



Guideline for developing Child Protection Policies and Procedures for organisations that involve children in their performances

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Developed March 2017

Why?

It is good practise for organisations that involve children in their performances, or paid modelling to have a child protection policy which is regularly reviewed and updated, and ensure all members, staff and volunteers are familiar with it. Contained within this document are a sample policy statement and guidelines that provide organisations with a framework that can be built on and tailed to meet the specific needs of the organisation.

The NSPCC has noted the following characteristics are common in organisations where abuse is most likely to exist:

- Minimal supervision of children
- Inadequate guidelines or procedures for dealing with concerns about children
- Lack of specialist skills or knowledge about child protection
- Minimal staff support
- Children left to their own devices
- Discouragement of parental involvement (e.g. as observers or as accompanying adults)
- Lack of resources
- Gaps between policy and practice
- Poor co-ordination and lack of consistency in supervision

These provide a useful first step in considering the policies and safe working practices the organisation should adopt to ensure the protection of children and vulnerable adults in their care

Up to what age?

A child is defined in The Children Act 1989 as anyone up to the age of 18 years. The regulations relating to children taking part in performances apply up to the statutory school leaving age.

Children do not reach the statutory school leaving age until the end of June in the academic year in which they become 16. Organisations have a duty of care towards young people between the statutory school leaving age and 18. They may not be required to be supervised by chaperones but they are still need to be protected according to Child Protection policies and procedures.

Why do we need a Policy?

Organisations working with or providing services for children should have a written child protection policy and set of procedures in place. All members, staff and volunteers should be fully aware of the policy and procedures, understand their responsibilities and be 'signed up' to them. The policy should provide the foundation for:

- An understanding across the organisation of its role in the protection of children in its care
- Practical objectives for ensuring the protection of children
- Reasons why the organisation needs formal procedures, including the recruitment and training of relevant personnel, responding to allegations of abuse, and who it is that takes lead responsibility within the organisation for the protection of children
- Acquiring basic information on current legislation and issues
- Accessing further information and advice

Why do we need a Procedure?

Linked to the child protection policy, organisations should have a set of procedures about how to put the policy into practice. The policy and the procedures should be dated and should be reviewed and updated regularly. They will be particular to how the organisation engages with children. The procedures should include:

- Risk assessment and risk management e.g. areas of potential hazard, routes to and from the rehearsal and performance venue etc.
- Recruitment practices
 - All employees / volunteers are required to provide at least 2 references, which are always verified.
 - All employees/volunteers will need to provide a record of their full employment history and explain any gaps.
 - All employees / volunteers will have relevant DBS (Disclosure and Barring) checks. Any failure to disclose convictions will result in disciplinary action or dismissal.

All new employees / volunteers are supervised until references have been verified and DBS checks received.

Further information:

www.buckinghamshirepartnership.co.uk/media/2608453/BSAB-and-BSCB-Safer-Recruitment-Toolkit-v1-1-Oct-2014.pdf

Please note that it is **NOT** the role of the organisation to decide whether a child has been abused or not. This is the task of the Local Authority Children's Social Care Services. It is however everybody's responsibility to ensure that concerns are shared and appropriate action taken.

The first part of this document provides sample child protection policy statements followed by guidelines on how to develop your organisations own child protection policy and procedures.

The final section provides an appendix which contains useful information that can be adapted to suit or copied for display purposes within your organisation. The most important thing to remember is that the key to robust child protection policy and procedures is that they are used, shared and work for staff and children or young people that attend your organisation and that they are reviewed annually

Sample Child Protection Policy Statement

Name of Organisation is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. It recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. *Name of Organisation* acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. Paid staff and volunteers will endeavour to work together to encourage the development of an ethos which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children, young people and adults.

The *XXXX Organisation* recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014, the Children Act 1989 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 (in Scotland Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003). Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015, Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016.

The organisation believes that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount;
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- All members, volunteers and employees of the organisation should be clear on how to respond appropriately

The organisation will ensure that:

- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity;
- The welfare of each child will always be put first;
- A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers the children to share in the decision-making process;
- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism;
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned;
- All adult members of the organisation provide a positive role model for dealing with other people;
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour;
- It will keep up-to-date with health & safety legislation;
- It will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children;
- It will undertake relevant development and training;
- It will hold a register of every child involved with the organisation and will retain a contact
name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

The organisation has child protection procedures which accompany this policy. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the organisation's Equal Opportunities Policy and Health & Safety Policy.

