



ECHO YOUTH THEATRE

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Echo Youth Theatre Company recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Child (Performances) Regulations 1968, the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 (in Scotland change to Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003).

Echo Youth Theatre recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect, and is committed to practice which protects children from harm. All members of the company accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

The company believes that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, 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 taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All members and employees of the company should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

The company 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 will not be accepted or condoned.
- All adult members of the company provide a positive role model for dealing with other people.
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
- 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 involved with the company and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

The company has a designated Child Protection and Safeguarding Lead, who has appropriate DSL training and they are responsible for ensuring that the child protection policy and procedures are adhered to.

The company has child protection procedures which accompany this policy and include details of who to contact with any safeguarding concerns and how to raise concerns.

This policy will be regularly monitored by the management team of the company and will be subject to annual review. All members of the management team accept and recognise their

responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm by undertaking regular safeguarding training.

The Company Manager maintains a record of all management team and volunteers safeguarding training, when it was conducted and by whom.

All members of the management team and regular volunteers are trained in the principles of good safeguarding practice and all Echo Youth Theatre activities are organised to reflect good safeguarding practice.

Attachment:

1. Echo Youth Theatre Child Protection Procedures



ECHO YOUTH THEATRE

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Responsibilities of the Company

At the outset of any production or event involving children, the company 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.
- Ensure key staff involved in the activity are trained in the principle of good safeguarding practice. The names of those trained and the dates of the training will be included in the event specific risk assessment.

Parents

The company believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and the company. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the company and to share responsibility for the care of children. All parents have access to the company's Child Protection Policy and procedures via our website.

All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after events, rehearsals or performances. It is not the responsibility of the company to take children home.

Unsupervised Contact

The company will ensure that all adults who are permitted unsupervised contact with children will be appropriately vetted, including a criminal records check.

If possible, there will be two adults during rehearsals or activities, but where this is not possible, 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.

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 company has a policy and procedures for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images of children.

Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes.

The company's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.

The company 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.

Guiding Principles for EYT Adults

You should make sure that you are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect, that you question the behaviour of children and parents/carers and don't necessarily take what you are told at face value. You should make sure you know where to turn to if you need to ask for help, and that you refer to our designated safeguarding lead, if you suspect that a child is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger (see the section on Taking Action for further information).

You should make sure that you understand and work within the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements that exist in Norfolk. In doing so, you should be guided by the following key principles:

- children have a right to be safe and should be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect;
- safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility;
- it is better to help children as early as possible, before issues escalate and become more damaging; and
- children and families are best supported and protected when there is a coordinated response from all relevant agencies.

You should not let other considerations, like the fear of damaging relationships with adults, get in the way of protecting children from abuse and neglect. If you think that referral to children's social care is necessary, you should view it as the beginning of a process of inquiry, not as an accusation.

Appendix 1 is a guide to understanding and identifying abuse and neglect. All adult members of the company should ensure they understand the definitions and indicators of abuse.

Suspicion of Abuse

Concerns about a child's welfare can vary greatly in terms of their nature and seriousness, how they have been identified and over what duration they have arisen. If you have concerns about a child, you should ask for help.

You should discuss your concerns with our designated safeguarding lead in the first instance. It is their responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually social services or the police. Guidance on taking action is at Appendix 2.

If you suspect that the person with responsibility for child protection is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to another Director of EYT, who will be responsible for making a LADO referral - procedures at Appendix 3.

If a serious allegation is made against any member of the company, 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.

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 you are unsatisfied with the response you receive when reporting your suspicion or concerns to the EYT Management Team, you should follow the procedures at Appendix 2 and 3 and make the appropriate referrals yourself. However, please speak to our designated safeguarding lead in the first instance.

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

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 company, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the company’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 company believes it is in its best interests to obtain criminal record disclosures for chaperones or other personnel, it will inform the individual of the necessary procedures and the level of disclosure required. An Enhanced disclosure will be required for anyone with unsupervised access.

The company has a written code of practice for the handling of disclosure information – Engagement of Volunteers and Vetting Policy.

The company will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

Chaperones

Chaperones will be appointed by the company for the care of children during productions where the performances are regulated by the The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014 and the company is operating under the authority of a Body of Persona Authority issued by Norfolk County Council. Guidance and procedures for appointed chaperones are at Appendix 4.

