

Play Act Drama Child Protection Policy

We Play Act Drama School are committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children and young people. We undertake to provide a safe environment and experience, where the welfare of the child/young person is paramount. We will adhere to the recommendations of Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, published by the Department of Health and Children. We have implemented procedures covering:

1. Code of behaviour for all staff
2. Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse;
3. Confidentiality;
4. Recruitment and selecting staff;
5. Managing and supervising staff;
6. Involvement of primary carers;
7. Allegations of misconduct or abuse by staff;
8. Complaints and comments;
9. Incidents and accidents.

This policy was reviewed on 11/ 08/2018 and will be reviewed on again on 05/04/2019.

[Signed by Adrienne Lee]



Date:

05/04/2019

[Signed by Alicia Gerrard]

Date:

Play Act Drama School

Child Protection Policy

1. Code of Behaviour

A. Child-Centred Approach

- Treat all children and young people equally;
- Listen to and respect children and young people;
- Involve children and young people in decision-making, as appropriate;
- Provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability);
- Use appropriate language (physical and verbal);
- Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere;
- Offer constructive criticism when needed;
- Treat all children and young people as individuals;
- Respect a child's or young person's personal space;
- Discuss boundaries on behaviour and related sanctions, as appropriate, with children and young people and their primary carers;
- Agree group 'contract' before beginning session;
- Encourage feedback from group;
- Use age-appropriate teaching aids and materials;
- Lead by example;
- Be aware of a child's or young person's other commitments when scheduling rehearsals or activities, e.g., school or exams;
- Be cognisant of a child's or young person's limitations, due to a medical condition for example;
- Create an atmosphere of trust;
- Respect differences of ability, culture, religion, race and sexual orientation.

B. Good practice

- Register each child/young person (name, address, phone, special requirements, attendance, emergency contact);
- Make primary carers, children/young people, visitors and facilitators aware of the Child Protection Policy and procedures;
- Have emergency procedures in place and make all staff aware of these procedures;
- Be inclusive of children and young people with special needs;
- Plan and be sufficiently prepared, both mentally and physically;
- Report any concerns to the Designated Person and follow reporting procedures;
- Organisations should have an anti-bullying policy. Encourage children and young people to report any bullying, concerns or worries and to be aware of anti-bullying policy);
- Observe appropriate dress and behaviour;
- Evaluate work practices on a regular basis;
- Provide appropriate training for staff and volunteers;
- Report and record any incidents and accidents;
- Update and review policies and procedures regularly;

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- Keep primary carers informed of any issues that concern their children;
- Ensure proper supervision based on adequate ratios according to age, abilities and activities involved; observe appropriate gender balance for residential;
- Ensure clear communication between artist and organisations; have guidelines and a prompt sheet for artists;
- Have a written agreement with any external organisation that an artist is working with;
- Don't be passive in relation to concerns, i.e., don't 'do nothing';
- Don't let a problem get out of control;
- Avoid if at all possible giving a lift to a child/young person and if you do then make sure that primary carers are informed and you have written consent;
- Maintain awareness around language and comments made. If you think that something you said may have caused offence or upset, then try to address it in a sensitive manner.

C. Inappropriate behaviour

- Don't use or allow offensive or sexually suggestive physical and/or verbal language.
- Don't single out a particular child/young person for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule, or unwelcome focus or attention;
- Don't hit or physically chastise children/young people;
- Don't socialise inappropriately with children/young people, e.g., outside of structured organisational activities.

D. Physical contact

- Seek consent of child/young person in relation to physical contact (except in an emergency or a dangerous situation);
- Avoid horseplay or inappropriate touch;
- Check with children/young people about their level of comfort when doing touch exercises.

E. Health and Safety

- Don't leave children unattended or unsupervised;
- Don't let them manage any dangerous materials;
- Provide a safe environment;
- Be aware of accident procedure and follow accordingly.