The organisation has a dedicated Child Protection / Welfare Officer, who is in charge of ensuring that the child protection policy and procedures are adhered to. That person's name is and he / she can be contacted on.....

In implementing this child protection policy *Name of Organisation* will:

- Communicate to all workers / members their legal and moral responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation
- Communicate to all employees / volunteers / members their responsibility to work at all times towards maintaining high standards of practice in protection of children
- Ensure that all workers / members understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a child or young person, or a worker's conduct towards a child / young person, to the organisation's named person for child protection
- Ensure that the organisations named person for child protection understands his / her responsibility to refer any child protection concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (i.e. Police and/or Children's Social Care)
- Ensure that any procedures relating to the conduct of workers / members are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner
- Facilitate opportunities for children and young people to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues in connection with the service they are provided with and to have access to the organisation's Complaints Procedure.
- Facilitate involvement of parents or carers in the work of the organisation and to make child protection policies and procedures available to them

The organisation has a commitment to allow staff and volunteers to access appropriate training. All staff and volunteers who have regular contact with children and young people should undertake basic safeguarding awareness training, which should be updated regularly. Training is available via the e-Learning signposts on the BSCB website: <http://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/training/e-learning-courses/>

(Also see Chaperones, Page 11)

This policy will be regularly monitored by the Executive Committee of the organisation and will be subject to annual review.

Date:

Developing Procedures

Your organisation's child protection procedures should detail the steps which will be followed where there are concerns that a child or young person could be experiencing abuse and / or neglect. The procedures should help to ensure a speedy and effective response for dealing with such concerns.

Section 1: Introduction

Your introduction should give a brief outline of the work that you do with children and young people. You should make it clear that your organisation is committed to the welfare and protection of children and/or young people within all the activities your organisation undertakes.

You should include the purpose of the procedures (i.e. to ensure that all concerns about the care and protection of children/young people are effectively managed) and, the workers/members who are required to implement the procedures (i.e. all workers / members, both paid and volunteers and not solely those who work with children and young people under the age of 18).

For example:

These procedures have been designed to ensure that the welfare and protection of any child and / or young person who accesses the services provided by *Name of Organisation*. The procedures recognise that child protection can be a very difficult subject to deal with to the extent that it is sometimes easier to close your eyes to what is happening or believe that it is somebody else's problem to deal with.

Name of Organisation is committed to the belief that protecting children and young people is everybody's responsibility and therefore the aim here is to provide guidelines that will enable all workers / members and volunteers to act appropriately to any concerns that arise in respect of a child / young person.

There should be a clear reference to the organisation's commitment to equal opportunities.

Section 2: Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

It is important in this section to provide definitions of abuse under the heading of Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Neglect, Child Sexual Exploitation and Bullying.

Definitions of Abuse

(unless otherwise stated, these definitions are taken from Working Together 2015)

Physical Abuse: Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, and burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse is the 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 children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far 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 include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as over protection 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 to frequently feel frightened or in danger, 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.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse 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 penetrative (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect: Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or a carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, (including exclusion from home or abandonment) failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers) or the failure to ensure access to the appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsive to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Child Sexual Exploitation: Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

(NB. Children who work in entertainment may be sexually exploited in return for offers of TV, film or modelling/ photographic work and roles in professional stage productions)

Bullying: Bullying may be defined as behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally. It can take many forms, including:

- verbal abuse, such as name calling or gossiping
- non-verbal abuse, such as hand signs or text messages
- emotional abuse, such as threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone
- undermining, by constant criticism or spreading rumours
- controlling or manipulating someone
- racial, sexual or homophobic bullying
- physical assaults such as hitting and pushing
- making silent, hoax or abusive calls.

Bullying can happen face to face or virtually, for example online via social networking sites, online forums or gaming or via mobile phones. The use of information communications technology (ICT) to bully impacts on the way bullying takes place – it can happen at any time of day and can be much more subtle or hidden, including taking place when a child is alone in their room. It also potentially involves a much larger audience, including a large number of bystanders and spread very quickly to become 'viral'. (Department of Education XXXX)

Section 3: Responsibilities of the Organisation

This section must clearly state the specific responsibilities so the organisation at the outset of any production.

For example

At the outset of any production the organisation will:

- undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process.
- identify the person with designated responsibility for child protection;
- engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting (if necessary in consultation with the local authority);
- ensure that children are supervised at all times;
- know how to get in touch with the local authority social care services, in case it needs to report a concern.