Appendices to Echo Youth Theatre Child Protection Procedures:

1. Understanding and Identifying Abuse and Neglect
2. How to Report Your Suspicions or Concerns
3. Reporting your Concerns about an Adult Working with Children
4. Guidance and Procedure for Chaperones

Understanding and Identifying Abuse and Neglect

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment – a person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Child welfare concerns may arise in many different contexts, and can vary greatly in terms of their nature and seriousness. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or by a stranger, including, via the internet. In the case of female genital mutilation, children may be taken out of the country to be abused. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. An abused child will often experience more than one type of abuse, as well as other difficulties in their lives. Abuse and neglect can happen over a period of time, but can also be a one-off event. Child abuse and neglect can have major long-term impacts on all aspects of a child's health, development and well-being.

The warning signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect can vary from child to child. Disabled children may be especially vulnerable to abuse, including because they may have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse. They may have speech, language and communication needs which may make it difficult to tell others what is happening. Children also develop and mature at different rates so what appears to be worrying for a younger child might be normal behaviour for an older child. Parental behaviours may also indicate child abuse or neglect, so you should also be alert to parent-child interactions which are concerning and other parental behaviours. This could include parents who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol or if there is a sudden change in their mental health. By understanding the warning signs, you can respond to problems as early as possible and provide the right support and services for the child and their family. It is important to recognise that a warning sign doesn't automatically mean a child is being abused.

There are a number of warning indicators which might suggest that a child may be being abused or neglected.

Some of the following signs might be indicators of abuse or neglect:

- Children whose behaviour changes – they may become aggressive, challenging, disruptive, withdrawn or clingy, or they might have difficulty sleeping or start wetting the bed;
- Children with clothes which are ill-fitting and/or dirty;
- Children with consistently poor hygiene;
- Children who make strong efforts to avoid specific family members or friends, without an obvious reason;
- Children who don't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities;
- Children who are having problems at school, for example, a sudden lack of concentration and learning or they appear to be tired and hungry;
- Children who talk about being left home alone, with inappropriate carers or with strangers;
- Children who reach developmental milestones, such as learning to speak or walk, late, with no medical reason;
- Children who are regularly missing from school or education;
- Children who are reluctant to go home after school;

- Children with poor school attendance and punctuality, or who are consistently late being picked up;
- Parents who are dismissive and non-responsive to practitioners' concerns;
- Parents who collect their children from school when drunk, or under the influence of drugs;
- Children who drink alcohol regularly from an early age;
- Children who are concerned for younger siblings without explaining why;
- Children who talk about running away; and
- Children who shy away from being touched or flinch at sudden movements.

There are four main categories of abuse and neglect: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Each has its own specific warning indicators, which you should be alert to.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Physical abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Babies and disabled children also have a higher risk of suffering physical abuse.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Physical abuse can also occur outside of the family environment.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of physical abuse:

- Children with frequent injuries;
- Children with unexplained or unusual fractures or broken bones; and
- Children with unexplained bruises or cuts, burns or scalds; or bite marks.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Although the effects of emotional abuse might take a long time to be recognisable, practitioners will be in a position to observe it, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

Emotional abuse may involve serious bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong;

- Parents or carers who withdraw their attention from their child, giving the child the 'cold shoulder';
- Parents or carers blaming their problems on their child; and
- Parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example, by name-calling or making negative comparisons.

Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child. You should be aware that many children and young people who are victims of sexual abuse do not recognise themselves as such. A child may not understand what is happening and may not even understand that it is wrong. Sexual abuse can have a long-term impact on mental health.

Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual abuse:

- Children who display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age;
- Children who use sexual language or have sexual knowledge that you wouldn't expect them to have;
- Children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games; and
- Children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections or underage pregnancy.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual exploitation:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant;
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- Children who regularly miss school or education or don't take part in education.

Neglect

Neglect is a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter. It is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development.

Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse. It is important that practitioners remain alert and do not miss opportunities to take timely action. However, while you may be concerned about a child, neglect is not always straightforward to identify.

Neglect may occur if a parent becomes physically or mentally unable to care for a child. A parent may also have an addiction to alcohol or drugs, which could impair their ability to keep a child safe or result in them prioritising buying drugs, or alcohol, over food, clothing or warmth for the child. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal drug or alcohol abuse.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of neglect:

- Children who are living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe;
- Children who are left hungry or dirty;
- Children who are left without adequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat;
- Children who are living in dangerous conditions, i.e. around drugs, alcohol or violence;
- Children who are often angry, aggressive or self-harm;
- Children who fail to receive basic health care ; and
- Parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured.

