



Child Protection Policy (CPP) For Stage Theatre Society (STS)

Abbreviations used throughout this document;

STS - Stage Theatre Society
CPP - Child Protection Policy
HOP - Hands on Policy
CRB - Criminal Records Bureau

INTRODUCTION

In response to the JAR inspection of 2006, the Medway Youth Service, and all of its affiliates have been targeted to ensure consistency in curriculum delivery across its service. This CPP has been compiled together with the Youth Service, and the Co-Owners of Stage Theatre Society to ensure it complies with Medway's standards.

The Children Act of 2004 provides the legal underpinning for Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme which identified a number of key outcomes for young people which all those who work with young people must contribute. This CPP has also been devised to ensure it complies with the Children Act 2004.

This policy has been developed in line with Children (Performances) Regulations 1968.

Below is our Child Protection Policy, in which all of our Production Team Members, Committee and Parental Helpers must adhere to at all times.

Stage Theatre Society is proud to be a member of SAFECHILD.CO.UK

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THIS CPP IS WITH THE APPOINTED CHILD WELFARE OFFICER, CHAIRPERSON AND CO-FOUNDERS PREDOMINANTLY.

THIS POLICY WILL ALWAYS BE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST FOR ANYBODY, INCLUDING TEAM MEMBERS, CAST, PARENTS, OUTSIDE AGENCIES, AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

RATIOS

Stage Theatre Society ensures a minimum of 1:12 (one production team member, committee member or parental helper ((here in known as TEAM MEMBER)) to every twelve young cast members ((15 or under))) present on the premises during rehearsals.

In any room, or enclosed area, there will not be less than two team members during deliberations, including rehearsing the production, with a young cast member, or as a group of two or more.

During confidential exceptions, a team member can deliberate with a cast member singularly. They must be visible at all times, inform another team member prior to deliberating, and deliver a generalised report to the current Chairperson and Child Welfare Officer at the earliest convenience of their discussion. Should the Chairperson or Child Welfare Officer not be satisfied with the report, they can forward their concern onto either of the Co-Founders, and should the Co-Founders not be satisfied with the report, the team member will be relieved of their duty until a further investigation has been conducted. This investigation will be discussed immediately at an extraordinary meeting, with the team member in question in attendance. The Committee and Co-Founders will deliberate and decide upon the appropriate action to take. If outside agencies are notified (Social Services, Medway Youth Service, Police etc...).

At all rehearsals, at least ONE team member will be able to deliver Emergency First Aid, and possess a valid and current certificate, available upon request from any team member, cast member or parent.

Whilst at the theatre hosting Stage Theatre Societies current production, STS will adhere to the current legislation regarding Young Peoples Performance Licence with sufficient chaperones, and stage crew appropriate to the amount of cast on stage. This will be enforced by The Head Chaperone of that production, whom will be able to be distinguished via the shows programme. This information must be available upon request. The Chaperones will be responsible for the welfare of the young cast and have a duty of care to ensure there is no breach of the regulations.

CRIMINAL RECORDS BUREAU CHECKS

In order to qualify to be a 'Team Member', a basic CRB Check must be carried out via the appropriate channels. If a volunteer would like to support the company without the appropriate checks, then they can do so, however they will not qualify as a team member, and will not be able to assist with Stage Theatre Society's Ratios as mentioned above.

CRB checks, in line with government legislation, will be accepted from previous or current employment in place of STS carrying out the check. This document must be presented to us for our records.

CRB checks will be available for anybody wishing or requested to volunteer with the company, and STS will offer to pay for the fee should the volunteer not have a current check available.

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Stage Theatre Society makes use of Social Networking sites to be able to effectively communicate with its members and their families, as well as to keep in contact with its old members. We also use Social Networking sites to promote our up and coming events within the society.

No Adult involved in Stage Theatre Society will ever initiate contact with its members under the age of 16. However they will accept requests to join the groups run by Stage Theatre Society or the people that run the group.

REGISTRATION

All cast and team members will be registered in to each rehearsal, performance, trip, or residential excursion. Those details will be held with one of the Co-Founders, Director of the current production, event leader (for trips and residential excursions), or a titled member of the Committee. This information will always be available upon request. The registration will always be done as soon as possible.

