

Youth Onstage Child Protection Policy

The Policy

Youth Onstage attaches the highest importance to the nurture and care of children and young people.

We will:

1. Create safe environments for children and young people.
2. Not collude with abuse wherever it is happening. We will report it to the appropriate authority.
3. Support children and young people who are suffering abuse.
4. Guard against the possibility of physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children and young people by persons who may be acting in the name of Youth Onstage.
5. Inform those adults and children who work for the organisation about this policy and its procedures. Members will be reminded at the first rehearsal after the auditions in each rehearsal period.
6. Review this policy every two years in consultation with those who work with children and young people and with external agencies if necessary.
7. Ensure that all volunteers and chaperones are provided with a copy of Section 1 of the most recent "Keeping Children Safe in Education" document along with this policy and they will sign to say that they have read both documents.

The Procedure

1. Workers and volunteers with Youth Onstage support through introduction by a committee member or involvement with the company through a member, e.g. a parent, grandparent, family friend.
2. All new employees (Production team) will be interviewed by at least two of the committee, to explore their suitability and experience in working with children and young people. Employees, chaperones and volunteers will have a DBS check; where a DBS check is not possible that person will not be allowed unsupervised access to members.
3. All members of the committee will have an enhanced DBS check, where this is not possible that person will not be allowed unsupervised access to members.
4. All committee, chaperones and volunteers will be informed of the policy and requested to sign the declaration form stating that they have both read and understand the policy.
5. If anyone refuses to sign the declaration, they will not be considered suitable to work with Youth Onstage.

6. Chaperones and volunteers over the age of 18 will be made aware of the position of trust wherein they cannot conduct an inappropriate relationship with any member of Youth Onstage under the age of 18 at any point in time.
7. Youth Onstage committee will ensure that there are always at least 2 members of stage crew who have enhanced DBS checks or are licensed chaperones in the stage area at any point in time.
8. A record of all DBS numbers is kept by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Reporting Suspected Abuse

It is the duty of all members, volunteers and employees to report any information relating to any child or young person who it is thought is being abused or to be at risk of abuse. This applies whatever the situation in which the abuse or suspected abuse is thought to take place.

N.B. *It is not the role of workers to do any investigation.*

Allegations against a member, volunteer or employee, and any other concerns, must be reported immediately to the designated people, Deb Lowe or Donne Sunderland, who will then take the appropriate action which may include suspending the member, volunteer or employee from their duties.

All information concerning allegations or suspicions of abuse regarding children / young people, families and workers will be kept confidential to the person initially involved in reporting their concern and the designated people.

A written report is to be produced, signed, dated and a copy given to the designated person and kept in a secure place.

If you suspect abuse or concern about a member of the group's welfare or if a disclosure is made to you

1. Do not delay; the responsibility of reporting young people thought to be at risk rests with the person who identifies the concern, no matter what their role in the organisation.
2. Consult one of the designated people, do not presume that they might already know.
3. Do not inform any other unauthorised people.
4. Do not do any investigating yourself, allow the person to speak freely but do not ask any leading questions. The appropriate authority is legally the only body allowed to deal with reported abuse and they will follow up every report. The police may also be involved.
5. Make an accurate note of your concerns, suspicions or the disclosure, recording dates, times and places – sign and date your notes. Use the actual language used by the child or young person, not a tidied-up version.
6. Once reported you will have no control over what happens.
7. You may be asked to attend a case conference.

8. You must not take responsibility for making a judgment about the allegation or disclosure. The child or adult will have needed much courage to get this far. The protection of the young person is always the priority.
9. Expect to have to handle your own strong feelings. You may well need support. Talk to the designated person.

Code of Conduct

Reporting Allegations

The nominated people are responsible for coordinating the child protection policy and monitoring implementation in practice, including ensuring that all employees, volunteers or members have appropriate information. The nominated people will normally be responsible for taking any necessary action when a concern is expressed or abuse is alleged. Scope for abuse will be minimised if rehearsals and events are run with the safety of all members in mind and sensible steps are taken in dealing with our members. If an allegation is made, or concerns are raised, they should always be brought to the attention of the nominated people for child protection. **The nominated people for Youth Onstage are Deb Lowe or Donne Sunderland.** If an allegation is made against either of the nominated people, this should be shared with the relevant licensing authority.

When an allegation is made the volunteer or employee should record the following:

- Name of the child and date of birth
- Parent's/ carer's details
- The child's address
- Relevant phone numbers
- What is said to have happened or what was seen
- When it occurred
- Who else, if anyone, was there
- What was said by those involved
- What, if any, evidence of abuse can be recorded, e.g. bruising, bleeding, changed behaviour
- Who has been told about it
- Who was involved in the incident and if possible record in what way involved
- Was the member able to say what happened, if so, how did they describe it
- Whether the parent(s) have been advised
- Sign and date the information and give a copy to the designated person.

All members, employees and volunteers will need to note the definitions below and pass on any concerns to the designated people. Abuse takes many forms:

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. This can include inappropriate use of Facebook/internet.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including inappropriate touching or language, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape and buggery) or non penetrative acts. They may include 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. This includes online abuse through up-skirting or the sharing of photographs.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs. 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 medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

The following are also forms of abuse:

FGM – if suspected, there is a duty on the person suspecting this to report it directly to the police

Grooming

Bullying/Cyberbullying

Child Trafficking

Confidentiality

General

All conversations and records should be treated as highly confidential and not disclosed to any third party. If a request from a third party is received for such information, the advice of the designated people must be sought before any disclosure. GDPR should never be seen as a reason to fail to notify the designated person re concerns for a member of Youth Onstage.

Other

All 'Authorised' persons shall have access to the above confidential information.

The term 'authorised' shall refer to the following personnel:

- a) The designated people.
- b) Those persons given authority by the Chair of Youth Onstage for the carrying out of specific and limited tasks.

‘Unauthorised’ persons shall refer to all persons other than those above.

All data will be kept in compliance with our GDPR Policy.

Agreed:	23 rd September 2024
Reviewed:	Annually

