



## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY**

Brantham Amateur Theatrical Society (BATS) recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act (1963), the Police Act (1997), the Protection of Children Act (1999), the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000) and the Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations (2014) which came into force 6 February 2015, which replaced the Child (Performances) Regulations (1968).

The Society recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. The Society is committed to practise which protects children from harm. All members of the Society accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

The Society 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 of the Society should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

The society will ensure that:

- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.
- The duty of care to children 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 Society 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 and safety legislation.
- It will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the safeguarding of children.
- It will undertake relevant development and training.
- It will hold a register of every child involved with the Society and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies. (BATS Membership register is held by Anna Gleadell. Angie Heath holds a register of all junior BATS. Mark Hinson holds a register of all teen BATS. New junior and teen BATS membership forms must be sent to Anna so they are on the BATS membership register.)

The Society has two safeguarding children leads, who are responsible for ensuring that the safeguarding children policy and procedures are adhered to. They are Angie Heath; she can be contacted on 01206 396674/07891974844 and Anna Gleadell on 01206 391458, mobile 07879456758.

This policy will be regularly monitored by the Executive Committee of BATS and will be subject to annual review.

## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PROCEDURES**

### **Responsibilities of the Society**

At the outset of any production involving children the society will:

- Confirm at the outset the person with designated responsibility for child protection and that they know how to get in touch with Local Authority

Social Services. (Angie Heath, Vice Chairman and Anna Gleadell, Safeguarding Lead.)

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process.
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting in consultation with Suffolk County Council and Essex County Council.
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case it needs to report a concern.

### **Parents/Carers**

- **BATS** believe it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and the Society and to share responsibility for the care of children. All parents will be made aware of the Society's Safeguarding Children Policy and procedures via the society's membership form.
- **All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange for the collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of the Society to take children home.**

### **Unsupervised Contact**

- The Society will ensure that adult members are made aware of the Safeguarding Children Policy and of the importance of not being on their own with a child.
- 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 anticipated that an individual is likely to have regular unsupervised contact with children, he or she will be required to obtain a Disclosure and Barring Service check and become a licensed chaperone.

### **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**

- The Society has a policy for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images of children (see membership application form).
- Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes (see membership application form).
- The Society's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.
- 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 disclosure and barring checks.

### **Suspicion of abuse**

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of the Society, please make this known to Angie Heath or Anna Gleadell, those with responsibility for safeguarding children. If you suspect that the person with responsibility for safeguarding children is the source of the concern, you should make your concerns known to a member of the committee.
- Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed as well as what action you took, in case there is a follow-up in which you are involved.

- If a serious allegation is made against any member of the Society, or a Chaperone, that individual will be unable to participate in BATS activities until an investigation is concluded and the individual concerned will be excluded from the production and rehearsals venue (usually Brantham Village Hall).

## **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 Angie Heath or Anna Gleadell, those with responsibility for safeguarding children. 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 Angie Heath or Anna Gleadell, those with responsibility for safeguarding children. 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.

## **Records and Confidentiality**

- In all situations, including those 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.
- No matter how you may feel about the accusation, both the alleged abuser and the child who is thought to be 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 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 Society, first aid will be administered, where possible by a trained first aider. The injury will be recorded in the Accident Book, kept with the First Aid box at the Village Hall. (This is the usual place of BATS activities). This record is to be counter-signed by the parent or carer and Angie Heath or Anna Gleadell if possible.
- If a child attends the society with a physical injury, this needs to be recorded and reported to Angie Heath or Anna Gleadell, for monitoring and referral if necessary. This record will be counter-signed by Angie Heath or Anna Gleadell. This record can be used 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 society's activities.

