

THEATRE CENTRE

Theatre Centre's Safeguarding Policy

1. Policy Statement

Theatre Centre's belief is that artistic quality and integrity is synonymous with respect and concern for children. We are committed to the safety of children, young people, vulnerable adults and of our employees. Therefore we have formulated policy and infrastructure to instigate safeguarding practice.

Staff, acting companies, touring partners and freelance personnel should be fully aware of the organisation's safeguarding guidelines and are provided with a copy of the company's Safeguarding Policy.

It is the responsibility of the Trustees and the CEO to ensure that adequate policies and procedures are in place. The process of implementing the policy is the responsibility of the Participation Producer.

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children

We will seek to keep children, young people and vulnerable adults safe by:

- Adopting safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Sharing concerns with schools, teachers and other agencies as appropriate.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed on **1st April 2019**

Signed _____  _____ Natalie Wilson (Artistic Director / CEO)

2. Meeting the Needs of Various Groups

2.1 Children and Young People (up to the age of 18)

Theatre Centre encounters children and young people in many different ways: as audience members, workshop participants, young apprentice writers, work placement volunteers etc.

Activity in schools is undertaken within the remit of our *Statement of Professional Etiquette in Schools* (appendix 1).

This has been tried and tested, reviewed and reworked over many years. It will be continually evaluated in the light of legislative changes, examples of best practice learnt from other companies and funding bodies. It will be informed by the input of our actors, stage managers and workshop leaders who lead our work in schools.

At the core of our safeguarding practice is the legal principle that, when Theatre Centre works in a school, the school remains *in loco parentis*. No performances or workshops take place without the presence of the teacher; this is part of the contract between the school and Theatre Centre.

The *Statement of Professional Etiquette in Schools* also addresses correct behaviour when Theatre Centre staff find themselves in the presence of unsupervised children or young people. Whilst discouraging this, it is acknowledged that it is not always possible to have a teacher present. For example, a touring team undertaking a get-in may receive the help of young people for a short while. Many schools are regular hosts of Theatre Centre and like to view company members as friends. Preserving their trust and the safety of young people underpins our practice of avoiding lone contact with a young person. Therefore all Theatre Centre staff and freelance personnel, on tour, work in pairs to avoid lone contact.

A structure and process for coping with and managing disclosure of personal information by young people is given to employees in case they find themselves in this sensitive and complex situation (Appendix 2).

The *Statement of Professional Etiquette in Schools* is made available to all employees. Touring and workshop companies are given a special briefing on the policy from a member of Theatre Centre management.

2.2 Work placements

Young people and vulnerable adults visiting Theatre Centre (either to its base, in rehearsal or at work 'on the road') as young apprentices or as work placements are entitled to the same commitment to their safety and protection as they would be if they were in their schools.

A workshop or writing student receiving individual support should be within sight of other young people/workshop or study leaders. Lone contact should be avoided.

Theatre Centre will seek the guidance of the relevant schools or placement providers should it foresee potentially difficult situations with work placements.

2.3 Teachers, leaders and colleagues from Education and Arts Education

Theatre Centre will inform professional colleagues in the Education and Arts Education sectors of the company's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures when entering into partnerships with them. Likewise, Theatre Centre will adhere to the best of its ability, and within its own resources, to the corresponding Safeguarding Policies of its partners.

The Participation Producer will receive regular professional development in safeguarding from recognised experts to keep abreast of changes in law and guidance in matters of safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

2.4 Obligations to our employees

All permanent employees will be required to have a Disclosure of their criminal records undertaken by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Freelance staff who, as a condition of their contract, need to have access to schools, will be contracted on the basis of successful DBS checks.

Theatre Centre undertakes DBS checks through Hackney Learning Trust and will meet the cost of these applications.

At the time of interview, potential employees will receive notification that should they be successful the company will make a DBS application on their behalf. Co-operation with this application is a condition of employment. Interviewees and employees are entitled to know that Theatre Centre will preserve the absolute confidentiality of Disclosure applications. The Equal Opportunities policy contains a statement of good practice to which we adhere.

It is important to note that the result of a DBS application may result in members of Theatre Centre management, authorised to deal with Disclosure matters (the 'Counter Signatories'), interpreting the evidence presented. Whilst there are some offences that make it simply impossible to work with or in proximity to children, there are others which are of no relevance and others which *may* not be of relevance. The company also maintains, within its Equal Opportunities Policy, an understanding of the Rehabilitation of Offenders regulations. In areas of interpretation, the nature of the job will be considered as well as the latest legislative situation.

