

THE GRIFFIN PLAYERS SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Introduction

The Griffin Players, (hereinafter called 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 practices which protect children (including vulnerable adults) from harm. All members of the society accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause such harm.

The Griffin Players have a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for children, all staff, chaperones, parents/legal guardians and volunteers accept their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to ensure that everyone follows procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The society believes that:

- The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount.
- All children or vulnerable adults, 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 reported swiftly and appropriately.
- All members and employees of the society should be clear on how to respond and reassure victims of abuse that they are being taken seriously and will be supported.

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 or peer-on-peer abuse will not be accepted or condoned.
- All adult members of the society must adhere to the Griffin Players – Code of Behavior and should provide a positive role model for dealing with other people.
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behavior.
- It will always promote Online Safety.
- It will keep up to date with health & safety legislation.
- It will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children.
- It will undertake relevant development and training.
- It will hold a register of every child or vulnerable adult involved with the society and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

There are three elements to our Child Protection Policy: -

- **Prevention** through awareness of each individual child's needs.
- **Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect**
- **Procedures** for identifying and reporting cases or suspected cases, of abuse.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of The Griffin Players and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Prevention

We recognise that the "entertainment industry" can be a very "adult" environment and we expect that all staff, chaperones, parents/legal guardians, volunteers and anyone else who comes into contact with children behave in an appropriate manner at all times and remember that "The Welfare of the Child is Paramount".

The Griffin Players will therefore: -

- Act within the Children's Act 1989 & 2004
- Act within The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel welcome and familiar with their environment and are informed of personal (toilets, dressing rooms, etc) and emergency arrangements (fire exits, meeting points, etc) and any Health and Safety Procedures (Dangerous equipment, First Aid, etc).
- Inform each child who the appropriate person or people are to speak to if they have any questions, problems or concerns.
- Ensure that all children are treated with respect and dignity and are treated as individuals and offered equality of opportunities.
- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and unnecessary physical contact with children) and involve/allow parents/chaperones wherever possible, to take responsibility for the child/children they are responsible for (parents must only have responsibility for their own child).
- Recognising the individual needs of the child, e.g. Recognising when a child may be tired and may need a break.
- Ensure that children are supervised appropriately.
- Ensure that all chaperones are registered with the local authority in which they reside and have an enhanced DBS check.
- Ensure all crew and staff coming into close contact with a child are DBS checked.
- Ensure that all staff and crew who don't necessarily have close contact with children, but who are assisting in the production, are aware of their conduct around children.

Definition 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/young person 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 the 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.

Legislation, Policy and Guidance

The Griffin Players will adhere to the relevant legislation when working with children and young people under the age of 18 years as outlined in the following:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015
- Crime and Policing Act 2026

Suspicion of Abuse

If you see or suspect abuse of a child, immediately make this known to the designated individual/manager responsible for child protection.

Disclosure of Abuse

If a child tells you that they or another child or young person is being abused: -

- Always stop and listen straight away, show that you take their allegations seriously.
- Encourage the child to talk, but do not ask leading questions, interrupt or ask the child to repeat itself.
- Never promise that you will keep what is said confidential or secret – explain that if you are told something of concern that you will need to let someone know but that you will only tell the people who need to know and can help.
- Record what you have been told accurately and as soon as possible. Use the child's own words. Make a note of the time, location, whether anyone else present and of the Child's demeanour.
- Ensure that your concerns are reported immediately to the designated individual/manager.
- Do not confront the alleged abuser.

Handling Allegations

If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff, it must be reported as a matter of urgency to the designated manager/individual for child protection who will refer to Social Services department for Children's Services. If the allegation is against the designated person, then the information should be reported to another senior manager or directly to Social Services department for Children's Services. (This would generally be referred to the authority in which the alleged incident took place.)

The alleged perpetrator should not be made aware of the allegation at this point.

Recording

In all situations, the details of allegation or reported incident must be recorded. Make accurate notes of time, dates, incident or disclosure, people involved, what was said and done and by whom, action taken to investigate, further action taken, e.g. suspension of individual and if relevant, reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, name of person reporting and to whom it was reported.

The record must be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know.

