

Hornby Drama Group

Child Protection Policy

Salient points highlighted in yellow

Aim

The Group is committed to protecting participating children from harm. This Child Protection Policy (CPP) outlines how we will satisfy this commitment.

Introduction

Hornby Drama Group (HDG) takes the safety & welfare of all members very seriously – but especially so where young people are concerned. The Group recognizes that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical, emotional, sexual and verbal abuse or neglect.

Responsibilities

All members of HDG, and parents/guardians of participating children, are required to read and sign to indicate acceptance of the policy and recognition of their individual responsibilities as implied.

Definition

For the purposes of this policy, a 'child' is defined as being under the age of 16 years.

Policy

The society believes that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children (and adults) have the right to protection from abuse (as defined above).
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse shall be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All members of the society must agree to its aims & objectives as a condition of membership.
- It is the responsibility of all HDG members to be familiar with the contents of this policy, and to actively promote and monitor its implementation.

HDG will ensure that:

- All children will be treated equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.
- All adult members of the society shall provide a positive role model for dealing with other people.
- Prompt action will be taken to stop any inappropriate behaviour.

This policy will be regularly monitored by the Executive Committee of the society and will be subject to annual review. This review to be recorded in the HDG meeting minutes. 'CPP Review' shall appear on the AGM agenda (to ensure that the review is not overlooked).

Strategy

- The HDG committee will identify at the outset one person with designated responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this Child Protection Policy, and to act as a 'single point of contact' to address any related issues arising. This person will be known as the Child Protection Officer, and shall be selected with regard to their knowledge & experience with child protection issues & procedures.
- For practical reasons (eg. availability), the designation of a deputy Child Protection Officer is desirable. This person shall be known as the Nominated Child Protection Officer. (More than one deputy may be appointed). The appointment of Nominated Child Protection Officer shall be proposed by the Child Protection Officer and approved by the HDG committee.
- **Whenever practicable, a Child Protection Officer or nominated deputy shall be present at every HDG rehearsal and performance.** This person shall be known as the Duty Child Protection Officer.
- The name of the CPO and any deputies are to be made known to all adult members.

Parents

- Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the HDG, and to share responsibility for the care of children. All parents shall be given a copy of this Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- **All parents/guardians have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of the HDG to take children home.**

Unsupervised Contact

- **It is the responsibility of all HDG members to attempt to ensure that there will always be at least two adults present when working with children whenever practicable.**
- If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimize 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, prior agreement with the child's parent/guardian shall be obtained.

Physical Contact

Adults are to avoid inappropriate physical contact with children, and be aware that even caring physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted.

Managing sensitive information

- Written consent shall be obtained from the child's parent/guardian for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images of children. (This includes the use of photographs featuring children for promotional purposes, including the HDG website).

Suspicion of abuse

- It is the responsibility of all HDG members to make known to the Child Protection Officer (CPO), or the HDG Chairman, any suspected abuse of a child (or other similar concerns). The CPO shall make an accurate record any allegation or reported incident.
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of the HDG, that individual will immediately be excluded from all HDG activities until an investigation is concluded.

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 leading questions.
- Don't promise to keep it a secret. Make it clear to the child that you will need to share this information with others, but 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.
- Without delay, inform the Duty Child Protection Officer .
- 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.

Rights & Confidentiality

- If a complaint is made against a member of the society, he or she will be made aware of the allegation without delay.
- Both the alleged abuser and affected child 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.

Safety

- A Safety Officer shall be appointed by the HDG committee. He/she will take prime responsibility to monitor general safety, and ensure good standards are maintained throughout the production process.
- At the outset of any production, the Safety Officer shall undertake a risk assessment. This shall take due regard to hazards which may particularly affect children. For example, recognising the fact that children may be unfamiliar with theatre tools & equipment, and the back-stage environment during performances (darkness and confined spaces).
- The Safety Officer shall brief all participants of "house rules" regarding health and safety, prior to any production. Care shall be taken to ensure that this briefing is delivered in a manner appropriate for young children, and that the salient messages are understood by all. (A separate briefing specifically for children may be the best way of achieving this. It could include 'games' to consolidate learning and demonstrate understanding, eg. the location of fire exits and the fire muster point).
- If a child (or adult) is injured during any HDG activity, the injury and response shall be recorded in the HDG accident book. If appropriate, this record shall be countersigned by the Duty Child Protection Officer.

Chaperones

- Hornby Drama Group (HDG) believes that it is the responsibility of all its members, both individually and collectively, to take responsibility for promoting and ensuring the safety & wellbeing of all participating children. Accordingly, it is not generally considered necessary to appoint Chaperones for the specific care of children during HDG activities. However, this is an option available if the Child Protection Officer should consider it to be necessary, for example where very young children are concerned.
- A Chaperone acts 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.
- Chaperones may need to have lone access to children in their care, (for example in a dressing room during a performance). However this is to be avoided if practicable.

- The parent/guardian of each participating child shall be informed if a Chaperone is to be appointed, and shall be required to give their written consent to that named individual undertaking that role for their child.

General Rules

Wherever practicable, the following rules shall be followed:

- Children shall be supervised at all times.
- The whereabouts of all children will be monitored and controlled at all times by a responsible adult(s).
- Younger children will be instructed not to leave the theatre unless in the company of their parent/guardian or Chaperone or with the express permission of the Duty Child Protection Officer. Every effort will be made to monitor and enforce this.
- Within the Hornby Institute, whenever practicable the 'Star' dressing room & toilet will be allocated for the exclusive use children, Children will be instructed to use only this toilet and to inform an adult when visiting it.
- Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms whenever practicable.
- At each HDG event, the time of arrival and departure of each child shall be recorded in a register. One HDG member shall assume responsibility for this process. (This register shall be used to confirm all are accounted for in the event of a fire muster).
- If a parent has not collected their child, it is the duty of the Duty Child Protection Officer or Chaperone to stay with that child or make suitable alternative arrangements for their continued supervised care.

This document Approved by the Child Protection Officer and the HDG committee

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Date.....

(Signed by CPO)