



Saffron Walden Musical Theatre Company Child Protection Policy – July 2023

Saffron Walden Musical Theatre Company (SWMTC) 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.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect children and young people within our society from harm.
- To provide members and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overall principles that guide our approach to child protection.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of SWMTC, including our members, volunteers, paid professionals and students.

SWMTC believes that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind.
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practice in a way that protects them.

SWMTC recognises that:

- The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.
- All children regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them
- Appointing a nominated child protection and safeguarding lead for children and young people
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for our members and volunteers
- Developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- Providing support and quality assurance measures so that all our members and volunteers know about and follow our procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently
- Ensuring all necessary checks are made in recruiting volunteers
- Recording and storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance

- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with our members and volunteers
- Making sure children and young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- Using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against members, or volunteers appropriately
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying
- Ensuring we have efficient complaints and whistle blowing measures in place
- Ensuring we provide a safe physical environment for our children and young people, members and volunteers by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- Building a safeguarding culture where members, volunteers, children and young people and their families treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns

Contact details

Nominated safeguarding and child protection lead

Rachel Glibbery

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We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed on: 19th July 2023.....

Signed:.....Rachel Glibbery.....

Date:.....19th July 2023.....

Supporting procedures:

Responsibilities of SWMTC

At the outset of any production involving children SWMTC will:

- Undertake a risk assessment and 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

- SWMTC believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and SWMTC. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of SWMTC and to share responsibility

for the care of children. SWMTC's Child Protection Policy and procedures are available on the SWMTC website: www.swmtc.net.

- All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of SWMTC to take children home.

Unsupervised Contact

- SWMTC 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 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, he or she may be required to obtain a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check.

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

- SWMTC has a policy and procedures for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images of children.
- Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes.
- SWMTC's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.
- SWMTC 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 SWMTC, 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 SWMTC Chair.
- 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 SWMTC, 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.

Rights & Confidentiality

- If a complaint is made against a member of SWMTC, he or she will be made aware of his rights under SWMTC's disciplinary procedures.
- 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 SWMTC, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in SWMTC'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.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

- The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) exists to help employers and organisations make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children and young people at risk. A DBS check forms one part of the wider safeguarding process. It helps organisations to determine whether a person is a suitable candidate for a particular role by providing information about their criminal history.

- DBS disclosures are required for anyone working in a regulated activity. Relevant Regulated Activity is unsupervised activities with children or young people to train, teach, instruct, supervise, or provide advice/guidance on well-being. This work is only Regulated Activity if done regularly or intensively, which means being carried out by the same person frequently (once a week or more), or on 4 or more days in a 30 day period. A person who manages or supervises a regulated activity is also counted as undertaking a Regulated Activity. If the person is providing occasional or temporary services, they are not in a Regulated Activity.
- Before an organisation considers asking a person to apply for a criminal record check through DBS, they are legally responsible for ensuring that they are entitled to submit an application for the job role. The three levels of DBS checks are:
 - **Standard Checks**
 - Reveals information relating to spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings from the Police National Computer (PNC). To be eligible for a standard check the position must be specified in the Exceptions Order to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
 - **Enhanced Checks**
 - Reveals information relating to spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings from the PNC. To be eligible for an Enhanced Check the position must be specified in the Exceptions Order to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 AND regulations made under the Police Act 199, which includes work with children.
 - **Enhanced Checks (with Barred List)**
 - Used to check against lists of people prohibited from working with children and vulnerable adults. These are known as 'Barred Lists' (see below). To be eligible for an Enhanced Check with Children's and/or Adults Barred List Check, the position must meet the criteria and fall within the DBS definition of Regulated Activity (see below).
 - The minimum age at which someone can apply for a DBS check is 16. Organisations wishing to undertake a check should choose between three routes depending on the nature of the role.
- **Regulated Activity Definition**
 - Regulated Activity is work a person who appears on the DBS Barred Lists is prohibited from doing. This includes work that involves close and unsupervised contact with vulnerable groups, including young children.
 - The **DBS** has recently reduced the scope of Regulated Activity, so that some roles that previously needed a Barred List Check, no longer do so. However, those posts taken out of Regulated Activity remain eligible for Enhanced Checks. In reducing the scope there is now greater role for organisations in deciding whether a person is a suitable candidate for a particular role. To do this effectively they must also use other safeguarding measures rather than rely on legal provisions alone.
 - Activities that place a staff member in regulated Activity with Children are:
 - **1.** Unsupervised activities; teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise children, or provide advice/guidance on well-being, or drive a vehicle only for children.