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2. Reporting Procedures

A. Who to contact about issues related to child protection and welfare

Adrienne Lee is designated as the person of contact if you have an issue or concern about any aspect of a child or young person's safety and welfare. It is her responsibility to support and advise staff about policy and procedures in relation to child protection and to ensure that procedures are followed. It is also the responsibility of the Designated Person to liaise with the Health Service Executive or Gardaí where appropriate.

- Designated Person: *Adrienne Lee* can be contacted via email or phone, adrienne@playact.ie / 353- 85-275-4057
- Deputy Designated Person: *Alicia Gerrard* alicia@playact.ie / 353-85-155-2098

The following excerpt from Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (4.3.2 - p.38) shows what would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- specific indication from the child or young person that s/he has been abused;
- an account by a person who saw the child/young person being abused;
- evidence, such as an injury or behaviour, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way;
- an injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse [an example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour];
- consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

B. Recording Procedures

(I) Staff should record the following information in relation to children and young people:

- Suspicions
- Concerns;

- Worrying observations;

- Behavioural changes;

- Actions and outcomes

Once recorded this should be given straight to the designated liaison person, who will secure the record.

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(ii) Dealing with a disclosure

- Stay calm and listen to the child/young person, allow him or her enough time to say what s/he needs to say;
- Don't use leading questions or prompt details;
- Reassure the child/young person but do not promise to keep anything secret;
- Don't make the child/young person repeat the details unnecessarily;
- Explain to the child/young person what will happen next (explanation should be age-appropriate).

(iii) Reporting procedures

- The reporting procedure should be known and accessible to all staff;
- The person who expresses the concern should be involved and kept informed;
- Actions and outcomes should be noted;
- Record all details, including the date, time and people involved in the concern or disclosure and the facts.
- Information recorded should be factual. Any opinions should be supported by facts;
- Inform the Designated Person or his or her deputy, if unavailable;
- The most appropriate person should discuss the concern or consult with primary carers. Parents, carers or responsible adults should be made aware of a report to the Health Service Executive unless it is likely to put the child/young person at further risk;
- The Designated Person may contact the Health Service Executive Duty Social Work Department for an informal consultation prior to making a report;
- Information will be shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis (see Section 4: Confidentiality statement);
- If there are reasonable grounds for concern as outlined above, the designated person will contact the Duty Social Worker in the Health Service Executive area using the standard reporting form available from the Health Service Executive. Reports to the Duty Social Worker can be made verbally initially and then followed by the standard reporting form. Reports should be made to the Health Service Executive without delay;

- If the Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person is not available, contact the local Duty Social Worker of the Health Service Executive directly;
- In case of emergencies outside of Health Service Executive Social Work Department hours, contact the Gardaí. In situations that threaten the immediate safety of a child/ young person, it may be necessary to contact the Gardaí.



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3. Confidentiality

A. Confidentiality Statement

We in Play Act Drama School are committed to ensuring people's rights to confidentiality.

However, in relation to child protection and welfare we undertake that:

- Information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard the child/young person;
- Giving such information to others for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality;
- We cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the child or young person are at risk;
- Primary carers, children and young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is being made to the Health Service Executive, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk;
- Images of a child/young person will not be used for any reason without the consent of the parent/carer (however, we cannot guarantee that cameras/videos will not be used at public performances);
- Procedures will be put in place in relation to the use of images of children/ young people;
- Procedures will also be put in place for the recording and storing of information in line with our confidentiality policy.

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4. Recruiting and Selecting Staff

A. Recruitment and selection policy statement

We will ensure that staff are carefully selected, trained and supervised to provide a safe environment for all children and young people, by observing the following principles:

- Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined for every job (paid or voluntary);
- Posts will be advertised widely;
- We will endeavour to select the most suitably qualified personnel;
- Candidates will be required to send in a CV with at least two references. They will then need to complete an interview and if successful, will then be asked to facilitate a class under supervision;
 - No person who would be deemed to constitute a 'risk' will be employed;
 - Some of the exclusions would include:
 - any child-related convictions;
 - insufficient documentary evidence of identification;
 - concealing information on one's suitability to working with children;
- There will be a relevant probationary period;
- All staff will be required to consent to Garda clearance.

