



RABBLE Theatre
Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
for the Protection of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

Updated 1st July 2020

An Introduction

Everyone who attends RABBLE Theatre is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. RABBLE Theatre has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for children, young people and vulnerable adults that teachers, coaches, chaperones and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

RABBLE Theatre is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone is informed of and accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults and to report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children, young people and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of RABBLE Theatre and to allow staff, chaperones and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific protection issues.

Policy Statement

RABBLE Theatre has a duty of care to safeguard all children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in their productions, classes and workshops from harm. All people have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children, vulnerable adults and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.

RABBLE Theatre will ensure the safety and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in their productions and classes through adherence to the following child protection guidelines.

Safeguarding means looking out for and trying to protect others in our community who are vulnerable or may be at risk of harm. If you think that someone is at risk, you must raise an alarm. Everyone can make a difference.

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children's Act 1989).

RABBLE Theatre is committed to the following:

- the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount
- all children and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in classes, courses and productions in a fun and safe environment
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- all RABBLE Theatre trustees, associate artists and any volunteer or employee working for or representing the organisation who work with children will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and protection procedures
- working in partnership with parents, children and/or carers is essential for the protection of children and vulnerable adults
- To provide children and vulnerable adults with the best possible experience and opportunities at RABBLE Theatre everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework

Monitoring and reviewing the policy and procedures

The implementation of procedures will be regularly monitored and reviewed. The designated safeguarding officer will regularly report progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements gaps and areas where changes are required to the trustees of RABBLE Theatre.

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation.

RABBLE Theatre's designated Safeguarding Officer is:

Toby Davies

Mobile: 07834 235 620

Promoting Good Practice

Introduction

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of employees, teachers, chaperones, volunteers or participants at **RABBLE Theatre** to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult, as explained further down.

This section will help to identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice including practices to be avoided and practises never to be sanctioned.

Good Practice

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and action:

- always work in an open environment where possible (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- make the experience of classes and rehearsals fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- treat all young people and vulnerable adults equally and with respect and dignity
- always put the welfare of the young person or vulnerable adult first
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people and vulnerable adults. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person or vulnerable adults consent has been given. See safe touch policy lower down.
- Involve parents/carers wherever possible, e.g. where young people or vulnerable adults need to be supervised in changing rooms, encourage parents to take responsibility for their own child. If groups have to be supervised in changing rooms always ensure chaperones work in pairs
- request written parental consent if teachers/volunteers are required to transport young people in their cars
- be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people or vulnerable adults
- always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- secure written parental consent for the school to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given
- keep a written record of each child's or vulnerable adults emergency contact details on hand at each class / rehearsal

- keep a written record of each child's or vulnerable adults health and safety form details (allergies, injuries, medication needs) on hand at each class / rehearsal

Practices to be avoided.

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel except in emergencies. If a case arises where these situations are unavoidable (e.g.: the child or vulnerable adults sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent/carer fails to arrive to pick up a child or vulnerable adults at the end of a session), it should be with full knowledge and consent of someone in charge or the child's parents or vulnerable adults carer if they have one.

Otherwise, avoid:

- spending time alone with children or vulnerable adults away from others
- taking a child alone in a car on journeys, however short, including taking them to or dropping them home after an event.

Practises never to be sanctioned

The following should **never be sanctioned. You should **never**:**

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- allow children or vulnerable adults to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun
- reducing a child or vulnerable adult to tears as a form of control
- allow allegations made by a child or vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- do things of a personal nature that the child or vulnerable adult can do for themselves

NB It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents/carers and the child or vulnerable adult involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependant on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded.

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- if you accidentally hurt a child or vulnerable adult
- if he/she seems distressed in any manner
- if a child or vulnerable adults appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- if a child or vulnerable adults misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Defining Abuse

Introduction

Abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

There are four main types of abuse: **physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect**. The abuser may be a family member, someone the person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a person directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming a person.

Abuse in all of its forms can affect a person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual throughout their life.

People with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse: where another person physically hurt or injure a person e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute child abuse.

This category of abuse can also include when a parent/carer reports non-existent symptoms or illness deliberately causes ill health in a young person they are looking after. This is called Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

In a theatrical situation, physical abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training disregards the capacity of a child's immature and growing body

Emotional Abuse: the persistent emotional ill treatment of a person, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the person's emotional development. It may involve telling a person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of people that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the person frightened or withdrawn.

Ill treatment of people, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse in a theatrical setting may occur when the person is constantly criticised, given negative feedback, expected to perform at levels that are above their capability. Other forms of emotional abuse could take the form of name calling and bullying.

Bullying may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are three main types of bullying.

It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

In theatrical training bullying may arise when a parent or teacher pushes the young person or vulnerable adult too hard to succeed, or a rival / competitive fellow performer uses bullying behaviour.

Neglect occurs when an adult/carer fails to meet the young person or vulnerable adults basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the person's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.

Neglect in a theatrical setting could occur when a coach does not keep the young person safe, or exposing them to undue cold/heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

Sexual Abuse occurs when a person (male and female) uses children or vulnerable adults to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing young people or vulnerable adults pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.

In theatrical training, activities which might involve physical contact with young people or vulnerable adults could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Also the power of the coach over young performers, if misused, may lead to abusive situations developing.

Indicators of Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a person is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- the young person or vulnerable adults describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a person
- unexplained changes in a young person or vulnerable adults behaviour e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- inappropriate sexual awareness
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- distrust of adult's, particularly those whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- difficulty in making friends
- being prevented from socialising with others
- displaying variations in eating patterns including over eating or loss of appetite
- losing weight for no apparent reason
- becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt

Signs of bullying include:

- behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go training or competitions
- an unexplained drop off in performance

- physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. on food, alcohol or cigarettes

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place. It is **NOT** the responsibility of those working at **RABBLE Theatre** to decide that abuse is occurring. It **IS** their responsibility to act on any concerns.

Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment at Theatrical Events

There is evidence that some people have used theatrical events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people. All RABBLE Theatre Directors, Choreographers, Musical Directors, Teachers, Chaperones and Volunteers should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the safeguarding officer.

All parents/carers and performers should be made aware when coaches or teachers use video equipment as a coaching aid.

RABBLE Theatre will always seek signed parental/carer permission before any photographs/video recordings are taken. Parents/carers will always have the right to veto any photographs taken of students and the images will only be used directly by RABBLE Theatre and will never be circulated to individuals or organisations outside of the company.

Recruiting and Selecting Personnel

Introduction

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children or vulnerable adults. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers, both full and part time. To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and vulnerable adults the following steps must be taken when recruiting.

Controlling Access to Children and vulnerable adults

- All staff and volunteers should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about the applicants past and a self disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from the applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau.
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children should be obtained. These references **MUST** be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo)
- Where a person is employed or volunteering for Chaperone work, a current Chaperone Licence must be held.
- All employees that work with young people and vulnerable adults must have a current enhanced DBS check with the exception of those circumstances when the children are under the supervision of a chaperone.

Interview and Induction

All employees and volunteers will be required to undertake an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full, including sections on criminal records and self disclosures
- Their qualifications should be substantiated
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified
- Child Protection Procedures are explained and training needs identified

Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or vulnerable adult
- Work safely and effectively with children and vulnerable adults

RABBLE Theatre requires:

- All staff and volunteers who have access to children or vulnerable adults to undergo an enhanced DBS check within the last 24 months, with the exception of those circumstances when children are under supervision of a licensed chaperone.
- All employees, self employed contractors, volunteers, chaperones, welfare officers and workers to undertake relevant child protection training or undertake a form of home study, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of positive culture towards good practice and child protection
- All staff and volunteers to receive advisory information outlining good/bad practice and informing them what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person or vulnerable adults
- Relevant personnel to undergo national first aid training

Responding to Suspicions and Allegations - Introduction

It is not the responsibility of anyone working at **RABBLE Theatre** in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person or vulnerable adults. This applies **BOTH** to allegations/suspicions of abuse occurring within **RABBLE Theatre** and to allegations/suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

ACTION

1. Concerns about poor practice:

- a. If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the safeguarding officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- b. If the allegation is about poor practice by the safeguarding officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Company director who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

2. Concerns about suspected abuse:

- a. Any suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult has been abused must be reported to the safeguarding officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure safety of

the child or vulnerable adult in question and any other child or vulnerable adult who may be at risk.

- b. The safeguarding officer will refer the allegation to the Social Services department which may involve the police, or go directly to the police out of hours.
- c. The parents or carers of the child or vulnerable adults will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from social services.
- d. If the safeguarding officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation the report must be made to social services

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made sometime after the event. Where such allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to social services. This is because other children or vulnerable adults in the school or outside it may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children or vulnerable adults is automatically excluded from working with children or vulnerable adults.

Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed in this document, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the young person or vulnerable adults affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- **stay calm** so as not to frighten the young person or vulnerable adult
- **reassure** the child or vulnerable adult that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- **listen** to the child or vulnerable adult, showing that you are taking them seriously
- **keep questions to a minimum** so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child or vulnerable adult has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify.
- **inform** the child or vulnerable adults that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child or vulnerable adult this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- **safety of the child or vulnerable adult** is paramount. If the child or vulnerable adult needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a protection issue
- **record** all information as soon as possible. Try to write everything down word for word as you remember it.
- **report** the incident immediately to RABBLE Theatre's safeguarding officer.

In all cases if you are not sure what to do you can gain help from NSPCC 24 hour helpline: 0800 800 500

Or Reading Borough Councils safeguarding adults helpline: 0118 937 3747
(CSAAvice.Signposting@reading.gov.uk)

Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

Information must include the following:

- the child or vulnerable adults name, age and date of birth
- the child or vulnerable adults home address and telephone number
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- details of witnesses to the incidents
- the child or vulnerable adults account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred
- have the parents/carers been contacted? If so what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so record details
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail

Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations MUST be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

RABBLE Theatre expects it's staff, chaperones and volunteers to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child immediately with the person in charge and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

If the safeguarding officer is not available you should take responsibility and seek advice from the NSPCC helpline or the duty officer at your local social services department or the police. Telephone numbers can be found in your local directory.

Concerns outside the immediate RABBLE Theatre Environment (e.g. a parent or carer)

- Report your concerns to the safeguarding officer
- If the safeguarding officer is not available, the person being told or discovering the abuse should contact their local social services department or the police immediately
- Social Services and the safeguarding officer will decide how to inform the parents/carers
- The safeguarding officer should also report the incident to the Director of RABBLE Theatre. The Director of RABBLE Theatre should ascertain whether or not the person/s involved in the incident play a role in the organisation and act accordingly
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The safeguarding officer

- The parents/carers of the child or carers of the vulnerable adults
- The person making the allegation
- Social services/police
- The Chair of RABBLE Trustees
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

Declaration

On behalf of **RABBLE Theatre**, we, the undersigned, will oversee the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

Signature:

Signature:

Name: Toby Davies

Name: Victoria Lavery

Date: 01 July 2020

Date: 01 July 2020

Safeguarding Officer, RABBLE Theatre

Chair of Trustees, RABBLE Theatre