



# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Azure Theatre School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection.

Our policy applies to all staff, and volunteers working with us.

There are five main elements to our policy:

- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Supporting children who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. Azure Theatre School will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults whom they can approach if they are worried.

We will follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education and Skills to:

- Ensure we have a designated senior person for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
- Ensure we have a nominated person responsible for child protection.
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) knows the name of the designated senior person responsible for child protection and their role.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated senior person responsible for child protection.
- Notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two sessions of a pupil who is on the child protection register.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters.



- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately and share these with the designated teacher responsible for child protection.
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. Azure Theatre School may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When with us their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. We will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of our teaching.
- Our ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives children a sense of being valued.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as social services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, education welfare service and educational psychology service.
- Ensuring that, where a pupil on the child protection register leaves, their information is transferred to the appropriate services immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

See Appendix A for signs of abuse.

See Appendix B for procedures for suspected child abuse.



## APPENDIX A

The designated teacher for Child Protection is **Miss Kelly-Marie Gibbs**.

At Azure Theatre School we are committed to ensuring that all our children are cared for, safe and protected.

We follow the RBWM Child Protection procedures and aim to work together with other agencies that support children and families.

As part of the Child Protection procedures we are required to be watchful for any signs and /or symptoms of abuse.

The four categories of abuse are:

1. Physical abuse.
2. Sexual abuse.
3. Emotional abuse.
4. Neglect.



## **APPENDIX B**

ALL STAFF must be aware of the procedures regarding child abuse. If any pupil makes a disclosure to a member of staff they should:-

- Listen – always believe what the child has to say.
- Never promise that you can keep it confidential.
- Never prompt the child with leading questions.
- Make notes, these need to be detailed and include dates, times etc (it may be used as evidence).
- Inform CPO as soon as possible.

The Child Protection Officer will then:-

- Liaise with instructors to gather information.
- Assess the situation.
- Meet with the child.
- Seek advice.

This may then lead to a formal referral to Social Services and a call home or meeting with the parents.

Therefore it is important that we communicate well, but remember confidentiality.

Once a referral is made Azure Theatre School will be asked to write a comprehensive report which may be used at Child Protection Conference or other meetings including the parents.

Please read the signs. Sometimes signs of one type of abuse can also be found under another heading.

**It is important to report and monitor any signs of suspected abuse.**

### **POSSIBLE SIGNS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE**

- Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they reoccur.
- Refusal to discuss injuries.
- Improbable explanations for injuries.
- Untreated injuries or lingering illness that is not being dealt with.
- Admission of punishment that seems excessive.
- Shrinking from physical contact.
- Fear of returning home.
- Fear of undressing.
- Fear of medical help.
- Aggression/bullying.
- Over compliant behaviour.
- Running away.
- Significant changes in behaviour without explanation.
- Significant deterioration in work.
- Unexplained pattern of absence.



## **POSSIBLE SIGNS OF SEXUAL ABUSE**

- Bruises, scratches, burns or bite marks on the body.
- Scratches, abrasions or persistent infections in the anal or genital area.
- Pregnancy – particularly if child is evasive about the identity of the father.
- Sexual awareness inappropriate to child's age – maybe in drawing, vocabulary, essays, games etc.
- Frequent public masturbation.
- Attempts to teach other children about sexual activity.
- Refusal to stay with certain people or go to certain places.
- Aggressiveness, anger, anxiety, fearfulness.
- Withdrawal from friends.

## **POSSIBLE SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

- Continual self-depreciation.
- Fear of new situations.
- Inappropriate responses to painful situations.
- Self-harm or mutilation.
- Compulsive stealing/scrounging.
- Drug/solvent abuse.
- Neurotic behaviour – obsessive rocking, thumb sucking etc.
- Air of detachment – don't care attitude.
- Social isolation – does not join in and has few friends.
- Desperate attention seeking behaviour.
- Eating problem, including overeating/lack of appetite.
- Depression, withdrawal.

## **POSSIBLE SIGNS OF NEGLECT**

- Constant hunger.
- Constant tiredness.
- Poor hygiene and poor state of clothes.
- Emaciation.
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance.
- Untreated medical problems.
- Destructive tendencies.
- Low self esteem.
- Neurotic behaviour – rocking, thumb sucking, hair twisting .etc
- No social relationships.
- Chronic running away.
- Compulsive stealing/scavenging.
- Failure to thrive.