

The Swan Theatre
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures
(revision April 2022)

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Child Protection is everyone's responsibility and everyone involved in the Swan Theatre needs to take ownership of this policy and be involved with the design and implementation. The Swan Theatre, by accepting and adopting this policy document, is determined to ensure that children and young people can participate in all forms of theatre activity, and do so, with their safety being of paramount importance.

This policy has been adopted by The Swan Theatre as it establishes our roles, responsibilities and procedures and both highlights the importance of the protection of children and young people, and safeguards all personnel from the risk of false allegations of abuse or poor practice.

The Swan Theatre acknowledges the requirement to work to statutory guidance as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 for Organisations that provide services to children and young people. The policy follows the principles set out by the Somerset Safeguarding Children Board

For the purposes of this policy the term

- 'children and young people' is used to refer to any person under the age of 18 years
- 'Parent' is used as a generic term to include parents, carers and guardians
- 'Personnel' includes paid or volunteer staff, including Trustees of the Swan Theatre.

The Swan Theatre want to encourage children and young people to take part in our activities in an enjoyable and safe environment. To ensure this the Swan Theatre is committed to promoting the safeguarding and welfare of children within an environment where they can enjoy participating in theatre activity and have adopted the following principles that all its personnel should follow.

1. Policy Statement

The Swan Theatre is committed to the following:

- Making the welfare of children and young people paramount
- Ensuring opportunities for all children and young people, irrespective of their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity and have the right to be protected from abuse.
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings.
- Taking action swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse.

- Ensuring the culture of the theatre and behaviour of members supports prevention of radicalisation of young people and complies with the national Prevent strategy where radicalisation is identified.

2. Good Practice, Poor Practice and Abuse

To provide children and young people with the best possible experience and opportunities in theatre activity everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework and demonstrate exemplary behaviour. This will allow the theatre activity to make a positive contribution to the development of children and young people and safeguards their welfare, while also protecting personnel from the risk of false allegations.

2.1 Good practice

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and actions:

- Before undertaking any activities involving children and young people, consideration will be given to ensure an appropriate level of supervision during the activity.
- Make the experience of theatre activity fun and enjoyable; promote fairness and confront and deal with bullying.
- Treat all children and young people equally; this means giving both the more and less talented members of a group similar attention, time, respect and preserving their dignity.
- Respect the developmental stage of each young person - this means ensuring that the practice intensity is appropriate to the physical, social and emotional stage of the development of the child or young person. Build relationships based on mutual trust and respect, in which children and young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their own development and decision-making.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with children and young people. Where any form of physical guidance is required in teaching technique, this should be provided openly and with the consent of the child or young person and parent.
- Maintain a safe, open and appropriate relationship with children and young people. It is inappropriate for personnel and others in positions of authority to have an intimate relationship with a young person, even if they are over 16, the normal age of legal consent.
- Maintain appropriate standards of behaviour at social events that children and young people attend.
- Be an excellent role model, for example by not smoking or drinking alcohol while working with children and young people.
- Communicate regularly with parents and involve them in decision-making. Gain their consent in writing to act in loco parentis to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises.
- Be aware of any medical conditions, existing injuries and medicines being taken. Keep a written record of any injury or accident that occurs, together with details of

any treatment given. Arrange that someone with knowledge of first aid is readily available

- If you are working with children and young people away from home (for example at events or at concerts), then there should be a risk assessment to minimize any risks and plan contingencies to deal with any situations which might arise. The Designated Safeguarding Lead can help with this if necessary.
- Always be publicly open when working with children and young people.
- Gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements, especially if an overnight stay is involved

2.2 Poor practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel:

- Unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with children and young people, including on a one to one basis
- Taking children and young people alone in a car on journeys, however short, without the express consent of the parent
- Taking children and young people to your home where they will be alone with you unsupervised
- Sharing a room with a child
- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching of any form
- Allowing children and young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control, using aggressive language or calling a child names
- Letting allegations a child makes go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon
- Doing things of a personal nature that children and young people can do for themselves
- Having children and young people stay at your home with you unsupervised

Where it is impractical to avoid any of the situations mentioned above, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the theatre activity and the children and young people's parents.

If during your care of a child you accidentally hurt them, the child seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, or misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to

another colleague and make a brief written note of it. Parents should also be informed of the incident.

2.3 Abuse

Abuse in all its forms can affect a child at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated, they may follow an individual into adulthood.

Children and young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation, and a powerlessness to protect themselves, or adequately to communicate that abuse has occurred.

Children and young people with other protected characteristics may also be at risk of abuse through discrimination and may be doubly powerless in these respects.