5. Managing and Supervising Staff

A. Staff management policy statement

To protect both staff (paid and voluntary) and children/young people, we undertake that:

New staff will:

- Take part in a mandatory induction training session;
- Be made aware of the organisation's code of conduct, child protection procedures, and the identity and role of who has been designated to deal with issues of concern;
- Undergo a probationary or trial period.

All staff will:

- Receive an adequate level of supervision and review of their work practices;
- Be expected to have read and signed the Child Protection Policy Statement;
- Be provided with child protection training.

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6. Involvement of primary carers Policy statement on the involvement of primary carers

A. Policy statement on the involvement of primary carers

We are committed to being open with all primary carers.

We undertake to:

- Advise primary carers of our child protection policy;
- Inform primary carers and schools of all activities and potential activities;
- Issue contact/consent forms where relevant;
- Comply with health and safety practices;
- Operate child-centred policies in accordance with best practice;
- Adhere to our recruitment guidelines;
- Ensure as far as possible that the activities are age-appropriate;
- Encourage and facilitate the involvement of parent(s), carer(s) or responsible adult(s), where appropriate.

If we have concerns about the welfare of the child/young person, we will:

- Respond to the needs of the child or young person;
- Inform the primary carers on an on-going basis unless this action puts the child or young person at further risk;
- Where there are child protection and welfare concerns, we are obliged to pass these on to the Duty Social Worker and, in an emergency, the Gardaí;
- In the event of a complaint against a member of staff, we will immediately ensure the safety of the child/young person and inform primary carers as appropriate.

As a child-centred organisation, we are committed to putting the interest of the child/young person first.

To that end we will:

- Contact local Health Service Executive and Gardaí where there is a child protection welfare concern;

- Encourage primary carers to work in partnership with us under the guidelines set out by our organisation to ensure the safety of their children;
 - Have a designated contact person available for consultation with primary carers in the case of any concern over a child or young person's welfare.
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7. Allegations of misconduct or abuse by staff

A. Dealing with an allegation against staff

Two separate procedures must be followed:

1. In respect of the child/young person Adrienne Lee will deal with issues related to the child/young person.
2. In respect of the person against whom the allegation is made Adrienne Lee will deal with issues related to the staff member.

- The first priority is to ensure that no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk;
- If allegations are made against the Designated Person, then the Deputy Designated Person should be contacted;
- The reporting procedures outlined in Section 2 of these guidelines should be followed.

Both the primary carers and child/young person should be informed of actions planned and taken.

The child/young person should be dealt with in an age-appropriate manner;

- The staff member will be informed as soon as possible
 - of the nature of the allegation;
 - the staff member should be given the opportunity to respond;
- The chairperson/head of the organisation should be informed as soon as possible;
- Any action following an allegation of abuse against an employee should be taken in consultation with Health Service Executive and Gardaí;
- After consultation, the chairperson/head of organisation should advise the person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.

8. Complaints and comments procedures

A. In the event of complaints or comments:

- Complaints or comments will be responded to within 1 week;
- Staff have the responsibility for directing complaints/comments to the appropriate person;
- Verbal complaints will be logged and responded to.

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9. Incidents and Accident

A. Incidents Accidents procedure

- The organisation must maintain an up-to-date register of the contact details of all children/young people involved in the organisation;
- Children/young people's details should be cross-referenced between the incident book and file;
- External organisations with whom your organisation has dealings must provide proof that they have public liability insurance;
- First-aid boxes should be available and regularly re-stocked;
- The location of the first-aid box(es) must be made known to staff;
- Availability of first-aid should be in accordance with the organisation's Health and Safety guidelines. The location of accident/incident books must be made known to staff;
- Children and young people must be advised of risks of dangerous material;
- Record details of risky equipment used and take steps to minimise risk;
- Take cognisance of responsibility for first-aid on off-site trips.

10. Reports & Forms

A. Forms **upon request

1. Declaration Form
2. Accident Report Form
3. Report of potential case to Designated Person