All recruitment at Theatre Centre takes place within the company's commitment to Equal Opportunities and, within this, whatever the legal requirements are on the company as laid down in legislation such as the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

In terms of working practice, all employees are entitled to feel that they are not being put into situations where they could be at danger of malicious or mistaken claims. Employees owe a duty of care to each other, an obligation to support each other in working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. They must also ensure that the management of the company is aware of potential problems and that inappropriate behaviour is reported through the line management arrangements. (See Appendix 2)

Our Safeguarding Policy works alongside and in tandem with the Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace Policy.

Theatre Centre recognises that the law in the area of Child Protection is under constant review. The interpretation of the law and professional guidance is likewise subject to continual change. In common with all of Theatre Centre's policies, this policy will be reviewed regularly, led by the Participation Producer. We realise our obligation to keep abreast of developments in this complex area and the need to pass on information to staff. The training, guidance and supervision of staff are key to the successful operation of a sound Safeguarding Policy.

Appendix 1: Statement of Professional Etiquette In Schools

Upon arrival at the school these guidelines should be followed: -

The liaison person should: -

- Announce the company's arrival at reception and ask for the contact teacher.
- Check if there is a visitor's book. If so it should be signed by the liaison person or everyone if necessary.
- Ask where the performing area is and assess implications for the get in i.e., how close can the van get to the hall.
- Ask where the staff toilets are. Never use the pupils' toilets.
- Ask for a private changing area. Ensure that this area is 'out of bounds' until the performance has begun.
- Ask if the team can have access to the staff room or an area where refreshments can be made.

Please remain polite and co-operative at all times with teachers and pupils. Please be aware at all times of the stress that teachers are sometimes under. If any team member is subjected to any prejudiced remark or behaviour e.g. a racist or sexist remark please report immediately to the CSM who should report it immediately to the teacher. The CSM should report the incident immediately to TC management. The TC management and the school will then resolve the issue verbally or in writing.

Vehicle Safety

When entering a school playground team members should act as 'outriders', walking in front, behind and to the sides of the van at all times. Use the same degree of care when leaving the premises. Always keep van locked whilst on school property. Never leave the van blocking a fire exit door. All valuables should be locked in the van whilst in the school because they will be covered by the van insurance. Leave money/phones etc. with CSM during show.

Company Safety

It is company practice to set a short agreed time for a warm up. Teams can choose whether to run these as a team, or with a rotating leader or to do them as individuals. Some movement directors give set warm ups to do. Each team member is responsible for ensuring that they are warmed up appropriately. Please ensure you have checked the acoustics in the room. The long tours and different spaces can put pressure on peoples' voices. Please ensure you look after your voices.

No alcohol should be taken into or consumed in the school premises. No illegal drugs should be taken into the school premises or kept or used in the van at any time. Prescribed drugs should be hidden and out of reach, preferably locked securely in the van.

Never perform without the presence of teachers. The team is not obligated to start the performance if a teacher or school representative is not present in the space. The Company Stage Manager has the right to delay the start of the show in the event that no school representative is present.

No one is permitted to take photos or video during the show unless this is a scheduled and agreed company video or photo shoot.

Legal Responsibility of the Company

The following notes are not intended to make you uncomfortable or self-conscious about your behaviour with children. They are guidelines for appropriate contact with pupils. If in doubt, consult with your colleagues. Any worries or concerns talk over with your CSM. Anything you feel cannot be

resolved talk to Theatre Centre's staff: Natalie Wilson - Artistic Director or Raidene Carter – Executive Director. Theatre Centre staff can be reached on 020 7729 3066.

