

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Act One Youth Theatre has a moral and legal obligation and is fully committed to safeguard the welfare of all children/young people up to the age of 18. When given responsibility for children/young people all trustees, chaperones, and parents/legal guardians recognise their responsibilities and take all reasonable steps to safeguard children/young people from harm, abuse and exploitation. This means to ensure that everyone follows procedures and practises in a way to protect children/young people and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

All trustees, chaperones, and parents/legal guardians will endeavour to work together to encourage the development of an ethos which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of all children/young people.

### **The purpose of this policy:**

- To promote good practice, providing children/young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of Act One Youth Theatre.
- To allow trustees and chaperones to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

### **This policy is based on the following principles:**

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989.
- All children/young people will be treated fairly and with respect.
- All children/young people regardless of age, disability, gender, racial origin, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity have the right to protection from all types of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

***Please also refer to our separate online safety policy***

### **Legal framework:**

Act One Youth Theatre will adhere to the relevant legislation when working with children/young people under the age of 18 years and this policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children and Young Persons Act 1933 Section 23-30
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963 Section 37-44
- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Children Act 2004
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

- Listen carefully to any child/young person who “tells you” that they are being harmed and report what you have heard immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

***YOU SHOULD NOT:***

- Exaggerate or trivialise another’s concerns about a child/young person.
- Ignore an allegation or suspicion of abuse in the hope that it will either ‘go away’ or that ‘someone else will deal with it’.
- Discuss personal issues about a child/young person or their family with other people, except with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, when you are concerned about the child/young person’s well-being.
- Be drawn into any derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children/young people. You should lead by example.
- Allow a child/young person to be bullied or harmed by either a member of Act One Youth Theatre or by one of their peers.
- Allow children/young people to swear or use sexualised language unchallenged, unless it forms part of the organisation’s formal activities.

***YOU SHOULD NEVER:***

- Engage in sexually provocative games.
- Allow others or yourself to engage in touching a child/young person in a sexually provocative manner.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child/young person, even in jest.
- Engage in rough or physical contact unless it is permitted within the rules of a game or activity or conforms to the guidance on appropriate physical restraint.
- Form inappropriate emotional or physical relationships with children/young people.
- Harass or intimidate a child/young person or another member of the organisation because of their race, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or disability.
- Invite a child/young person to your home without the permission of their parent(s) or person(s) with parental responsibility.

**PROCEDURES**

**Dealing with Concerns of Abuse**

The following action should be taken if you suspect a child/young person maybe suffering abuse in some way:

- Do not attempt to investigate.
- Privately voice your concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- As soon as possible after becoming aware of possible abuse, make notes about your concerns, date, time and sign.
- Pass on your written record to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the earliest opportunity.
- Do not disclose your concerns with anyone else.
- Ask the Designated Safeguarding Lead for support for yourself if you feel you need it.

## Storing of and Access to Confidential Child Protection Data

Act One Youth Theatre abides by the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Everyone responsible for using data has to follow strict rules called 'data protection principles'.

***All child protection information will be stored securely and will only be shared with authorised personnel and appropriate authorities.***

## Health and Safety in the Theatre

A risk assessment will be carried out prior to children/young people using rehearsal or theatre space and risk monitored throughout the production process. Dressing rooms and backstage areas will be assessed to ensure they are safe and comfortable. Act One Youth Theatre members must be aware of the fire evacuation procedure and a register of those present must be kept. No photographic equipment or any devices with a camera will be permitted in the dressing room at any time.

Act One Youth Theatre have Public Liability Insurance with Zurich Insurance plc

**Act One Youth Theatre** has a **Designated Safeguarding Lead** who is in charge of ensuring that the child protection policy is adhered to. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is **Helen Starkey** and can be contacted at:

Mobile            07739 046346  
Email             [helenstarkey5@gmail.com](mailto:helenstarkey5@gmail.com)

If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable please contact the Chairperson or in an emergency situation contact First Response Children's Duty Team or the Police.

Emergency Contact Details – Refer to Appendix A

In implementing this policy Act One Youth Theatre will:

- Ensure that all committee members, chaperones and volunteers understand their legal and moral responsibility to protect children /young people from harm.
- Ensure that all committee members, chaperones and volunteers understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a child/young person, or a co-workers conduct towards a child/young person to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will refer any child protection concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (i.e. First Response Children's Duty Team, Police and/or Children's Social Care).
- Children/young people, parents and carers will be informed of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

This policy will be regularly monitored by Wendy Spencer, Chairperson and will be subject to an annual review and will be agreed by Act One Youth Theatre Committee.

Signed: Wendy Spencer, Chairperson.....

Date Policy Agreed:            May 2023  
Date Policy to be Reviewed:    May 2024

### Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect

A child is abused or neglected when somebody inflicts harm or fails to act to prevent harm. A child or young person up to the age of 18 years can suffer abuse or neglect and require protection.

- **Physical Abuse** - May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates or induces illness in a child whom they are looking after.
- **Sexual Abuse**—Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening, may involve: physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts;  
non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect** – Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger or the failure to ensure access to appropriate care or treatment. It may also include neglect of or unresponsiveness to a child’s basic emotional needs.
- **Emotional Abuse**—The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional and behavioural development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age and developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, for example witnessing domestic abuse within the home or being bullied or 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.*

If known record the name(s) of the person(s) implicated in the abuse:

When was the referral to appropriate team made (i.e. social care, police) who received your call and advice given:

Signed:

Date:

Signed (Designated Safeguarding Lead/Chairperson)

Date: