



Safeguarding Policy

Stage Theatre Society

Reviewed - October 2024

Introduction

Here at STS we strive to ensure the highest standards when it comes to the safeguarding of children in our care. We are committed that under no circumstances should any volunteer inflict physical or psychological harm on a child.

This safeguarding policy has been compiled together with our Volunteers and this must be always adhered to. The policy is in place to reduce risk and prevent harm to children and to ensure that all volunteers at Stage Theatre Society understand their part in the safeguarding of children in our care.

This policy has also been developed in line with Children (Performances) Regulations 1968 and is reviewed yearly.

Our safeguarding policy is made available on our website.

Key contact information

Stage Theatre Society Designated Safeguarding Lead – Julie Porter.

Local Authority Designated Officer -

Telephone: 03000 41 08 88

Email: kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk

NSPCC Helpline

0808 8005000

Email: help@NSPCC.org.uk

Aims and objectives of the society

Aims and objectives of the society shape the way we operate and are very important to us and are as follows.

- To improve quality of life for all members of the society.
- To increase performing and technical abilities of its members.
- FOR EVERYONE TO HAVE FUN
- To encourage discipline and learning in the activities we carry out.
- To have a balance of social and learning activities in the society.
- For all of our members to succeed in what they do with us at all times.
- To always encourage the best in our members.
- To progress with the show according to the rehearsal programme.
- To teach and offer new talents to our members.
- To make people want to be part of our society.
- To enable our members to bond socially with others.
- To always encourage commitment to the show from all members of the society.
- To distribute all show betterments to charitable organisations, or to be used to subsidise the next production if needed.
- To always keep within the proposed budgets for our shows.
- To increase community involvement and spirit within the society.
- To be able to fill our auditoriums with lively audiences.
- To have the audience always wanting more.
- To demonstrate to our audiences a different culture.

Training and induction of volunteers

All volunteers that help with Stage Theatre Society will be provided with sufficient safeguarding training, including, but not limited to, knowing what to do in the event of a child disclosing something to them and how to recognise the different types of abuse/neglect. They will also be made aware of this policy and its procedures.

Ratios

Stage Theatre Society ensures a minimum of 1:15 (one production team member, volunteer to every fifteen young cast members aged 15 or under present on the premises during rehearsals – in-line with child performance regulations.

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

During confidential exceptions, a volunteer can deliberate with a cast member singularly. They must be always visible, inform another volunteer prior to deliberating, and deliver a generalised report to one of the co-founders and Designated Safeguarding Lead at the earliest convenience of their discussion.

Should the co-founders or Designated Safeguarding Lead not be satisfied with the report, the volunteer 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 volunteer in question in attendance. The Co-Founders will deliberate and decide upon the appropriate action to take. If necessary, outside agencies would be notified (Social Services, Police etc).

First aid provision

At all rehearsals, at least one volunteer will be able to deliver Emergency First Aid, and possess a valid certificate for this.

Chaperones

Whilst at the theatre hosting our current production, STS will adhere to the current legislation regarding Young Peoples Performance Licencing ensuring there are sufficient chaperones appropriate to the amount of cast on stage. The Chaperone team 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. Such chaperones will have the necessary licences and checks in place to carry out their duties.

This will be enforced by The Head Chaperone of that production, whom will be able to be distinguished via the shows programme.

DBS checks

At STS, all volunteers that work directly with young people must have at least a basic DBS check in place. If a volunteer would like to support the company without the appropriate checks, then they can do so – but will need to be paired with someone that does carry a DBS check. It will be assessed as to the need for the person to have a DBS check in place.

DBS checks will be accepted from previous or current employment in place of STS carrying out the check. This original document must be presented to us, along with ID for our records. STS however reserves the right to carry out its own, should it see fit.

DBS checks will be available for anybody wishing or requested to volunteer with us, and STS will offer to pay for the fee should the volunteer not have a current check available and we deem it necessary for it to be in-place.

Records of the volunteer DBS checks, Chaperone Licencing and ID are kept in one place on our knowledge sheets.

Social networking

Stage Theatre Society makes use of Social Networking sites to be able to effectively communicate with its members, their families, alumni and the general public.

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 volunteers will be registered into and out of each rehearsal, performance, trip, or residential excursion. Those details will be held on our central knowledge sheets for the performance – alongside notes of holidays and absence. This information will always be available upon request. The registration will always be done as soon as possible.

Emergency evacuation procedure

STS will follow the necessary arrangements of the venue that they are using at the time surrounding meeting points and evacuation.

An 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead. The register will be taken and, should anyone be missing from the evacuation drill, a full investigation will be undertaken by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the results of which will be forwarded to the Co-Founders accordingly.

All cast members and volunteers will be informed of the evacuation process, including meeting points in the event of an emergency, including all fire exits which will always remain clear. Details of meeting points will be always displayed at the rehearsal venue and will be the responsibility of the Site Manager for the venue.

Whilst at the theatre hosting the current production, information on the emergency evacuation procedure remains the responsibility of the theatre staff but will be monitored by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

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 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 production team volunteers 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, Designated Safeguarding Lead.

At any time it is deemed necessary for a volunteer to handle a cast member, then they will request permission prior from the young cast member and be visible to another team member.

A summarised hands-on policy will be included during registration for all members of the young cast, and must be agreed 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead to inform all team members that the parents have declined the hands-on policy, 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 production team member or volunteer, they will have the opportunity to express their grievance in confidence with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will minute the discussion for referral reasons ONLY. Under NO circumstances will this meeting be discussed with anyone other than necessary to resolve the issue.

The young cast member will be allowed to have a parent or guardian present during this discussion.

If it is deemed to involve outside agencies (as detailed above), then the Co-Founders 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 the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the investigation will be conducted by a Co-Founder. The 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.

Use of photographs and videos of members

Every young cast member accepted to be part of a production will be asked to sign a disclaimer as part of the sign-up process. This will include a disclaimer giving Stage Theatre Society the right to hold and store photographs / video media of the child. Previous Photos / Videos can be used by Stage Theatre Society for promoting the group unless a cast member withdraws permission.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.