DO NOT worry that you might be mistaken; you have a responsibility to pass on your concerns following a disclosure. Never think abuse is impossible, or that an accusation about a person you know well and trust is bound to be wrong.

IT IS YOUR DUTY TO REFER ON – NOT TO INVESTIGATE

The society has Safeguarding Procedures which accompany this policy. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the society's Equal Opportunities Policy and Health & Safety Policy.

The Designated Individuals/Managers for child protection and safeguarding:

Name: Nichola Johnston

Position in Company: Designated Safeguarding Lead

Contact Number: 07855 768095

Alternatively, Izzy Wheeler can be contacted on: 07456 956932

Date of review and adoption by the committee: Sept 2026

Next Review Date: June 2027

THE GRIFFIN PLAYERS - SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

Responsibilities of the Society

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

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process.
- Identify at the outset the person with designated responsibility for child protection.
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting (if necessary, in consultation with the local education authority).
- 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 and carers

- The society believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents/carers and the society. Parents/carers are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the society and to share responsibility for the care of children. All parents/carers will be given a copy of the society's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- All parents/carers have the responsibility to bring and collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of the society or members of the society to take children home.

Unsupervised Contact

- The society will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.
- 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 predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, he or she will be required to obtain a DBS with barred list clearance.

Supervised Contact

- Where supervised contact will take place for a period of more than 3 days in a 30-day period, the highest level of DBS check will need to take place with barred list clearance.
- Occasional helpers are not affected but regular rehearsal directors, choreographers and musical directors are included.

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 and procedures for the taking, using and storage of photographs, videos or images of children for legitimate production purposes.
- Permission will be sought from the parents for use of any photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes.
- 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 criminal record disclosures.

Suspicion of abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of the society, please make this known to the person 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.
- Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed as well as your response, in case there is follow-up in which you are involved.
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of the society, chaperone, venue staff etc., that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms etc. and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production.

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 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 be recorded, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a statutory child protection 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 e.g., 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.

Rights & Confidentiality

- If a complaint is made against a member of the society, he or she will be made aware of his rights under the society's disciplinary procedures.
- 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 under the Data Protection Act 1998. Remember also that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released.
- In criminal law the Crown, or other prosecuting authority, has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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, a designated first-aider will administer first aid, and the injury will be recorded in the society's accident book. This record will be countersigned by the person with responsibility for child protection. • If a child joins the production with an obvious physical injury a record of this will be made in the accident book. This record will be countersigned by the person with responsibility for child protection. 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 society decides that a DBS check is required, it will inform the individual of the necessary procedures and the level of disclosure required. An Enhanced DBS will be required for anyone with supervised or unsupervised access.
- The society will have a written code of practice for the handling of disclosure information.
- The society will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

Chaperones

- If a child/children is/are cast in a Griffin Players production, then the Society will apply for the necessary Performance Licence exemptions/BOPA from Luton Borough Council as appropriate.
- Licenced chaperones will be appointed by the Society to care for the children during the production process and will be present at all rehearsals and performances as required, unless the parent of the child is present. 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.
- All appointed chaperones will be made aware of The Griffin Players Safeguarding and 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 producer/director. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily, the chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue.
- If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the producer/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. This could include working on wires or heavy lifting. Chaperones should tell the producer/director to cease using children in this way and should contact the local authority.
- During performances and rehearsals, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the pre-arranged meeting point and signing them in to and out of the building.
- Children will be kept together at all times, except when using separate dressing rooms.
- Chaperones will be aware of where the children under their supervision are at all times.
- Children are not to leave the theatre unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents.
- 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 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 Griffin Players.
- Chaperones should examine accident books each day. If an accident has occurred, the producer/director is not allowed to use that child until a medically qualified opinion has been obtained (not just the word of the parent or child).
- Chaperones should have written arrangements for delivery and collection of children. If someone different is to collect the child, a password should be given, or telephone call should be made to the parent to confirm the arrangements.

- If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child or make arrangements to take them home.
- The Griffin Players shall ensure that it keeps records of each child's performance as required by Schedule 3 of The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014.

Last reviewed: 28/09/26

Adopted at the committee meeting dated: 07/10/26

Date of next review: 27/09/27