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Centenary Drama Group and CD Kids Safeguarding Policy **(Updated & presented at AGM 2025)**

Centenary Drama Group & CD Kids recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Child (Performances) Regulations 1968, the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 (*in Scotland change to Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003*).

Centenary Drama Group and CD Kids is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults involved in our activities. We aim to create a safe and inclusive environment where everyone feels supported and protected.

The group's designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), Linda Barnes (CDGsafeguarding@outlook.com) acts as the primary point of contact for safeguarding concerns and is in charge of ensuring that the child protection policy and procedures are adhered to.

The group recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. The group is committed to practice which protects children from harm. All members of the group accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

The group 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 and employees of the group should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

The group will ensure that:

- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.
- The duty of care to children 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 society 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.
- It will hold a register of every child involved with the society and will retain a contact

name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

The group has child protection procedures which accompany this policy.

This policy will be regularly reviewed before every show and after any safeguarding incident. The child protection officer will meet with volunteer chaperones within the group to refresh safeguarding procedures before every show commences.

Types of abuse:

Domestic abuse:

Domestic abuse can include:

- Sexual abuse and rape (including within a relationship) Punching, kicking, cutting, hitting with an object
- Withholding money or preventing someone from earning money
- Taking control over aspects of someone's everyday life, which can include where they go and what they wear Not letting someone leave the house
- Reading emails, text messages or letters
- Threatening to kill or harm them, a partner, another family member or pet.

Children and young people witnessing domestic abuse:

Witnessing domestic abuse is really distressing and scary for a child, and causes serious harm.

Children living in a home where domestic abuse is happening are at risk of other types of abuse too.

Children can experience domestic abuse or violence in lots of different ways. They might:

- See the abuse
- Hear the abuse from another room
- See a parent's injuries or distress afterwards
- Be hurt by being nearby or trying to stop the abuse

Teenagers experiencing domestic abuse:

Domestic abuse can happen in any relationship, and it affects young people too. They may not realise that what's happening is abuse. Even if they do, they might not tell anyone about it because they're scared of what will happen, or ashamed about what people will think.

Sexual abuse:

There are 2 different types of child sexual abuse. These are called contact abuse and non-contact abuse.

Contact abuse

Involves touching activities where an abuser makes physical contact with a child, including penetration. It includes:

Sexual touching of any part of the body whether the child's wearing clothes or not

Rape or penetration by putting an object or body part inside a child's mouth,

vagina or anus Forcing or encouraging a child to take part in sexual activity

Making a child take their clothes off, touch someone else's genitals or masturbate.

Non-contact abuse

Involves non-touching activities, such as grooming, exploitation, persuading children to perform sexual acts over the internet and flashing.

It includes:

- Encouraging a child to watch or hear sexual acts
- Not taking proper measures to prevent a child being exposed to sexual activities by others
- Meeting a child following sexual grooming with the intent of abusing them
- Online abuse including making, viewing or distributing child abuse images Allowing someone else to make, view or distribute child abuse images Showing pornography to a child
- Sexually exploiting a child for money, power or status {child exploitation}.

Neglect

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and is the most common form of child abuse. A child maybe left hungry or dirty, without adequate clothing, shelter, supervision, medical or health care.

A child may be put in danger or not protected from physical or emotional harm. They may not get the love, care and attention they need from their parents.

A child who's neglected will often suffer from other abuse as well. Neglect is dangerous and can cause serious, long- term damage - even death.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is deliberately hurting a child causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts. It isn't accidental - children who are physically abused suffer violence such as being hit, kicked, poisoned, burned, slapped or having objects thrown at them. Shaking or hitting babies can cause non-accidental head injuries (NAHi). Sometimes parents or carers will make up or cause the symptoms of illness in their child, perhaps giving them medicine they don't need and making the child unwell - this is known as fabricated or induced illness (FII).

There's no excuse for physically abusing a child. It causes serious, and often long-lasting, harm - and in severe cases, death.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the ongoing emotional maltreatment of a child. It's sometimes called psychological abuse and can seriously damage a child's emotional health and development.

Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare or humiliate a child or isolating or ignoring them.

Children who are emotionally abused are often suffering another type of abuse or neglect at the same time - but this isn't always the case.

The signs of child abuse

The signs of child abuse aren't always obvious, and a child might not tell anyone what's happening to them. Children might be scared that the abuser will find out, and worried that the abuse will get worse. Or they might think that there's no-one they can tell or that they won't be believed. Sometimes, children don't even realise that what's happening is abuse.