## Chaperones

- Suffolk County Council and Essex County Council have responsibility for licensing chaperones (depending on where the chaperone lives). Potential chaperones will be required to submit documentation and sign a declaration as requested by Suffolk County Council or Essex County Council, in order to apply to be a licensed chaperone. Further information can be obtained from Anna Gleadell (chaperone coordinator).
- The contact for Suffolk is the child employment team 01473 265195 [childemployment@suffolk.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:childemployment@suffolk.gcsx.gov.uk) Website: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/keeping-children-safe/apply-for-a-chaperone-licence/>
- The contact for Essex (in relation to the DBS) is [dbs.servicecentre@essex.gov.uk](mailto:dbs.servicecentre@essex.gov.uk) and in relation to chaperone licences [child.employment@essex.gov.uk](mailto:child.employment@essex.gov.uk) or telephone 0333 0138 967. Website to explain the process: <http://www.essex.gov.uk/Education-Schools/Schools/Pupil-Parent-Support/Pages/Children-in-entertainment.aspx>
- The process for applying for a chaperone licence for those who live in Essex, is different than for those who live in Suffolk. The ID, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and chaperone licence checks are all completed by the child employment team in Suffolk County Council. In Essex, the ID and DBS checks are undertaken, processed and reviewed by the society, (using Essex eDBS System). The society decides (based on the outcome of the DBS check), if they will continue to support the individual to apply for a chaperone licence. If there is a DBS disclosure on the 'children's barred list', the individual will not be supported to continue with the chaperone licence application. In relation to other disclosures, this will be discussed with the DBS team and child employment team where necessary, in order for the society to make a decision as to whether to progress with the chaperone licence application.

- The society will treat DBS applicants who have a criminal record fairly and not discriminate automatically because of a conviction or other information revealed.
- Information needed for these positions is **never** disclosed to a third party. Any certificates, etc. are kept in a file in a locked filing cabinet and will be produced for any inspection made.
- The leaders of junior and teen BATS are licensed chaperones (Angie Heath Junior BATS Leader; Mark Hinson and Ian Southgate (Teen BATS leaders).
- Licensed chaperones will be used by the society for the care of children during any performance for which a charge is made (usually the February production). By law the licensed chaperone is acting in loco parentis and should exercise the care which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give to a child. BATS will adhere to and follow the requirements made by the Child Employment Team, Suffolk County Council.
- Licensed chaperones will be made aware of the society's safeguarding children Policy and Procedures.
- Licensed chaperones may decide that the conditions are not suitable to the children in their care and if this is so they must bring this to the attention of the Producer. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily, the licensed chaperone should consider not allowing the child/children to continue.
- If a child becomes ill or over-tired, the licensed chaperone may decide that it is unwise for the child to continue and will bring this to the attention of the Producer/Director.
- Under the Dangerous Performances Act, no child of compulsory school age is permitted to do anything which may endanger life or limb. Licensed chaperones should tell the Producer/Director to cease using children in this way, if this is felt to be the case.
- During performances, licensed chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the stage door and signing them into the building.



- Children will be kept together at all times except when using separate dressing rooms, or entering and exiting the stage, when a licensed chaperone will be present.
- Licensed chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times.
- Children are not to leave the theatre unless supervised by a licensed chaperone or in the company of their parents/guardian.
- Children will be supervised while going to and from the toilets (this is particularly important when the General Public are using the same toilets during a performance in Brantham Village Hall).
- Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms, except for access at planned times e.g. when not in use as a changing room.
- Licensed chaperones should be aware of any safety arrangements and first aid procedures in the venue, and will endeavour to ensure that children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger.
- Licensed chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported and recorded by the Society.
- Licensed chaperones should examine accident books each day. They have the right to request a letter of qualified medical opinion should they doubt that the child is fit for a performance. The word of the parent or a child will not in this case be sufficient. If the opinion of the licensed chaperone is that the child should not perform, the Producer/Director may not use that child for a performance.
- Licensed chaperones should have written arrangements for children after performances. If someone different is to collect the child, a telephone call should be made to the parent to confirm the arrangements.
- Children should be signed out when leaving after a performance; children should never leave a rehearsal without identifying the collector as a parent/carer.
- If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the licensed chaperone to stay with that child or make arrangements to take them home.

Date reviewed and agreed: 13 November 2019

Next review date: 13 November 2021

Accepted by the Executive Committee as being a true and proper document.

Signed.....Chairman/and or Vice Chairman.