regular basis.
- If a child with an obvious physical injury joins the production, a record of this will be made in the accident book. 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.

CRIMINAL RECORD DISCLOSURES

- If the Group believes it is in its best interests to obtain criminal record disclosures for chaperones or other personnel it will inform the individual of the necessary procedures and the level of disclosure required.
- The Group will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

CHAPERONES

- During the production process the Group will appoint chaperones for the care of children. By law the chaperone is acting in 'loco parentis' and should exercise the care which a parent might be reasonably expected to give to a child. The maximum number of children in a chaperone's care shall not exceed 12.
- Chaperones will be made aware of the Group's child protection policy and procedures.
- If chaperones consider the conditions for the children are unsatisfactory they should bring this to the attention of the Child Protection Officer(s).
- If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the Director and not allow the child to continue.
- Under the Dangerous Performances Act no child of compulsory school age is permitted to do anything which may endanger life or limb.
- Children will be kept together at all times except when using separate changing rooms.
- Chaperones will at all times be aware of where children are.
- Children are not permitted to leave the venue unless supervised by chaperones or a responsible adult OR in the company of their parent/guardian, thus safeguarding the children.
- Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
- Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms.
- Chaperones should be made aware of the safety arrangements 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.
- The Group or Directors of the production should ensure that all children are escorted off the premises in the safe care of a parent or guardian.
- If a parent/guardian has not collected a child after rehearsals or performances, it is the duty of the Director(s) to stay with that child or make arrangements to take them home. If this happens two adults must stay with the child concerned.