



Safeguarding Policy 2025

Date of Policy: **1st February 2025**

Policy Responsibility: **Sam Gibbs (Principal)**

Updated or reviewed: **Annually**

PERFORMERS THEATRE COMPANY

“EVERY CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO BE PROTECTED AND IT IS EVERYONE’S RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT CHILDREN”

INTRODUCTION

Performers Theatre Company is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people who engage in our performing arts activities. We believe that children and young people have the right to be safe, and we have a duty of care to protect them from harm. This policy outlines our approach to safeguarding and child protection and provides guidance on how we can achieve our aim of creating a safe and supportive environment for young people aged 2-18 years.

This policy has been developed in line with UK safeguarding legislation and good practice, including:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- The Equality Act 2010

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure the welfare of children and young people is the paramount consideration in all activities undertaken by Performers Theatre Company.
- Outline the procedures for responding to safeguarding concerns.
- Provide staff and volunteers with clear guidance on how to identify, respond to, and report concerns about safeguarding issues.
- Promote a culture of vigilance and responsibility.

SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors, students, and anyone else involved with Performers Theatre Company, whether they are delivering classes, performances, or any other activities involving children and young people.

SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES

We adhere to the following key safeguarding principles:

1 The welfare of the child is paramount.

All children, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, disability, sexuality, or religion have the right to protection from harm. Their welfare is the top priority.

2 Everyone has a responsibility to act.

All members of staff and volunteers have a duty to safeguard children and to act in the best interests of the child at all times.

3 Children have the right to express themselves.

Children and young people have the right to feel safe, respected, and heard. Their views are important and should be taken into consideration when appropriate.

4 We will work in partnership with families and other agencies.

Safeguarding is most effective when there is a coordinated approach involving families, local authorities, schools, and other agencies.

5 Staff and volunteers will receive appropriate training.

All staff, volunteers, and anyone involved with Performers Theatre Company will receive regular safeguarding training, including on how to identify and report concerns.

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD (DSL)

Performers Theatre Company has appointed a **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Sam Gibbs**, who is responsible for the safeguarding of all children and young people involved in the school's activities.

Responsibilities of the DSL

The DSL will:

- Ensure that safeguarding is embedded in the culture and practices of the school.
- Oversee and manage all safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure that appropriate action is taken when a concern is raised.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the policy and their responsibilities.
- Act as the main point of contact for external agencies such as social services, police, and the local safeguarding children board.
- Provide regular safeguarding training for all staff and volunteers.
- Ensure that the school's procedures for recruitment, training, and safeguarding checks (e.g., DBS) are followed.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

All staff and volunteers who work with children at Performers Theatre Company will undergo a thorough recruitment process that includes:

- An application form with a full employment history.
- An interview process that assesses safeguarding knowledge and suitability for working with children.
- A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for all staff and volunteers.
- Two written references, one of which must be from a previous employer or relevant safeguarding role.
- A full induction and safeguarding training upon commencement of employment or volunteering.

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

5.1 Identifying and Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

All staff and volunteers are required to be vigilant and report any concerns or suspicions regarding a child's welfare. Signs of abuse or neglect may include, but are not limited to:

- Unexplained injuries or a history of frequent hospital visits.
- Sudden changes in behavior, mood, or performance.
- Withdrawal, anxiety, or fearfulness.
- Disclosure of abuse by a child.

If a child confides in a staff member or volunteer about a concern, the staff member must:

- Listen to the child calmly and with empathy, but not question them in detail.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking up.
- Record the disclosure immediately using the school's safeguarding reporting form, including the child's words where possible.

- Inform the DSL as soon as possible.
- Ensure that any actions are taken in line with local child protection procedures.

5.2 Reporting a Concern

If a staff member, volunteer, or any member of Performers Theatre Company becomes aware of a safeguarding concern, they must report it immediately to the DSL. If the DSL is unavailable, the concern should be reported to the Hampshire MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) immediately.