It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- age
- gender reassignment
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being [pregnant](#) or on maternity leave
- [disability](#)
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Abuse may take a number of forms, and may be classified under the following headings:

Neglect

This is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Physical Abuse

This is where someone physically hurts or injures children and young people, for example by hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Sexual Abuse

This involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities 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 of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation involves grooming a child directly or online; to prepare a child for sexual abuse; to gain access to a child and build a relationship with that child. This can involve one off contact which may include sexual advances, to a series of events over time. It may start with an adult scanning websites to identify a vulnerable child or befriending a child, perhaps by pretending to have common hobbies or interests or using flattery to trick a child into trusting them. Perpetrators can groom families and organisations, to be trusted as a route to gaining access and creating a relationship with a child.

Emotional Abuse

This is persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Bullying

This may be bullying of a child by an adult or another child. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name-calling, graffiti, abusive text messages transmitted by phone or on the internet), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

Peer on Peer abuse

Children and young people can abuse their peers which can take many forms, including but not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying); sexual violence or harassment; physical abuse including hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiating/hazing type violence or rituals.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges: can occur between two children of any age and sex and occur through a group of children or young people sexually assaulting or harassing an individual or group of children.

It can also involve Upskirting which involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain

sexual gratification or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. This is now a criminal offence

2.4 Indicators of abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people involved in theatre activity are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- An injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her
- Someone else – a child or adult, expresses concern about the welfare of a child
- Unexplained changes in a child's behaviour – e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn, or displaying sudden outbursts of temper - or behaviour changing over time
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour in games
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- Difficulty in making friends
- Being prevented from socialising with other children and young people
- Displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite
- Losing weight for no apparent reason
- Becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive or exclusive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place. It is not the responsibility of those working in the theatre to decide that child abuse is occurring, but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns.

3. Responding to suspicions and allegations

Abuse can and does occur in the family setting as well as other situations, which may include the theatre or other social activities, and is rarely a one-off event when it occurs within such a setting. It is crucial that those involved in the theatre are aware of this possibility and that all suspicions and allegations are taken seriously and appropriate action taken.

It is **not** the responsibility of anyone in the theatre, whether paid or a volunteer, to decide whether or not child abuse is taking place. However, there is a responsibility to inform appropriate agencies of possible abuse so that they can then make inquiries and take any necessary action to protect the child. This applies both to suspicions of abuse occurring within the context of theatre activities and to allegations that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

3.1 Receiving evidence of possible abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening ourselves; we may suspect that it is occurring because of signs such as those listed above; it may be reported to us by someone else, or directly by the child affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a child says or indicates that he or she is being abused, or information is obtained which gives you concern that a child is being abused, you should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child
- Tell the child they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- Take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child who has a speech disability and/or differences in language
- Keep questions to the absolute minimum necessary so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said, and be careful not to ask leading questions
- Reassure the child, but do not promise to keep the matter secret – explain that to resolve the problem it will be necessary to inform other people as appropriate.
- Write down what they tell you, using their own words where possible

3.2 Recording information

As with other forms of information arising in relation to child protection, information of this kind is highly sensitive and confidential. Accordingly, it should be held under secure conditions and only made available to those who have a definite need for it.

You should make a note as soon as possible of whatever information you obtain and pass on to your Designated Safeguarding Lead. The information is then recorded for your own future reference and possibly for passing on to others, appropriate agencies such as the Children's Social Care (Somerset Direct) or the police. In writing such a note, you should confine yourself to the facts, and distinguish between what is your own personal knowledge and what you have been told by other people. You should not include your own opinions on the matter, to avoid the possibility of libel.

Information should include the following:

- The nature of the allegation, in as much detail as possible, including times, dates, locations and other relevant information
- Details of the child involved, including name, age, address and other contact details, and identifying who has parental responsibility for the child

- Details of the person against whom the allegation is made, including name, relationship with the child, age and contact details (if known)
- The identity and contact details of any informants or other witnesses
- The child's account, if he or she can give one, of what has happened
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries
- Details of who else has been informed of the alleged incident
- Any other relevant information
- Record outcome and if referred record confirmation
- Sign and date what you record

3.3 Reporting the concern

Any concern about the welfare of a child should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will decide what action to take. The Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy should be the main contact for reporting concerns to Somerset Direct

Designated Safeguarding Leads, (DSLs).

Name: Rick Beaver
Telephone number: 01935 423935

Name: Rachel Butcher
Telephone number: 01935 429236

Name: Annetta Broughton (DSL representative at Committee)
Telephone number: 01935 823274

(The key role of the committee DSL is to ensure that there is a safeguarding oversight and input into committee decisions and Swan theatre processes and procedures).