Should one of the aforementioned events listed above proceed without a register being taken, a report will be conducted by the Chairperson, Child Welfare Officer and the Co-Founders. Appropriate action which satisfies all parties will be agreed and conducted.

EVACUATION PROCEDURE

A fire evacuation drill will be conducted at rehearsals at least once a year. The details of which must be held confidential, and conducted accordingly by the Child Welfare Officer. The register will be taken, and should any one be missing from the evacuation drill, a full investigation will be undertaken by the Child Welfare Officer and the results of which will be forwarded to the Co-Founders and Chairperson accordingly.

All team and cast members and volunteers will be informed of the Evacuation Process, including meeting points for both a fire alarm and bomb alarm, including all fire exits which will remain clear at all times. Details of meeting points will be displayed at the rehearsal venue at all times, and will be the responsibility of the Site Manager for the venue.

Whilst at the theatre hosting the current production, information on the fire evacuation procedure remains the responsibility on the theatre staff, but will be monitored by the Child Welfare Officer.

During trips and residential excursions, the event leader will inform all present of the procedures accordingly.

HANDS ON POLICY

Due to the nature of the business here at Stage Theatre Society, it is sometimes imperative to instruct or guide the young cast, especially during the choreography sessions, to prevent injury. This will apply to team members only.

Strictly under NO circumstances will it be acceptable for anybody else to handle a young cast member. In this instance, an immediate full investigation will be conducted by the Co-Founders, Chairperson and Child Welfare Officer with the company Secretary in attendance to minute the investigation for distribution to any team member or parent who requests a copy. Names will be stricken from the records to protect confidentiality.

At anytime it is deemed necessary for a team member to handle a cast member, then they will request permission prior from the young cast member and be visible to another team member. The HOP is exempt from the deliberation section mentioned prior in the RATIO section of this CPP with regards to 'confidential exceptions'.

A summarised HOP will be included in the Welcome Pack for all members of the young cast, and must be signed by a parent or guardian thus expressing their permission for this policy to exist. If this permission is not granted, then it remains the responsibility of the Child Welfare Officer to inform all team members that the parents have declined the HOP, and therefore the young child must not partake in the production on Health and Safety grounds.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If a young cast member has a grievance with a team member (excluding the Child Protection Officer or company Secretary) they will have the opportunity to express their grievance in confidence with the Child Protection Officer and company Secretary, who will minute the discussion for referral reasons ONLY. Under NO circumstances will this meeting be discussed with anyone, including the Co-Founders.

The young cast member will be allowed to have a parent or guardian present during this discussion, and will be informed of every stage of the investigation.

If it is deemed to involve outside agencies (as detailed above), then the Co-Founders and Chairperson will be entitled to read the minutes of the investigation, including the team member in which the grievance has been lodged against.

Should the grievance concern either the Child Protection Officer or the company Secretary, then the investigation will be conducted by a Co-Founder with the Chairperson acting as the company Secretary. The aforementioned procedure will continue as detailed above.

The young cast member and/or parent or guardian has the right to ask for the investigation to be conducted by any team member of their choice.

Notice will need to be given of at least 28 days from both parties for a GP investigation to occur.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Every young cast member auditioning will be entitled to a fair and equal audition, and will not be discriminated against on the basis of religion, ethnicity, sex, and disability. Due to the nature of the work, particular roles will need to be cast according to the sex of the character. Due to the inexperience of the team members, it is also deemed acceptable to discriminate against some young cast who audition with severe physical/mental disabilities, on the basis of Health and Safety.

The Casting Manager for the production will be able to answer any questions regarding discrimination at an audition to anybody who pledges a request. Should the response not satisfy, then parties will have the opportunity to follow the Grievance Procedure.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS OF MEMBERS

Every young cast member accepted to be part of a production will be asked to sign a member pack. This will include a disclaimer giving Stage Theatre Society the right to hold and store photographs / video media of the child. These documents are signed and at the end of each production filed securely. Previous Photos / Videos can be used by Stage Theatre Society for promoting of the group.