



CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Policy Title: Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Version: 3.0

Effective Date: 03/02/2023

Review Cycle: Annually

Next Review Date: 22/04/2026

Approved By: Karl Hughes - CEO/Managing Director

1. Introduction

This policy outlines Viper Production's commitment to ensuring the safety, welfare, and well-being of all children, young people (defined as under the age of 18) and vulnerable adults involved in our activities. The organisation acknowledges its legal and moral obligation to safeguard individuals from harm and to create an environment where they are respected, protected, and heard.

This policy applies to all employees, freelancers, contractors, volunteers, chaperones, cast, and crew who may come into contact with children or vulnerable adults during any of our operations.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is based on and aligns with the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Care Act 2014 (for vulnerable adults)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Local Safeguarding Partnership Procedures
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Child performance licensing regulations (Child and Young Persons Act 1963)

3. Aims and Objectives

- To protect all individuals from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harm.
- To ensure that individuals feel safe, listened to, and respected.
- To equip staff and affiliates with the knowledge and tools to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns.
- To ensure robust systems are in place for reporting and dealing with allegations or incidents.
- To comply with national and local safeguarding protocols and legal obligations.
- To provide a safe and inclusive environment for all individuals involved in our work.

4. Key Principles

- The welfare of the individual is paramount.
- All individuals have the right to equal protection from all forms of abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, religion, or age.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Working in partnership with children, parents, carers, professionals, and agencies is essential to promote safety.
- Empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership, and accountability are central safeguarding principles.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- The **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** is responsible for overseeing safeguarding practices, handling concerns, and ensuring policy compliance.
- All staff and representatives have a duty to report concerns or disclosures to the DSL immediately.
- Senior management is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding is a central part of the organisational culture.

6. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Responsibilities of the DSL:

- Act as the main point of contact for all safeguarding and child protection concerns.
- Respond to disclosures, concerns, and allegations promptly and appropriately.
- Liaise with children's services, local authorities, police, and other relevant agencies.
- Keep accurate and confidential records of all concerns and actions taken.
- Provide safeguarding guidance and support to all staff, volunteers, and affiliates.
- Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities and are trained appropriately.
- Review and update the safeguarding policy and procedures annually or when legislation changes.

Display of Information:

Details of the DSL, including name, photo, and contact information, will be clearly displayed in all workspaces, production offices, and on set so they are easily visible and accessible to all children, parents, and team members.

7. Code of Conduct for Adults Working with Children and Vulnerable Adults

All adults must:

- Act as role models and maintain appropriate boundaries.
- Never engage in behaviour that might be perceived as inappropriate or exploitative.
- Avoid any unnecessary physical contact
- Not use offensive, demeaning, discriminatory or sexual language.
- Maintain confidentiality when reporting concerns
- Respect the dignity and rights of every individual
- Not communicate with children outside official channels
- Report any concerns, allegations, or suspicions immediately.

8. Chaperones and Supervision

Chaperones play a vital role in safeguarding individuals involved in productions, performances, or activities under Viper Productions.

8.1 Legal Requirements

- All chaperones must be **licensed by the local authority** in accordance with UK child performance licensing laws.
- Chaperones must provide valid proof of their license and undergo an **enhanced DBS check** before commencing work.

8.2 Duties and Expectations

- Ensure the safety, comfort, and welfare of all individuals at all times.
- Supervise children and vulnerable adults at all times and do not allow them to be alone with unauthorised adults
- Ensure individuals have adequate food, hydration, rest breaks, and toilet access.
- Keep daily attendance and welfare records of the individuals in their care.
- Monitor working hours and breaks in line with regulations.
- Act as the **first point of contact** for individuals who feel unwell or unsafe and escalate any concerns to the DSL immediately.

8.3 Behavioural Standards

- Chaperones must maintain professionalism and integrity at all times.
- Physical intervention is only acceptable when necessary to prevent immediate harm and must be reported.
- Chaperones must report any breach of conduct or unsafe practice immediately.

8.4 Ratios

- Children: 1 chaperone to every 12 children (or fewer as needed).
- Vulnerable adults: Risk assessments will determine suitable ratios based on need and support requirements.

9. Recognising Abuse

Types of abuse include:

- **Physical Abuse** - e.g. hitting, shaking, burning.
- **Emotional Abuse** - e.g. belittling, constant criticism, unrealistic expectations.
- **Sexual Abuse** - e.g. inappropriate touching, grooming, exposure to sexual content.
- **Neglect** - e.g. failing to provide food, shelter, supervision or medical care.

Signs to watch for include:

Withdrawal, aggression, sudden behaviour changes, unexplained injuries, reluctance to go home, fearfulness around certain individuals, or overly mature behaviour.

10. Reporting Concerns

If a child discloses abuse or if you have a concern:

1. **Stay calm.**
2. **Listen carefully.** Don't ask leading questions.
3. **Reassure the individual** but never promise confidentiality.
4. **Record the facts** as soon as possible.
5. **Report immediately** to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):**Name:** Karl Hughes**Phone:** 07928908393**Email:** karl@viperproductions.co.uk

In emergencies, call **999** or contact **local Social Services** directly.

11. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- All information related to safeguarding concerns will be handled with sensitivity, respect, and confidentiality. Information will be shared only on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

12. Recruitment and Vetting

- All staff, freelancers, and chaperones working directly with children or vulnerable adults must undergo **enhanced DBS checks**.
- References and identity checks are mandatory before engagement.
- Safeguarding responsibilities are clearly outlined in contracts and onboarding materials.

13. Training and Induction

- All relevant personnel will receive **basic safeguarding training** and **annual refreshers**.
- Chaperones and senior staff will receive advanced safeguarding training and inclusion training
- Induction programs will include policy overviews and reporting procedures.

14. Policy Breach and Disciplinary Action

Breaches of this policy or any safeguarding misconduct may lead to:

- Immediate suspension from duties.
- Investigation and, if necessary, involvement of social services or law enforcement.
- Termination of contract or employment.

15. Monitoring and Review

- This policy is reviewed annually or following a significant safeguarding incident or legislative change.
- Staff feedback, incident logs, and DSL reports will inform the review process.

16. Declaration and Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. I agree to follow its procedures and uphold its standards at all times.

Name: _____**Signature:** _____**Role:** _____**Date:** _____

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee by:

Name in Capitals: Karl Hughes**Signature:** *Karl Hughes***Position:** Chief Executive Officer**Date:** 22/04/2025