

# SAMPLE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

## Introduction

(**Name of company/theatre**) have a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for children all staff, chaperones, parents/legal guardians and volunteers accept their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to ensure that everyone follows procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

### There are three elements to our policy:-

- ☐ **Prevention** through awareness of each individual child's needs.
- ☐ **Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect**
- ☐ **Procedures** for identifying and reporting cases or suspected cases, of abuse.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of (**Name of company/theatre**) and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

## Prevention

We recognise that the "entertainment industry" can be a very "adult" environment and we expect that all staff, chaperones, parents/legal guardians, volunteers and anyone else who comes into contact with children behave in an appropriate manner at all times, and remember that "The Welfare of the Child is Paramount".

(**Name of company/theatre**) will therefore:-

- ☐ Act within the Children's Act 1989 & 2004
- ☐ Act within The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- ☐ Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel welcome and familiar with their environment and are informed of personal (toilets, dressing rooms etc) and emergency arrangements (fire exits, meeting points etc) and any Health and Safety Procedures (dangerous equipment, first aid etc)
- ☐ Inform each child who the appropriate person or people are to speak to if they have any questions, problems or concerns.
- ☐ Ensure that all children are treated with respect and dignity and are treated as individuals and offered equality of opportunities.
- ☐ Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and unnecessary physical contact with children) and involve/allow parents/chaperones wherever possible, to take responsibility for the child/children they are responsible for. (parents must only have responsibility for their own child)
- ☐ Recognising the individual needs of the child. eg recognising when a child may be tired and may need a break.
- ☐ Ensure that children are supervised appropriately.
- ☐ Ensure that all Chaperones are registered with the local authority in which they reside and have an enhanced DBS check.
- ☐ Ensure all crew and staff coming into close contact with a child are DBS checked.

☐ Ensure that all staff and crew who don't necessarily have close contact with children but who are assisting in the production are aware of their conduct around children.

### **Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect**

A child is abused or neglected when somebody inflicts harm, or fails to act to prevent harm. A child or young person up to the age of 18 years can suffer abuse or neglect and require protection.

☐ **Physical Abuse** - May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates or induces illness in a child whom they are looking after.

☐ **Sexual Abuse** - Forcing or enticing a child/young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening, may involve: physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts; non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities; or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

☐ **Neglect** - Neglect 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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

☐ **Emotional Abuse** - The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional and behavioural development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age and developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, for example witnessing domestic abuse within the home or being bullied, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone

### **Legislation, Policy and Guidance**

**(Name of company/theatre)** will adhere to the relevant legislation when working with children and young people under the age of 18 years as outlined in the following:

- ☐ Children Act 1989
- ☐ Children Act 2004
- ☐ Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

### **Suspicion of Abuse**

☐ If you see or suspect abuse of a child, immediately make this known to the designated lead/manager responsible for child protection.