

The Carnon Downs Drama Group Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Responsibilities of the Group

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/persons with designated responsibility for Child Protection.
- 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 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 and the Group. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the Group and to share the responsibility for 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.

Unsupervised contact

- Where possible there will always be three or more 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 will be required to obtain a DBS.

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 social media 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 in accordance with The Data Protection Act.
- On leaving the Group all details 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/persons 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 Chairman/Chairperson or Director.
- 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, 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 for example 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 officers 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. 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 the 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 joins the production with an obvious physical injury 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

- Chaperones will be appointed by the Group 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 might be reasonably expected to give to a child. The maximum number of children in the chaperone's care shall not exceed 12.
- Chaperones will be made aware of the Group's child protection policy and procedures.
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the child protection officers.
- 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 be aware of where the children are at all times.
- Children are not permitted to leave the venue unless supervised by chaperones or a responsible adult OR in the company of their parent/guardians 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 into the safe care of a parent or guardian.
- If a parent/guardian has not collected the child, it is the duty of the Director/Directors to stay with that child or make arrangements to take them home. If this happens make sure two adults stay with the child concerned.

COVID 19

The Carnon Downs Drama Group adhere to a strict set of guidelines concerning Coronavirus and have our own risk assessment that is followed at all rehearsals. We also abide by the COVID rules set out by the venue that we rehearse in. Our risk assessment is changed as and when is necessary in accordance with Government guidelines. The safety of our young members is of paramount importance to us. If you would like to see our Covid 19 policy or have any concerns then please don't hesitate to ask us and we will provide you with all the necessary documents.

This Child Protection Procedure was updated in September 2021.