

Safeguarding Policy

Footlights Youth Theatre (FYT) recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, the Child Performance and activities licensing in England 2015 and the Protection of Children Act 1999.

Footlights Youth Theatre works to ensure that all our members are safe and protected from harm. All members of the committee accept and recognise their responsibility to develop awareness of the issues which may cause children harm. Westfield Productions recognises that bullying and abuse can take many forms, including, but not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, neglect, abandonment, self-neglect.

Footlights Youth Theatre believes that:

- The welfare of all our members is paramount.
- Our members, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexuality have the right to be safe.

Footlights Youth Theatre will ensure that:

- All members will be treated equally, with respect and dignity.
- All suspicions and allegations of bullying and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to immediately and appropriately as outlined in our safeguarding procedures.
- We will hold a register of every member involved with Westfield Productions and retain relevant personal information.
- Communication with our members and their primary caregivers is open and clear.
- We will undertake relevant development and training.
- Westfield Productions will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

Footlights Youth Theatre has safeguarding procedures which operate in accordance with this policy. This policy must also be implemented in conjunction with all other relevant Westfield Production policies.

Footlights Youth Theatre has a dedicated Designated Safeguarding Lead, who is in charge of ensuring that the Safeguarding policy and procedures are adhered to.

Policy approved by the Executive Committee on 1st March 2023

Policy to be reviewed by Gennie Matthews.

Safeguarding Procedures

Responsibilities of Footlights Youth Theatre

At the outset of any period of activity Footlights Youth Theatre will:

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the process.
- 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 in line with appropriate adult to child ratios.
- It is also understood that no supervising adult should be left alone with an individual child.
- At least one supervising adult will hold a committee approved DBS certificate.
- All activities can only proceed in a venue where a qualified first aider is in attendance and where necessary an adult who is trained to administer an epi-pen.
- Under the Dangerous Performances Act, no child of compulsory school age is permitted to do anything which may endanger life or limb.

Responsibilities of caregivers and/or parents

- Footlights Youth Theatre believes it to be important that there is a partnership between caregivers and Footlights Youth Theatre. All caregivers will be given access to Footlights Youth Theatre. Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and all other relevant policies.
- All caregivers have a responsibility to ensure that junior members attend activities at the specified times, wearing appropriate clothing and supply their child/children with a suitable food and drink. Please note that Footlights Youth Theatre operates within a nut-free environment.
- All caregivers will ensure that contact, medical and other relevant information will be kept up to date and inform us of any changes.

Managing sensitive information

- Footlights Youth Theatre has a policy and procedures for the collection use and storage of sensitive information.

Physical Injury

- If a member is injured while in the care of Westfield Productions, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in Footlights Youth Theatre accident book. If a member is under the age of 18, this record will be countersigned by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and caregivers will be informed.
- 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead. 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.

Criminal Record Disclosures

- If Footlights Youth Theatre believes it is in its best interests to obtain criminal record disclosures for chaperones or other personnel, it will inform the individual of the necessary procedures and the level of disclosure required. A Standard disclosure will apply for anyone with supervised access to children. An Enhanced disclosure will be required for anyone with unsupervised access.
- Footlights Youth Theatre will have a written code of practice for the handling of disclosure information.

- Footlights Youth Theatre will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

Prevent

- Footlights Youth Theatre will be aware of any guidance issued by the Government regarding the Prevent Duty and any impact or conditions this may have on Footlights Youth Theatre undertaking its objectives.

Chaperones

- Chaperones will be appointed by Footlights Youth Theatre 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 our adult: child ratios.
- Chaperones will be made aware of Footlights Youth Theatre Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- Chaperones without an approved DBS certificate will not have 1:1 access to children.
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the stage door and signing them into the building. From this point children will be supervised by a chaperone at all times.
- Children are not to leave the theatre unsupervised until signed out and collected by caregivers.
- 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 or others in danger.
- Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are recorded.
- Chaperones should be made aware of who is collecting each child and if someone different is to collect the child, a telephone call should be made to the caregiver to confirm the arrangements.
- If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child until they are collected.

Responding to Suspicions and Allegations of bullying and abuse

If you believe that one of our members is at risk and in immediate danger please call 999.

Suspicion of abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of Footlights Youth Theatre, please make this known to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If you suspect that the Designated Safeguarding Lead is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to a member of the Executive Committee. An up to date list of these persons will be displayed wherever our activities take place.
 - 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. Only record factual information and omit personal bias or opinion.

Disclosure of abuse

If a member 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 them to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification.
 - TED (Tell me, Explain, Describe)
 - DO NOT ask leading questions.
 - As soon as appropriate, record what has been said without embellishment, bias or personal opinion.
 - DO NOT promise to keep secrets.
- Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a member of the Executive Committee

If an allegation or disclosure is made against any member or employee of Footlights Youth Theatre, 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.

Recording

- In all situations, the details of an allegation or reported incident will be recorded.
- 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 person/s 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.

Referral

If you are unable to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead or you believe an incident or allegation has not been handled appropriately you can report a safeguarding concern directly to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0300 555 1384 during office hours, 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 4.30pm on Friday. Or on 0300 555 1373 at all other times.

Rights & Confidentiality

These procedures are in place to keep all our members safe. If you have raised a concern or are aware of an allegation that has been made or an incident that has taken place, no matter how you may feel about the situation, both the alleged abuser and the member who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality. Remember that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through the release of this information. In criminal law, the Crown, or other prosecuting authority, has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Procedures approved by the Executive Committee on 5th March 2023

Procedures to be reviewed by Gennie Matthews.