Section 4: Named Person(s) for Child Protection

Every organisation that works with children or young people should have in place a named person who is responsible for dealing with child protection issues that may arise. A deputy must be made available in their absence. These individuals must be trained in child protection and their responsibilities clearly stated within your procedures.

For example:

Name of Organisation has an appointed individual who is responsible for dealing with any child protection concerns. In their absence, a deputy will always be available for workers/members to consult with.

The named persons for Child Protection within *Name of Organisation* are:

Named Person for Child Protection: _____

Work telephone number: _____

Mobile number: _____

Emergency contact no: _____

Deputy:

Name of contact person: _____

Work telephone number: _____

Mobile number: _____

Emergency contact no: _____

The role and responsibilities of the named person(s) are:

- To ensure that all staff are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they are concerned that a child/young person may be subject to abuse or neglect.
- Ensure that any concerns about a child/young person are acted on, clearly recorded, referred on where necessary and followed up to ensure the issues are addressed.
- The Named Person(s) will record any reported incidents in relation to a child/young person. These will be kept in a secure place.

Section 5: Stages to follow if you are worried about a child

The following section should provide clear guidelines for workers/members to follow if they have concerns about a child or young person.

For example:

Suspicion of abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of *the organisation*, please make this known to the named person with responsibility for child protection. This named person will assist with decision making around the appropriate action. They should follow the BSCB advice on 'What to do if you are concerned about a child in Buckinghamshire' available at: [Concerned about a Child](#). **If the child is at immediate risk of harm, call 999.**
- If you suspect that the person with responsibility for child protection is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the local authority designated officer (LADO).
- Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed as well as your response, in case there is follow-up in which you are involved.
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of *the organisation*, chaperone, venue staff etc., action will be taken to ensure the individual does not have further contact with the child until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms, filming location, TV Studio, etc. and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production.

Disclosure of abuse

If a child confides in you that abuse has taken place:

- Remain calm and in control but do not delay taking action.
- Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Don't promise to keep it a secret. Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the person with responsibility for child protection. Make it clear to the child that you will need to share this information with others. Make it clear that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help.
- **Reassure the child that 'they did the right thing' in telling someone.**
- **Tell the child what you are going to do next.**
- Speak immediately to the person with responsibility for child protection. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually Children's Social care or the Police.
- Never investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where a child makes a disclosure
- As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was said, using the child's own words. Note the date, time, any names that were involved or mentioned, and who you gave the information to. Make sure you sign and date your record.

Recording of information

In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, the details of an allegation or reported incident will be recorded, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a statutory child protection agency.

An accurate note shall be made of the date and time of the incident or disclosure, the parties involved, what was said or done and by whom, any action taken to investigate the matter, any further action taken e.g. suspension of an individual, where relevant the reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, and the name of the persons reporting and to whom it was reported.

The record will be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation.

Who to tell and what to tell them

If you have concerns about the wellbeing of a child in your care you have a duty to report it to the organisations welfare officer who will contact the child employment manager. If you are unable to contact them you should contact Buckinghamshire County Council Children's Services.

The telephone number is shown on the 'useful contacts' page at the back of this leaflet'.

Where you make such a referral, please advise the child employment office at the earliest opportunity. We can offer you the appropriate support and advice where required.

Section 6: Creating a Safe Organisation

The following section should provide clear guidelines that address the issues detailed below. Any part of this text can be adapted for use in the organisations procedure.

Photographs and images of children

There are risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on web sites and in other publications such as theatre programmes. Photographs can be used as a means of identifying children especially when they are accompanied with personal information, for example, "this is X who goes to such-and-such a school and who likes playing football". This information can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to start to 'groom' that child for abuse. Secondly the content of the photo can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. There is evidence of this adapted material finding its way on to child pornography sites.

Organisations need to develop a policy in relation to the use of images of children and young people on their web sites, programmes and other material. The organisation will need to assess the potential risks to the child when making decisions about the type of images they wish to use and the way they are used. Organisations should ensure that parents support the policy. Use of names of individuals in a photograph should be limited and it is sensible to avoid use of any additional information that might help locate the child. Using only images of children in suitable dress may reduce the risk of inappropriate use. Parental permission to use an image of a child must be sought in advance.

If parents or other members of the audience are intending to photograph or video an event they should be made aware of the organisation's policy. The use of cameras or mobile phones with camera or filming capability in dressing rooms and other inappropriate environments should be expressly forbidden.