The effects of abuse may be short term or may last a long-time - sometimes into adulthood. Adults who were abused as children may need advice and support.

How to tell whether behaviour is normal for their age:

Children develop and mature at different rates. So what's worrying for a younger child, might be normal behaviour for an older child. If a child looks or acts a lot older or younger than their age, this

could be a cause for concern.

However, if a child develops more slowly than others of a similar age and there's not a cause such as physical or learning disabilities, it could be a sign they're being abused.

Signs to look out for:

- Talks of being left home alone or with strangers.
- Poor bond or relationship with a parent, also known as attachment.
- Acts out excessive violence with other children.
- Lacks social skills and has few if any friends.

County Lines:

County lines is a **form of criminal exploitation in which criminals groom and manipulate children into drug dealing**. The 'lines' refer to mobile phones that are used to control a young person who is delivering drugs, often to towns outside their home county.

Some of the signs of county lines involvement and exploitation are:

- A child or young person going missing from school or home or significant changes in emotional well-being
- A person meeting unfamiliar adults or a change to their behaviour
- The use of drugs and alcohol
- Acquiring money or expensive gifts they can't account for
- Lone children from outside of the area
- Individuals with multiple mobile phones, tablets or 'SIM cards'
- Young people with more money, expensive clothing, or accessories than they can account for
- Unknown or suspicious looking characters coming and going from a neighbour's house
- Relationships with controlling or older individuals or associations with gangs
- Suspicion of self-harm, physical assault or unexplained injuries

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Responsibilities of the Group

At the outset of any production involving children the group will:

- Monitor risk throughout the production process.
- Identify at the outset 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 education authority).
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times.
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case it needs to report a concern.

Parents

- The group believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and the group. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the society and to share responsibility for the care of children. All parents will be given a copy the society's Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after

rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of the group to take children home.

Unsupervised Contact

- The group 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 will be required to obtain a criminal record disclosure.

Physical Contact

- All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.
- Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity.
- Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

Managing sensitive information

- Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes.
- The group's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.
- The group will ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of its members, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such as criminal record disclosures.

Suspicion of abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of the group, please make this known to the person with responsibility for child protection. 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 Chairperson or the board of trustees.
- 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 society, chaperone, venue staff etc., that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms 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 social services or the police.
- 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

- 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.

Procedures for Reporting Concerns

If you have concerns about someone's safety:

1. Contact the DSO immediately.
2. Provide clear details of the concern, including names, dates, and a description of the situation.
3. The DSO will assess the concern and, if necessary, report it to the relevant authorities.

Details for children's services and whistle blowing help lines

Devon and Cornwall Police- you wish to report an incidence of abuse or neglect, contact the Multi Agency Referral Unit (MARU) on: 0300 123 1116

NSPCC Child protection helpline 0808 800 5000 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Save The Children. A registered charity established to promote the welfare of children worldwide by the relief of their hardship and distress. Tel: 020 7012 6400 Website:

www.savethechildren.org.uk

Bullying

Please refer to the anti-bullying policy.

Rights & Confidentiality

- 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. Remember also that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released.
- In criminal law the Crown, or other prosecuting authority, has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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 group, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the society's accident book.
- This record will be countersigned 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 countersigned 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.

Criminal Record Disclosures

- If the society believes it is in its best interests to obtain criminal record disclosures for chaperones or other personnel, it will inform the individual of the necessary procedures and the level of disclosure required. A Standard disclosure will apply for anyone with supervised access to children. An Enhanced disclosure will be required for anyone with unsupervised access.
- The society will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

Chaperones

- Chaperones will be appointed by the society for the care of children during the production process. By law 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. The maximum number of children in the chaperone's care shall not exceed 12.
- Potential chaperones will be required to supply photographic proof of identity (eg. passport, driving licence) and two references from individuals with knowledge of their previous work with children, unless already well known to the society. They will also be asked to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children.

- Chaperones will be made aware of the group's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Chaperones will not usually have unsupervised access to children in their care.
- If unsupervised access is unavoidable, or if this is a requirement of the local authority, a criminal record disclosure will be sought.
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the Chairperson or Child Protection Officer, in the event of their absence another committee member will be nominated. 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 Chairperson or Child protection Officer, in the event of their absence another committee member will be nominated, 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 cease using children in this way and should notify the Chairperson and 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 theatre 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 society.
- Children are supervised until they are collected.
- If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child or make arrangements to take them home.

This policy was reviewed, updated and agreed by the Committee April 2023

Signed:

Printed:

Chairperson April 2025