- **2.** Work for a limited range of establishments ('specified places'), with opportunity for contact. E.g. schools, children's homes, childcare premises,. Not work done by supervised volunteers.
- **3.** Relevant personal care; e.g. washing or dressing; or health care by or supervised by a professional, even if done once.
- **4.** Registered childminding and foster-carers.
- Work under **1.** Or **2.** Is Regulated Activity only if done regularly. 'Regularly means carried out by the same person frequently (once a week or more) or on four or more days in a 30-day period (or in some cases overnight). Activity under **3.** And **4.** Does not have a frequency restriction and is Regulated Activity even if performed only once.
- Broadly speaking, the new definition of Regulated Activity relating to children no longer includes certain activities done on an irregular or ad-hoc basis or some activities properly supervised by someone who themselves is in Regulated Activity.

Chaperones

- Chaperones will be appointed by SWMTC 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.
- Chaperones are required to hold volunteer or professional chaperone licences. They will be required to supply photographic proof of this licence and will have it on view whilst caring for the children at all performances.
- Chaperones will be made aware of SWMTC'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 [through DBS](#).
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the producer. 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 producer 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 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, or unless signed permission from parents has been received.
- Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
- 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 SWMTC.
- Chaperones should examine accident books each day. If an accident has occurred, the producer is not allowed to use that child until a medically qualified opinion has been obtained (not just the word of the parent or child).
- Chaperones should have written arrangements for children after performances. If someone different is to collect the child, a telephone call should be made to the parent to confirm the arrangements.
- Children should be signed out when leaving and a record made of the person collecting.
- 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.

Social Media

- SWMTC recognises that social media can be a legitimate and effective way to communicate with children and young people. Current social media applications frequently used by members include Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Contact with children and young people through such forums should only take place through SWMTC accounts. Current SWMTC accounts are as follows:
- FACEBOOK – Saffron Walden Musical Theatre Company – SWMTC
- INSTAGRAM - swmusicaltc
- TWITTER – @swmtcsaffwalden

Radicalisation

- SWMTC recognises the positive contribution it can make towards protecting children and young people from radicalisation to violent extremism. SWMTC will empower children and young people to create communities that are resilient to extremism and support the wellbeing of children and young people who may be vulnerable to being drawn into violent extremism or crime. It will also promote the development of spaces for free debate where shared values can be reinforced.
- Radicalisation is the process by which individuals come to support terrorism or violent extremism. There is no typical profile for a person likely to become involved in extremism, or for a person who moves to adopt violence in support of their particular ideology. Although a number of possible behavioural indicators are listed below, SWMTC members and chaperones should use their judgement and discuss with other SWMTC members if they have any concerns:
 - Use of inappropriate language
 - Possession of violent extremist literature including electronic material accessed via the internet and communication such as e-mail and text messages
 - Behavioural changes
 - The expression of extremist views
 - Advocating violent actions and means
 - Association with known extremists
 - Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology

If SWMTC members or chaperones have any significant concerns about a child/young person beginning to support terrorism and/or violent extremism, they should discuss this with the Designated Child Protection Officer immediately.

Signed: Rachel Glibbery Date: 19/7/2023

Rachel Glibbery
SWMTC Safeguarding and Child Protection Officer