



Child Protection Policy

(Last updated July 2023)

On The Mark Youth Theatre (OTMYT) is dedicated to providing a safe and secure environment for its members.

The OTMYTA Child Protection Policy is available to parents and staff at our organisation.

Purpose and Aim of the Policy

OTMYT is run by a Principal whose role is to supervise rather than teach, whilst the tuition is delivered by a specialist production team. This enables the principal to be on hand at all times.

Child Protection arrangements for OTMYT requires its Principal, production team and assistants to apply for clearance via the DBS - Disclosure and Barring Service (formerly CRB) and its structure is often used as an example of Best Practice.

Your child is in safe hands at OTMYT; we have a clear commitment to child protection and the child protection of our members is of the highest priority.

OTMYT acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring child protection practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and compliance with best practice.

The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989

Guidance

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) 2018
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Relevant government guidance on child protection children

Designated Safety Officer

The Designated Safety Officer for OTMYT is Janice Craine (Principal)
The Deputy Designated Safety Office is Simon Phillips (Artistic Director)

Equality Statement

The policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all children

- have a positive and enjoyable experience at OTMYT in a safe and child centred environment.
- are protected from abuse whilst participating in the activities provided by OTMYT.

OTMYT acknowledges that some children, including disabled children and young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

As part of our Child Protection Policy, OTMYT will

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- work in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies in promoting young people's welfare.
- ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of child protection and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other child protection concerns relating to children and young people.
- adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for members, staff and volunteers.
- recognise that some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- seek to keep children and young people safe by: valuing them, listening to and respecting them; and by making this policy freely available.
- recruit members, staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made if they are in sole charge of children or vulnerable members.
- ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern.
- ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all child protection concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals.
- ensure robust child protection arrangements and procedures are in operation, sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.

Scope of the Policy

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in OTMYT. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

Dealing with a disclosure

If a child or young person discloses that he or she has been harmed in some way, the member of the production team / staff / volunteer should, where applicable:

- listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- accept what is being said.
- allow the child or young person to talk freely.
- reassure, but not make promises which it might not be possible to keep.
- not promise confidentiality – it might be necessary to refer to Children's Services: child protection and Specialist Services.
- reassure the child that what has happened is not his or her fault.
- stress that it was the right thing to tell.
- listen, only asking questions when necessary to clarify.
- not criticise the alleged perpetrator.
- explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.
- make a written record.
- pass the information either to the Designated Safety or Deputy Designated Safety Officer.

Monitoring

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- as required by the Local child protection Children Board
- as a result of any other significant change or event.

This policy was last reviewed on: 23 July 2021 to be reviewed on: 23 July 2022

By Janice Craine