- Never talk to a child alone, i.e., in a school corridor or the playground.
- Always talk to a child in pairs, e.g., 2 actors. Sometimes our shows and their themes encourage direct physical contact, e.g., an arm around the shoulder to comfort.
- Younger children, especially infants often wish to show their gratitude in a physical way, e.g., a hug. Please keep any physical contact with children to an appropriate level e.g., offer a handshake.
- Should you need to make physical contact with a child i.e. to model an exercise, Theatre Centre practices a “safe touch” approach. First of all, ask yourself whether it is necessary to touch the child; is demonstration or verbal instruction adequate? Next, seek the child's permission and if they say “no” it must be respected, however if the child agrees then tell the child or young person where you are going to touch them and how will you will touch – then explain why you are going to touch. The process feels quite formal and stilted, but in reality, can be quite simple: i.e. “is it okay if I touch you? I'm just going to move your arm slightly so that your mimed action is a bit stronger.”
- Should a child offer you information e.g. ‘I'm being bullied’, or should a child seem distressed about the emotions of the themes in the play, explain to them – gently - that you cannot keep this information confidential and (if possible) suggest that you go and talk to their teacher together. If the child does begin to disclose something, try and make sure that there are other people around and that it is not just you and child/young person in a confined space.
- If a disclosure does take place try to stay calm and not look shocked or disturbed. Listen without interrupting. You can nod or make verbal affirmation that you have heard what the young person is saying. Only ask questions if you didn't understand what was said, for example if it was said quietly or you require a word to be repeated. Do not promise to keep a secret. You can reassure the young person that they have done the right thing in making a disclosure.
- If a disclosure does take place, try and write a statement as close to what the young person said as possible using their words not yours – and sign it – immediately and then present it to a teacher. It is the teacher's responsibility, not yours to manage the issue.

Visitors to the Performance

All visitors to performances in schools are expected to adhere to host schools' own safeguarding Procedures. Theatre Centre staff, freelancers and volunteers who intend to visit a performance at a school must inform the Programme and Administration Coordinator in advance of their visit – admin@theatre-centre.co.uk or 020 7729 3066. The Programme and Administration Coordinator will ensure the school is informed. Theatre Centre expects all visitors to our performances in schools to behave in accordance to our Statement of Professional Etiquette in schools. Failure to do so will mean their barring from future schools' performances.

If a paid casual or a placement should help the team with a get-in or get-out, the Programme and Administration Coordinator - or Company Stage Manager must fully brief them on the Statement of Professional Etiquette as documented in the company handbook and in this policy.

Mobile Phone Policy

- Mobile Phones must not be used during any part of the get-in, get-out, during the half, costume change, performance, pre-setting or post show talk. Phones must be switched off completely during performances. The team is reminded that mobile phones are attractive to thieves who may be present in schools. Theatre Centre advises that any phones be left locked in the van.

- Any use of mobile phones during breaks must be discrete – some schools have ‘no mobile’ policies and the team should be sensitive to this. As a rule, if students are present in any space you are in – keep your phone out of sight.
- Team members should inform the CSM if there is some emergency for which they need to keep in contact with other people by phone. In this situation it is up to the CSM to use their discretion in over-ruling any part of the above Mobile Phone Policy.

