

YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

SIERRA VISTA COMMUNITY THEATRE LLC (the “Theatre”), and its subsidiary and related organizations, seek to support youth in their artistic and personal growth through instruction and mentoring and by providing opportunities to perform and participate in Theatre programming. The Theatre seeks to assure participants, parents, and the community that the environment, staff, and volunteers are safe for youth and that safety of youth is a shared responsibility between the Theatre and families.

Youth are defined as minor children participating in Theatre activities with the consent of their parents or legal guardians.

Care for Alleged Victim

The Theatre believes the safety of youth is of paramount importance and, in the event of an allegation of abuse, the Theatre will ensure the youth is placed in a safe environment and ensure, in consultation with parents, that an alleged victim is given proper support and is referred for an evaluation to identify treatment needs.

Staff and Volunteers

All Theatre staff who, in the course of their regular and ongoing duties, will interact with youth must undergo a state and federal criminal background check, including the sex offender registry, at the Theatre’s expense, prior to hiring. Theatre volunteers desiring to participate in Theatre activities involving youth may be required to cover the cost of these background investigations. Background checks will include references pertaining to the applicant’s character in interacting with youth.

All staff members shall attend an annual training that includes Theatre policies pertaining to youth safety, abuse symptoms and dynamics, and mandatory reporting practices. Documentation of all training will be maintained in each individual’s personnel file.

All Theatre staff and volunteers will sign a statement (Appendix C of the Theatre handbook) acknowledging receipt and understanding of this policy and the Youth Protection Code of Conduct.

Youth Protection Code of Conduct

No staff member or volunteer shall be alone with a youth in an isolated area. Two adults shall be present at all times. If it is necessary for a staff member or volunteer to meet individually with a youth, it shall be done in an area in which all are clearly visible to others.

Youth may be released from activities only to individuals designated by the parents. Parents shall at registration provide a list of persons authorized to transport their child. This list may be updated verbally, with a record of the date, time, and participants being maintained by the Theatre. The Theatre will not release a child to an authorized person if there is a question that the child’s safety will be compromised.

Theatre staff and volunteers will abide by the Theatre Social Media Policy, especially as it pertains to youth protection.

Reporting Procedures

Staff and volunteers are to immediately report to the Chair of the Youth Theatre Committee, or any available Theatre Director, any instance in which they have reason to suspect that a youth has been the victim of physical or sexual abuse or neglect. A concurrent report should be made to the Arizona Child Abuse Hotline, 1-888-SOS-CHILD (1-888-767-2445).

Any interview of a youth shall be limited to determining whether there is reason to suspect abuse. Greater detail will be elicited through forensic interviews conducted by law enforcement or child protective services. The suspected perpetrator or other responsible adult may be interviewed by Theatre staff after consultation with law enforcement. Parents shall be notified if it is clear that the suspected perpetrator is a non-family member.

The Executive Committee shall have the options of suspending a volunteer, or staff member's activities, terminating employment and/or retaining the status quo. In any event, the Board shall be notified if a report of abuse is received by the Theatre.