Somerset Direct
Telephone number 0300 123 2224

Additional guidance can be found through the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership website <https://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/working-with-children/>

Parents or carers

In most situations, it would be important to talk to parents or carers to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, they may have experienced bereavement in the family. However, there are circumstances in which a child might be placed at even greater risk were such concerns to be shared, e.g. where a parent or carer may be responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately. In these situations, or where concerns still exist, any suspicion, allegation, or incident of abuse must be reported to appropriate agencies as soon as possible.

Children's Social Care (Somerset Direct) or Police

The first consideration is to minimise the danger of further abuse to the child or to other children and young people. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should seek advice from the local police or Children's Social Care (Somerset Direct 0300 123 2224). The allegation should be referred to the police and Children's Social Care (Somerset Direct) in any case involving physical or sexual abuse or where the child's safety is otherwise at risk. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not available, or the concern is about the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the person in receipt of the information or with the concern should contact these agencies direct. Reporting the matter to the police or Children's Social Care (Somerset Direct) should not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information.

Children's Social Care (Somerset Direct)

When a child protection referral is made its staff has a legal responsibility to investigate. This may involve talking to the child and family and gathering information from other people who know the child. Wherever possible, referrals telephoned to the Children's Social Care (Somerset Direct) will be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. A record will also be made of the name and designation of the Children's Social Care (Somerset Direct) member of staff to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call, in case any follow-up is needed.

Police

Where the apparent abuse is of a criminal nature, it will be appropriate to inform the police. A record should be made of the crime reference number provided by the police, together with the time and date of the call, in case any follow-up is needed. The police and Children's Social Care (Somerset Direct) may also carry out a joint enquiry.

3.4 Allegations/Concerns against a member of staff or volunteer or another adult

An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

Any allegation should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who should inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day. If the allegation is about the Designated Safeguarding Lead it should be reported to the deputy or person in charge of the theatre activity.

To notify the LADO of an allegation, an [Allegations Reporting Form](#) (ARF) will need to be completed and forwarded to Somerset Direct: sdinputters@somerset.gov.uk

Alternatively you can phone Somerset Direct on 0300 123 2224 and request an ARF.

The Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) can be contacted through Somerset Direct.

LADO Name; Antony Goble

Email: sdinputters@somerset.gov.uk

Somerset Direct: 0300 123 2224

3.5 Disciplinary procedures

For all personnel, if the abuse is alleged to have occurred within the context of the theatre activity it may also require disciplinary action by the Swan Theatre. If the matter is being investigated by the police and/or Children's Social Care (Somerset Direct), The Swan Theatre may decide to await the outcome of these investigations, which may well influence a disciplinary investigation, although not necessarily so. In appropriate cases, the theatre will suspend the individual concerned while an investigation is taking place. This is not intended to prejudge the outcome of the investigation, but simply to remove the individual from contact with children and young people until the investigation is concluded.

The disciplinary sanctions available include:

By the Swan Theatre – Suspension or exclusion from membership of the individual concerned, and such other sanctions which are provided for within the Swan Theatre constitution

Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality for all concerned, and consideration will be given to what support may be appropriate to children and young people, parents and all personnel

3.6 Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made some time after the event, for example, by an adult who was abused as a child by a member of personnel who is still working with children and young people. Where such an allegation is made, the procedures given above will be followed. This is because other children and young people, either within the theatre or outside it, may be at risk from this person.

4. Recruiting and selecting personnel to work with children and young people

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children and young people. This applies equally to all personnel. The fundamental principle is that those in charge of activities involving children and young people must take all reasonable steps to satisfy themselves as to the suitability of those who are given access to the children and young people in their care.

4.1 Controlling access to children and young people

Applicants for positions that involve significant access to children and young people should complete procedures designed to elicit information about their past career, and to disclose any criminal record or other matter that has a bearing on their suitability to work with children and young people.

Consent should be obtained from applicants for checks to be conducted to determine whether the Disclosure and Barring Service holds any relevant information on them.

The organisation has a legal duty to make a referral to the DBS in cases where an individual (paid worker or volunteer) is removed from working with children within the theatre (or would have, had the person not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children

4.2 Vetting (including DBS checking)

All personnel who will have significant access to children and young people must first be vetted by obtaining a Disclosure about the individual from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

It is important to emphasise that the absence of any relevant disclosure emerging from this vetting process does not guarantee that the individual is safe to work with children and young people, so it should not be relied on excessively. It is only one of a number of factors in the initial assessment of the person's suitability for such responsibilities.

Specifically the following DBS checks will be made:

The leaders of the Swan Youth Theatre (SYT) are involved in a regulated activity and therefore need to have enhanced DBS checks and a level of training commensurate with their role as leaders. (Suggest this is a basic awareness or level 1). The DBS checks need to be seen by the DSLs of the Swan Theatre.

Adults supporting the SYT do not need to have DBS checks as they are supervised by the SYT leaders. They should have a level of training commensurate with their role (basic awareness and be familiar with the Swan Theatre child protection policy and procedures).