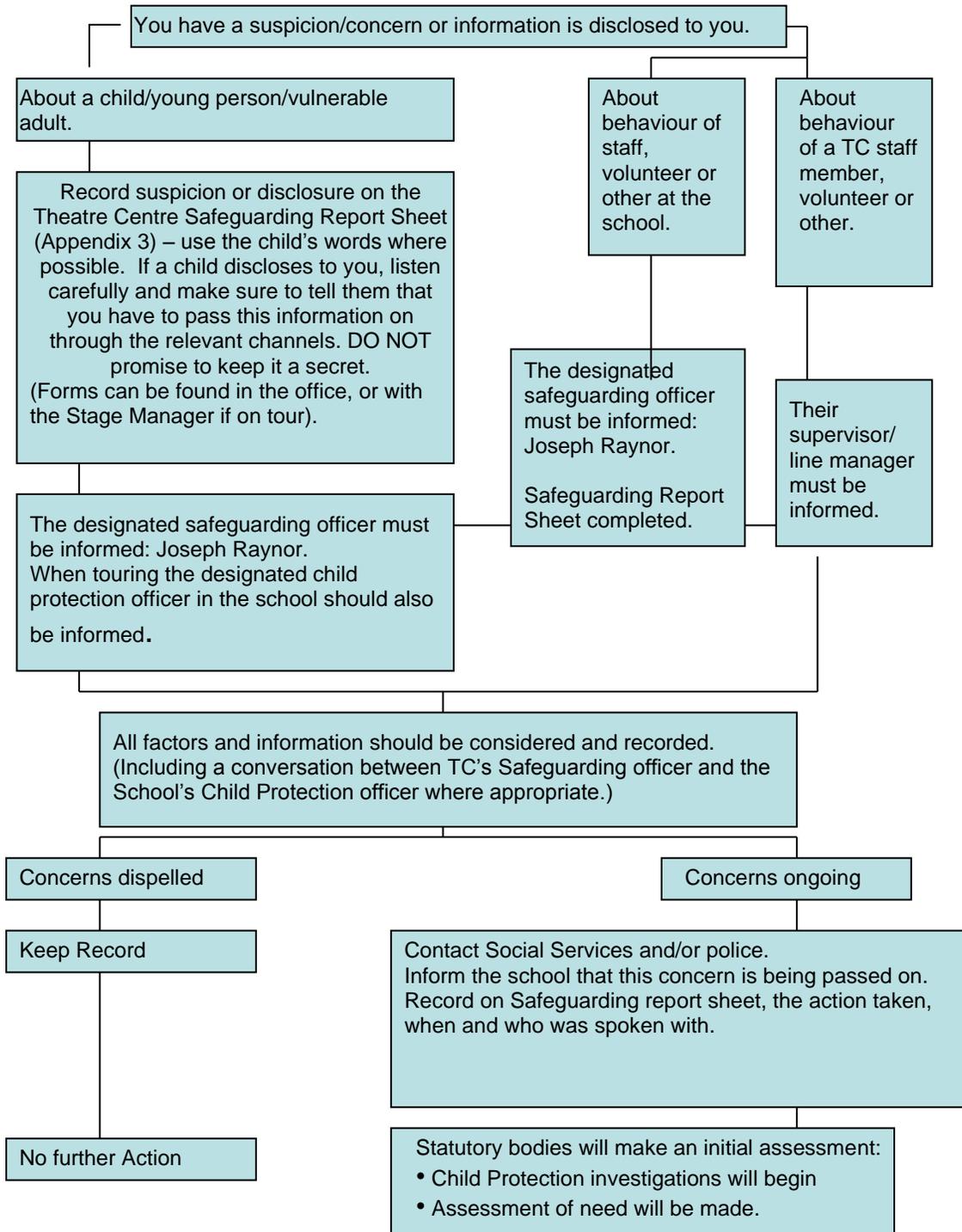
Social Media Policy

- Only use social media in relation to your work with Theatre Centre if you feel comfortable doing so. There’s no pressure on you to use your personal accounts for this purpose.
- We’d also ask you to only use social media in relation to Theatre Centre if your account is clean – do not associate yourself with Theatre Centre online if you also post (or have posted in the past) about anything unsuitable for a younger audience.
- For your own safety, do not exchange private messages with young people, follow young people’s social media accounts, or accept Facebook friend requests from young people. Do not actively seek out or engage young people online.
- If young people try to engage you online (in conversation, or by adding you as a friend on social media platforms) refer to Theatre Centre’s Marketing Manager for advice.
- Do not take or share photographs of young people unless written proof of parental consent has been made available from the school in advance and forwarded to Theatre Centre.
- Avoid taking photographs on school grounds or ‘checking in’ at schools.
- Respect any rules for the use of social media at any schools or venues you are visiting.

Other

- Company members should avoid having with them any personal items containing or displaying potentially contentious or unsuitable content for children and young people. I.e. Magazines,, books, newspapers, overtly branded clothing or accessories, or those which carry slogans or images unsuitable for a school environment. Any such items, if taken on tour, should be left at the accommodation or, as a last resort, locked out of sight within the company vehicle.

Appendix 2: Theatre Centre’s Safeguarding Reporting Processes



Contact details

Theatre Centre

Shoreditch Town Hall
380 Old Street
London, EC1V 9LT
020 7729 3066

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

Name: Joseph Raynor (Participation Producer)
Phone: 020 7729 3066 (Ext 204)
Email: joseph@theatre-centre.co.uk

Deputy DSO

Name: Raidene Carter
Phone: 020 7729 3066 (Ext 205)
Email: raidene@theatre-centre.co.uk

Hackney Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Name: Liezel Le Roux
Phone: 020 8356 4569
Email: lado@hackney.gov.uk

CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection command)

www.ceop.police.uk

NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 5000

Hackney Prevent Co-ordinator

Name: Tracey Thomas
Phone: 0208 356 8104
Email: Tracey.Thomas@hackney.gov.uk