How to Report your Concerns or Suspicions about Abuse

Please speak to Echo Youth Theatre's designated Safeguarding and Child Protection Lead in the first instance. This is:

PAUL CLARK - safeguarding@echoyouththeatre.co.uk

Paul is a qualified teacher and experienced at handling safeguarding concerns. He has appropriate and current "designated safeguarding lead" training. If you are unable to contact Paul, please contact:

JO MYERS - jo@echoyouththeatre.co.uk

Jo is the Company Manager and has appropriate safeguarding training and will put you in contact with the appropriate person in Paul's absence..

If you need to speak to either of them urgently, please ask the lead practitioner or chaperone on site for their contact numbers.

If you are unsatisfied with the response you get from the EYT team, you can use the CADS service run by Norfolk County Council.

Children's Advice and Duty Service

If you are a professional, i.e. working with a child or young person in a formal or voluntary setting and not a family member or member of the public, you can contact the Children's Advice and Duty Service on their direct line: **0344 800 8021**.

If you are a member of the public you can do this through Norfolk County Council's Customer Services on **0344 800 8020**.

For any call raising concerns about a child, the Children's Advice and Duty Service will ask for:

- all of the details known to you/your agency about the child;
- their family composition including siblings, and where possible extended family members and anyone important in the child's life;
- the nature of the concern and how immediate it is;
- Any and what kind of work/support you have provided to the child or family to date.

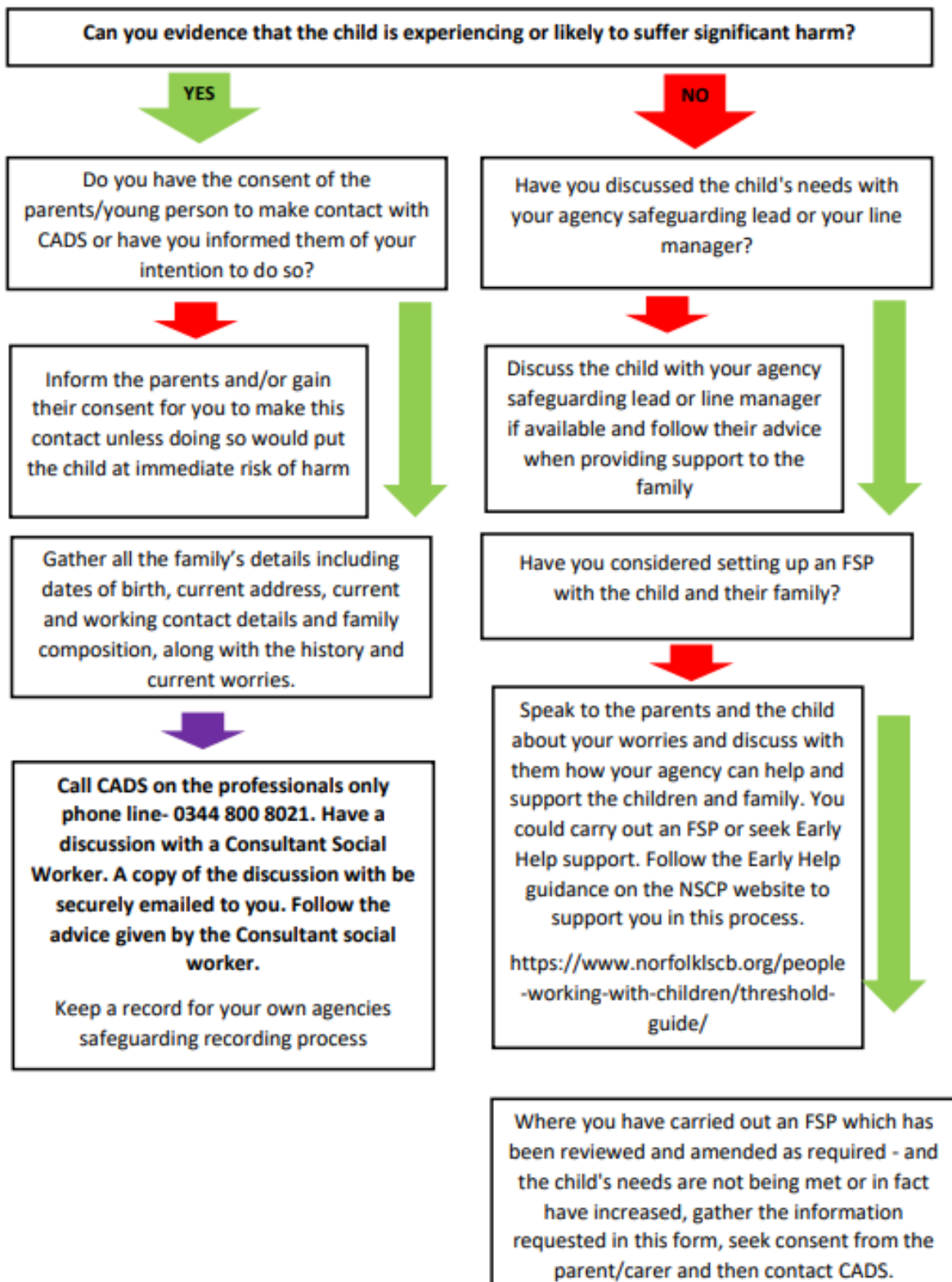
They will also need to know where the child is now and whether you have informed parents/carers of your concern.