5.3 Action to be Taken

The DSL will:

- Assess the situation and determine whether there is a need for further investigation or external intervention.
- Contact external agencies, such as Hampshire MASH, Children's Social Care or the police, when necessary.
- Maintain confidentiality on a need-to-know basis, only sharing information with those who need it to protect the child.

5.4 Record Keeping

Accurate records must be kept of any safeguarding concerns, disclosures, or incidents. These records should:

- Be written in clear, factual language.
- Include the date, time, and details of the concern.
- Be stored securely and accessed only by those who need to know.

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING AND AWARENESS

Induction Training

All new staff and volunteers will receive safeguarding training as part of their induction. This will include an overview of the safeguarding policy, how to recognise signs of abuse, how to report concerns, and their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding.

Ongoing Training

Safeguarding training will be refreshed regularly for all staff and volunteers, and specific updates will be provided in response to changes in legislation or safeguarding best practices.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Health and Safety

Performers Theatre Company is committed to ensuring a safe environment for all children. The school will:

- Conduct regular health and safety checks for all premises used for classes and performances.
- Provide appropriate supervision and control during all activities.
- Ensure that facilities are safe and child-friendly.

Supervision

Children must always be appropriately supervised during activities. The ratio of staff to children will be in line with best practice for performing arts and child care settings.

Use of Images and Social Media

The use of images or video recordings of children involved in Performers Theatre Company activities will only be permitted with prior consent from parents or carers. The school will follow best practice guidelines in the use of photography and media. Please see our *Photographs and Images policy* for further information.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, Performers Theatre Company will take the following steps:

- The DSL will immediately assess the situation and may need to inform relevant authorities such as the police or local authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- The staff member or volunteer may be suspended, pending investigation, to ensure the safety of the children.
- The matter will be handled confidentially, and information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

WHISTLEBLOWING

Performers Theatre Company encourages a culture of openness and transparency. If any member of staff or volunteer has concerns about the safeguarding practices of others, they are encouraged to report these concerns.

CHAPERONES

Chaperones will be appointed by Performers Theatre Company for the care of the cast 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/young person. During performances the maximum number of cast members in the chaperone's care shall not exceed 12.

Potential chaperones must be appointed and approved by Performers Theatre Company. They will have to complete a DBS form and provide the certificate to Performers Theatre Company for their records.

Chaperones will be given a copy of Performers' Safeguarding Policy.

Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the cast members, they should bring this to the attention of the person responsible for child welfare.

If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell and unable to continue, the chaperone must inform the person responsible for child welfare, who will inform the Principal so that a decision can be taken on whether to allow the young person to continue with the Production.

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. If the chaperone feels there is a danger, they should speak to the person responsible for child welfare who will discuss their concerns with the Principal.

Under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014, the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, performances that are licensed require that chaperones be responsible for meeting the cast members as they arrive and signing them into the building. Chaperones must be aware of where the members of the cast in their care are at all times

Cast members of compulsory school age, i.e. up to the end of Year 11 of schooling, are not to leave the rehearsals or theatre unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents/guardians or designated person.

Cast members must be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets. Males and Females must have separate dressing rooms. Sensitive arrangements can be made for any young person who does not identify as either or who is transitioning (MTF/FTM).

Chaperones should be briefed by a designated person on the safety arrangements, fire procedures and first aid procedures in the venue, and will ensure that cast members in their care do not place themselves or others in danger.

Chaperones must notify the person responsible for child welfare if an accident occurs so that an accident form can be completed.

Cast members must be signed out when leaving a performance. Cast members over compulsory school age, after the end of Year 11 of schooling, may sign themselves out.

If a parent/carer has not collected the child, the chaperone must stay with that child until the parents arrive.

REVIEW AND MONITORING

This safeguarding policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or local safeguarding procedures. The policy will be monitored regularly to ensure it is being effectively implemented and that children are safeguarded at all times.