E-Safety

Most of our children will use mobile phones and computers. They are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. However, we know that some men, women and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings.

The organisations e-safety policy explains how we try to keep children safe by not communicating with children via their phone, but with their parents.

Cyber-bullying by children, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying.

Consideration must be given to the Prevent strategy issued by DfE. Prevent is one of four work strands which make up the government's counter terrorism strategy
www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance

The Prevent agenda should be seen as part of Safeguarding and should be part of the culture of vigilance and awareness you have for any other issue which might impact on the care or welfare of students.

Parents

The organisation believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and the organisation. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the organisation and to share responsibility for the care of children.

All parents will be given a copy the organisation's Child Protection Policy and procedures.

All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. The organisation has a responsibility to ensure suitable arrangements are in place to take children home.

Unsupervised Contact

The organisation will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.

If possible there will always be two adults in the room when working with children.

If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimise risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area or in a designated room with a door open.

If it is predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, he or she may be required to obtain a criminal record disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service

All children will be chaperoned at all times

Rights & Confidentiality

If a complaint is made against a member of the organisation he or she will be made aware of his rights under the organisation's disciplinary procedures.

No matter how you may feel about the accusation, both the alleged abuser and the child who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998.

'Right to confidentiality' must not prevent people from speaking up about any concerns they have. This really means do report it but don't talk to anyone else about it.

Remember also that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released.

Accidents

To avoid accidents, chaperones and children will be advised of "house rules" regarding health and safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds. Children will be advised of the clothing and footwear appropriate to the work that will be undertaken.

If a child is injured while in the care of the organisation, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the organisation's accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for child protection.

If a child joins the production with an obvious physical injury a record of this will be made in the accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for child protection. This record can be useful if a formal allegation is made later, and will also be a record that the child did not sustain the injury while participating in the production.

Chaperones

Chaperones registered with their local authority will be appointed by the organisation for the care of children during the production process. The chaperone is acting in loco-parentis and should exercise the care which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give to a child. Buckinghamshire approved chaperones receive 2 hours chaperone training on safeguarding and the legislation. The maximum number of children in the chaperone's care shall not exceed 12. This is at the discretion of the Local Authority who may require less than a ratio of 1 to 12

Potential chaperones for Standard and Body of Person Licences (Body of person licences may also have an agreed number of Letter of Assurance chaperones as well as approved chaperones) will be required to obtain chaperone approval from their local authority and to supply this approval to the organisation once the local authority has approved them as a chaperone.

- Chaperones will be made aware of the organisation's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Chaperones may have unsupervised access to children in their care; consequently a criminal record disclosure will be sought as a requirement of the local authority, before they grant approval for the chaperone
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the producer. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily the chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue.
- If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the producer and not allow the child to continue.
- Under the Dangerous Performances Act no child of compulsory school age is permitted to do anything which may endanger life or limb. This could include working on wires or heavy lifting. Chaperones should tell the producer to stop involving children in dangerous performances, and should contact the local authority.
- During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the stage door and signing them into the building.
- Children will be kept together at all times except when using separate dressing rooms.
- Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times.
- Children are not to leave the place of performance unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents.
- Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
- Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms.
- Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures in the venue, and will ensure that children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger.
- Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by the organisation.
- Chaperones should examine accident books each day. If an accident has occurred, the producer is not allowed to use that child until a medically qualified opinion has been obtained (not just the word of the parent or child).

- Chaperones should have written arrangements for children after performances. If someone different is to collect the child, a telephone call should be made to the parent to confirm the arrangements.
- Children should be signed out when leaving and a record made of the person collecting.
- If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child until arrangements have been made to take the child home.

Section 7: Disseminating / Reviewing Policies and Procedures

All organisations should have in place a system for disseminating and reviewing their overall policies and procedures. They should be reviewed annually, signed by Trustees / Governors and/or anyone within the organisation that has overall responsibility for the service being provided.

Any changes / amendments need to be clarified and shared with staff and where significant changes appear these must be relayed to parents / carers. Best practice guidelines advise the involvement of parents/carers and young people in developing policies that affect them.

Within this section you need to make it clear that there is a system in place for an annual review of policies and procedures, who will be involved and, how this will be undertaken.

Useful Contacts	
Child Employment	01296 383512
Buckinghamshire County Council First Response Team (Children's Social Care)	0845 4600001
Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team	0800 999 7677
Buckinghamshire Local Authority Designated Officer: (LADO)	01296 382070
Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board	www.bucks-lscb.org.uk