DBS checks can be arranged through Spark Somerset. Contact Details:

Leonie Cole, Development Manager

Units 3 & 4, The Courtyard, Bowdens Farm

Hambridge, Somerset, TA10 0BP

Email address Leonie.Cole@sparksomerset.org.uk

Directors of Swan Theatre productions which involve a young person under the age of 18 will need to have a basic DBS check and level of training commensurate with their role, (basic awareness and be familiar with the Swan Theatre child protection policy and procedures).

When having a DBS check individuals are asked to register for the online service on application, or within 7 days of receiving their certificate, so that the DBS check can be transferable for other voluntary organizations.

If the person has a transferable DBS, through having registered with the online service when applying for a previous DBS check, then this is likely to be valid for the Swan Theatre provided the required details and consent is given for the DSL check the online record.

On receipt of the DBS check the individual will show the certificate to the DSL who will:

1. Validate that the DBS check belongs to the individual checking identity using documents as required for the DBS check.
2. Check that the details in the DBS certificate are accurate
3. Check that the DBS check relates to the child workforce
4. Check that the individual has signed up to the update service
5. Make a record of the Date, Certificate number, Name and Address.

4.3 Licensing and Chaperones

Directors or producers intending to produce a play which involves a young person need to check if they need to apply for a license, and if so will need to ensure there are licensed chaperones for the young person.

Key points in determining the requirement for a license:

The upper age limit of a child for the purposes of these requirements is until they cease to be of compulsory school age (the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16) – page 3 of specific guidance

This need for a license applies where performances are at a licensed premise, or in connection with which a charge is made.

However, a license is not required if a child does not perform on more than four days in any period of six months (providing no absence of school is required) – page 14 of specific guidance

There is a limit to 6 performances per 7 days – page 10 (performance refers to any directed activity which includes rehearsals) - page 12 of specific guidance

In applying for a license, the director will need to arrange for Chaperones to be present at rehearsals or productions.

The attached guidance outlines the situation in detail and provides the necessary forms to apply for the license, and requirements of a Chaperone.

Chaperones need to be licensed by the local authority which will require an enhanced DBS check, appropriate level of training (provided as part of the licensing arrangement), and be familiar with the Swan Theatre child protection policy and procedures and the Children in Entertainment Guidance from Somerset County Council.

Chaperones need to apply for a licence from the local authority where they are resident. In Somerset the chaperone licence needs to be renewed after 2 years and a new DBS check will be required (arranged by Somerset county Council).

A child or young person's parent can act as a chaperone for their own child if the parents are present with the child at all times (except when on stage). This does not extend to siblings or grandparents who might see themselves as "carers".

4.4 The Designated Safeguarding Lead within the Swan Theatre

Two Designated Safeguarding Leads will be appointed, at least one should be a member of the Committee, to advise the Swan Theatre on compliance with the procedures in this protection policy and act as a focal point for reporting any concerns. The DSLs have the primary responsibility to check that everyone who has significant access to children and young people within the theatre is suitable for that role and has been vetted as described above. This is done by overseeing this policy and procedures and providing guidance and support to members in following them.

4.5 Training

The effectiveness of the policies depends on everyone who is involved being aware of what is good practice and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure there is awareness on the committee and particularly with those working directly with children and young people.

- **Induction**, which includes familiarization with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed and delivered to all personnel.
- All personnel to receive a copy of the Swan Theatre's Child Protection Policy

- **Training** for Designated Safeguarding Leads and other personnel as and when required

5. Visiting Groups

Where groups using the Swan Theatre for their own performances have young people for whom it would be necessary to have a license and chaperone, the group will have to provide written confirmation of their compliance with the requirements for a license and chaperones as necessary so the theatre can be assured that a visiting company using the premises is acting appropriately. This will avoid the risk of any expense and reputational damage to the theatre should a visiting group not be compliant and their show be shut down as a consequence.

7. Conclusion

Child Protection is everyone's responsibility and everyone involved in the Swan Theatre needs to take ownership of this policy and be involved with the design and implementation. The Swan Theatre, by accepting and adopting this policy document, is determined to ensure that children and young people can participate in all forms of theatre activity, and do so, with their safety being of paramount importance.

8. Review Date

This policy will be reviewed regularly, at intervals of not more than two years, to ensure it is in line with developments in Safeguarding Children guidance and meets the needs of the Swan Theatre.

Next Review Date: May 2024

Chairperson:

Name:


Date:

 M. PAYNE
3/5/2022

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Name:

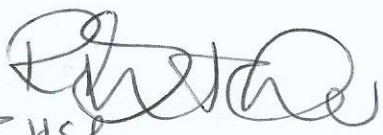
Date:

RICK BEAVER 
22/4/22

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Name:

Date:


RACHEL BUTCHER
22/04/2022