

WHITWELL PLAYERS

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

The Whitwell Players are committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which the children in our care are protected from abuse and harm.

We will respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur.

We believe that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All members should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

We will ensure that:

- All children are treated equally with respect and dignity.
- The duty of care to children will always be put first.
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned.
- Adults should provide positive role models for children.
- Adults in supervisory roles to have DBS checks.
- Wherever possible no adult will have unsupervised contact with children – if this is not possible the situation will be risk assessed and all steps taken to minimize risk e.g. doors being open etc.
- Children will have their own changing area.
- Adults to maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.
- No physical contact is made without consent of the child/parent (if necessary for the production).
- Photographs can only be taken and used with parental consent.
- No telephone numbers/emails shared without parental consent.
- We will be on guard for signs of abuse from 'outside' the Players environment.
- We will have several members of the Committee trained in Safeguarding.

Parental Responsibility

- Parents will be informed it is their responsibility to collect children or have a named authorized adult to do so.
- We keep contact numbers for all children in case of emergencies.

Forms of child abuse and neglect

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly, or by failing to protect them from harm. Some forms of child abuse and neglect are listed below.

- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making the child feel that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- **Physical abuse** can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may be also caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child.
- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This can involve physical contact, or non-contact activities such as showing children sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs. It can involve a failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, to protect a child from physical and emotional harm, to ensure adequate supervision or to allow access to medical treatment.

Signs of child abuse and neglect

Signs of possible abuse and neglect may include:

- significant changes in a child's behaviour
- deterioration in a child's general well-being
- unexplained bruising or marks
- comments made by a child which give cause for concern
- inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person. For example, inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their role, or inappropriate sharing of images.

If abuse is suspected or disclosed

If a child makes a disclosure to a member of the Players they should:

- Reassure the child that they were not to blame and were right to speak out
- Listen to the child but not question them. Allow them to speak freely.
- Give reassurance that they will take action but not make promises it may not be possible to keep
- Not show signs of disbelief or shock. Not criticize the alleged perpetrator.
- Record the incident as soon as possible (see *Logging an incident* below).

If a member of the Players witnesses or suspects abuse, they will record the incident straightaway. If a third party expresses concern that a child is being abused, we will encourage them to contact Social Care directly. If they will not do so, we will explain that we are obliged to and the incident will be logged accordingly.

Confidentiality

We have a responsibility to share disclosed information with the appropriate investigative agencies.

If a child requests a disclosure to be kept secret, it must be explained in an appropriate manner that they cannot promise complete confidentiality but that the information needs to be passed on to other professionals who can help to keep the child safe.

Members should not share any information with each other – only with the Players Designated Senior Person.

Logging an incident

All information about the suspected abuse or disclosure will be recorded on the **Logging a concern** form as soon as possible after the event. The record should include:

- Date of the disclosure or of the incident causing concern
- Date and time at which the record was made
- Name and date of birth of the child involved
- A factual report of what happened. If recording a disclosure, you must use the child's own words.
- A diagram illustrating any injuries
- Name, signature and job title of the person making the record.

The record will be given to the Designated Senior Person. In the first instance the DSP will decide whether they need to contact Social Care or make a referral. If the member of the team thinks that the incident has not been adequately followed up, they may call Social Care themselves.

Allegations against a member of the Players

If anyone makes an allegation of child abuse against a member of the Players:

- The allegation will be recorded on an **Incident record** form. Any witnesses to the incident should sign and date the entry to confirm it.
- This record should be given to the DSP (or if the allegation is against the DSP – to the chair of Players).
- Parent/Guardian of the child should be informed.
- The allegation must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO will advise if other agencies (eg police) should be informed, and the Players will act upon their advice.

Promoting awareness among Players

A copy of this policy will be given to all members of the committee and Directors/Production teams/actors involved in a Production where children are involved.

Social Care: Children's Service: 0300 1234043

LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer): 01992 555420

HSCB (Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board): Hertfordshire County Council 01992 588757

Hertfordshire Targeted Advice Service: 01438 737511

Ofsted: 0300 123 1231

Police: 101

NSPCC: 0808 800 500

This policy was adopted by: The Whitwell Players	Date: 17/1/24
To be reviewed: 17/1/26	WITWELL CHAIR