

Shires Rep Theatre : Child Protection Policy

Introduction

- A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).
- For the purpose of this policy document
- The term 'child' will be used to describe all children and young people under the age of 18 years old participating in Shires Rep led activities.
- The term 'staff' will be used to describe all those working with Shires Rep on a self-employed freelance basis as well as those on a voluntary/unpaid basis.
- Staff should implement this policy using the following guidelines when conducting work that involves children. This will protect the safety and well-being of children engaging with the organization and that of our own staff.
- For all activity and events involving children at least one member of staff should lead on child protection, raising awareness of this policy and its guidelines among other staff and where appropriate the children and accompanying school.
- Where staff are likely to engage with a child on a one-to-one basis, it is imperative that he/she is appropriately child protection trained.
- The "Lead member of staff" referred to in this Policy is the Creative Director.

Children's Rights

All children have needs and rights:

- The need for physical care and attention
- The need for intellectual stimulation
- The need for emotional love and security
- The need for social contact and relationships
- The right to have their needs met and safeguarded
- The right to be protected from neglect, abuse and exploitation
- The right to be protected from discrimination
- The right to be treated as an individual

Shires Rep will ensure 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 will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All staff have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate child protection lead member of staff.

Policy statement

Shires Rep staff have a professional duty within the circumstances of any educational institution, to ensure that the child is safe from harm while involved in our activities. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. Shires Rep will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in its activities through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines it has adopted.

Policy aims and implementation

We are performing in a school to enable young people to develop their artistic skills and interest as well as supporting their understanding of the play. We have a duty to keep them safe. It is in the interest of all parties to keep clear professional boundaries. The aim of the Shires Rep Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice by:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst learning with/ in the care of the Company
- Allowing all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.
- Developing effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- Keeping written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately. Ensuring all records are kept securely in locked locations.
- Developing and then following procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or a volunteer.
- Adopting a procedure for dealing with concerns about possible abuse.

The Child Protection Policy will be implemented by adhering to the policy guidelines contained within this document. All staff who work with children must comply with this Policy in conjunction with the company's constitution.

Staff recruitment and training

- A safe recruitment will be ensured by checking that all our staff who work with Shires Rep and children have a current enhanced CRB (Criminal Record Bureau Check).
- Child protection procedures will be explained to staff and training needs identified.
- All staff will sign up to Shires Rep 's Constitutional rules of conduct for staff and the Child Protection Policy.
- All staff will receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy.
- No member of staff will ever be left unattended with a child or children.
- Professional school staff will always accompany Shires Rep members throughout their time in a school.

Good child protection practice:

- Always work in an open environment
- Treat all children equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Be clear about what the objectives of the activity are before it begins and always put the welfare of each child first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with children (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child)
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Ensure that if children of mixed genders are to be supervised, they should ideally be accompanied by a male and female member of staff.
- Conduct yourself in a manner that sets a good example to the participants. Be an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of/whilst responsible for children.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Never use physical force against a participant, unless it constitutes reasonable restraint to protect him/her or another person or to protect property.

- Never using physical punishment
- Ensure that should any child suffer from illness or injury they are passed on to the appropriate member of staff within the school.
- Always refer any problems to the child protection lead member of staff.
- Question any unknown adult who enters the space and or who attempts to engage with the children.

Practices never to be sanctioned:

- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Engaging in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Children's inappropriate use of language and/or behaviour. This should always be challenged.
- Sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves (e.g. apply antiseptic cream).
- Inviting or allowing children to stay with you at your home or arrange meetings off-campus.
- Giving out your address, telephone number, email address or any social networking contact information.

Use of photographic/filming equipment

Written consent to take and use images of children will be obtained prior to the taking of photographs and/or video footage.

Child Abuse

As professionals working with children we each have a duty to watch out for each child's safety and well-being. This means having a shared responsibility with other agencies who work with children, to look out for signs and indicators of possible abuse, and act when a child is potentially in danger.

Child Abuse is a term to describe a range of ways in which people, usually adults harm children. Often the adult is a person who is known and trusted by the child.

Child abuse is neglect, physical injury, sexual abuse or emotional abuse inflicted or knowingly not prevented, which causes significant harm or death.

NSPCC (1999)

-There are a number of ways in which abuse becomes apparent:

- A child discloses abuse.
- Someone else discloses that a child has told him/her or that he/she strongly believes a child has been or is being abused.
- A child may show signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation.
- A child's behaviour may indicate that it is likely that he/she is being abused.
- A member of staff's behaviour or the way in which he/she relates to a child causes concern.

Dealing with disclosure

- If a child discloses privileged information, you cannot keep it confidential
- Do not promise to keep secrets
- Listen but do not investigate
- Do keep records of any discussion
- Do refer it to your lead member of staff and the schools designated child protection person

- Do not discuss the information with anybody else
- Record what was said
- Differentiate between fact, opinion and judgment
- Sign and date a hard copy
- Give to your lead member of staff and designated school person

Allegations against staff:

If an allegation is made against you or any other Shires Rep member, the lead member of staff must be informed without delay

Sexual abuse, Neglect, Emotional abuse, Physical abuse, Signs and Indicators:

There are many obvious physical signs that we may spot; bruising, burns etc. However do not forget to be aware of behavioural indicators such as; self harming, aggression, over reaction to mistakes, social isolation, low self-esteem and poor relationships with peers.

Remember it is your duty to report concerns.

If you are unsure as to whether to report a possible case of abuse, you can call the Northamptonshire numbers below to ask for guidance:

Referral teams

Kettering/Corby	Tel: 01536 313000
Wellingborough	Tel: 01933 220700
Northampton	Tel: 01604 411911
Daventry	Tel: 01327 300567

Out of hours including weekends Tel: 01604 626938