Consent: Please seek consent for the referral unless the concerns being raised suggest that the child/children or someone else (including the referrer) would be placed at risk of significant harm, or it might undermine a criminal investigation if the parents/carers are informed. Reasons for not seeking consent should be clearly stated when speaking with Children's Advice and Duty Service and recorded on internal systems for your records.

Please see the flowchart below to support communication. Please remember to record your concerns for your internal audit trail.

Children's Advice and Duty Service- CADS

Before contacting CADS, please answer the following questions and follow the advice provided:



Reporting your Concerns about an Adult Working with Children

If you have concerns or suspicions about any adult working with or supporting Echo Youth Theatre, whether you know them to have direct contact with the children or not, please discuss your concerns with our designated safeguarding lead, or if they are unavailable (or the subject of your concern) then please speak to one of the EYT Directors.

Some examples of possible concerns are someone who:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed an offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child in away that indicates that they may pose a risk to children
- behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

All allegations of abuse of children by those who work with children must be taken seriously:

- A child is anyone under the age of 18.
- An employee (person) is anyone working with children, be it in an employed (all sectors and settings) or voluntary capacity.
- An employer is anyone working with or providing services to children (all sectors and settings)

Any allegation against a person who works with children should be reported immediately and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be informed within one working day of all allegations that come to an employer's attention or that are made directly to the police.

The role of the LADO is to be involved in the management and oversight of allegations against people who work with children. They are not responsible for undertaking investigations. They can provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations. Please note:

- Incidents where one child harms another child, or a parent who does not work with children harms their own children do not need to be reported to the LADO Service, these need to be referred directly to Norfolk Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS). 0344 800 8020.
- Norfolk LADO services do not deal with allegations of bullying , unless there is clear evidence that it is by an adult working with children.
- Parental complaints need to go to the Board of Directors at EYT in the first instance.

Allegations Against Persons who work with Children, Protocol 8.3 needs to be read, when making a referral to Norfolk LADO service. [Allegations Against Persons who Work/Volunteer with Children Policy | NSCP \(norfolkscp.org.uk\)](#)

Completed LADO referral forms should be sent to LADO@norfolk.gov.uk.

Chaperone Guidelines and Procedures

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 one chaperone's care shall not exceed 12.

When required by Norfolk County Council, designated chaperones will be required to register for a Chaperone Licence with Norfolk County Council. On other occasions the chaperones will be appointed internally by Echo Youth Theatre.

Chaperones will be made aware of the company's 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, who is responsible for ensuring the chaperone's concerns are addressed.

If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the Company Manager and not allow the child to continue.

During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the venue entrance and signing them into the building and also supervising their departure and signing them out.

Children will be allocated dressing rooms and are not permitted to enter each others dressing rooms without permission from a chaperone. Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times. Children will not be allowed in the adult dressing rooms under any circumstances.

Children are not to leave the theatre unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents or written permission is provided by parents.

Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.

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 company.

Chaperones should examine accident books each day. If a serious accident has occurred, the producer 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 a written record of arrangements for collection of children after performances and should liaise directly with parents if arrangements are changed. Any changes organised verbally by parents are to be recorded on the signing in sheet by the chaperone. If the chaperone has any concerns over collection arrangements, a telephone call should be made to the primary contact parent to confirm.

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.