



Parish Players

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Policy review due by:

1st September 2024

Parish Players **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

Parish Players is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children (i.e. members under the age of 18 and any other children involved in a production) and has therefore drawn up these procedures to ensure that young people are protected as far as is reasonably possible.

Parish Players Safeguarding & Child Protection policy is based on information and guidance from NODA and the NSPCC.

Every member of Parish Players has an equal duty and responsibility towards safeguarding all members, particularly under 18s. The Parish Players committee therefore requires all members to read our Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and abide by the responsibilities and actions named within it.

All parents/guardians of under 18 members will be signposted to our Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy. Any queries or concerns regarding this policy may be directed to the committee or the S&CP Officer.

The Safeguarding and Child Protection policy will be reviewed annually prior to the AGM in September.

Designated Safeguarding & Child Protection Officer

Parish Players has a designated Safeguarding & Child Protection (S&CP) Officer responsible for ensuring that the safeguarding & child protection policy and procedures are followed.

The current Safeguarding & Child Protection Officer is *Caroline Chick*

Contact details: Tel: 07815945474

Email: cjchick88@yahoo.co.uk

Maternity cover from September 2023: Clare Quinn

Contact details: Tel: 07922083193

Email: cquinn962@gmail.com

If any member has any concerns regarding the physical or emotional safety of any child within Parish Players, they must inform the S&CP officer immediately.

The safeguarding officer will be supported by the committee (and specific deputy S&CP Officers if/where applicable). Advice will also be sought from the Parish Safeguarding Lead where necessary. Safeguarding & Child Protection will remain an agenda item at each committee meeting for any concerns and/or updates to be discussed.

Recognising signs of abuse and behaviours of concern

Abuse can take a number of forms:

Physical: causing physical harm to a child or vulnerable adult by hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or some other method. Physical harm can also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child or vulnerable adult.

Sexual: forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not that person is aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse includes both physical contact and non-contact activities.

Emotional: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult in a way likely to cause severe and persistent negative effects on that person's emotional development.

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of that person's health and/or development.

Financial: being denied access to funds, having funds misappropriated or misused by others, being pressured or manipulated into giving money away or using it in a way the vulnerable person does not wish.

Institutional: the mistreatment, abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult by a regime or individuals.

It is important to recognise the multitude of abusive situations that overlap within these definitions. Children and vulnerable adults may be at risk of abuse through such varied issues as bullying (including cyberbullying), substance misuse, child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, breast ironing, forced marriage, radicalisation and extremist behaviour, abuse related to protected characteristics e.g. racism/sexism/homophobia, domestic abuse, gang violence, sexting and others.

It is also important to recognise that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to, bullying (including cyberbullying), child criminal and/or sexual exploitation, gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting. All members must remain alert to the possibility of child-on-child abuse and take appropriate action to safeguard those involved, in line with the procedures outlined in this policy.

Members may become aware of abuse in a number of ways, including:

- Disclosure by a child
- Disclosure or remarks made by another party (e.g. carer, another member, member of the public)
- Discovery of non-typical bruising or marks on a child's body
- Unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
- Evidence of disturbance or explicit detail in drawing, writing or play
- Evidence of neglect in terms of cleanliness, personal hygiene, failure to thrive or apparent exposure to unnecessary risks
- Persistent lateness, poor or irregular attendance or persistent absence from rehearsals

It is important to remember that abuse may not always become apparent through direct disclosure or 'obvious' indicators, but through an accumulation of small incidents or concerns that form a pattern. It is therefore essential that any and all concerns, including low level concerns, are reported to the Safeguarding & Child Protection Officer and/or Committee so that they can be recorded and acted upon as necessary.

Committee Responsibilities

Prior to and/or at the beginning of every production involving children (on or off stage) the committee will:

- Email all existing members with an electronic copy of the membership and parental consent form, informing the under-18 membership that completed consent forms must be brought to the first read-through/audition/rehearsal evening to allow them to remain in attendance.
- Ensure all advertising for Parish Players and specific productions informs prospective new members to contact Parish Players directly via email prior to attending any read-through/audition/rehearsal evenings. Following this, prospective members will be sent Parish Players guidelines, membership and parental consent forms to allow for their attendance.
- Undertake a risk assessment & monitor risk throughout the production process
- Identify the person with designated responsibility for safeguarding & child protection and communicate this to all members involved in the production
- Ensure at least one member of the committee is present at the front door to meet and greet all new members at the read-through and audition evenings of each production. They are responsible for ensuring written parental consent is received for all under-18 members via the membership forms before they are left unaccompanied by their parent/carer.
- In conjunction with the director/s, the membership secretary will draw up a list of every child involved in the production. This list must include the name and 2 x contact numbers of their next of kin in case of emergency. This list must be held by the directors and be available at every rehearsal and performance.
- Ensure that the dates and expected finish times of rehearsals and performances are communicated by the director, in advance, to all members involved in the production

Rehearsals and Productions – Director Responsibilities

- The director must have the Production Safeguarding File available at each rehearsal
- The Production Safeguarding File will include: *A hardcopy of The Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, hardcopies of membership/consent forms and the under-18s contact list* (this is separate to the wider production register).
- No child is able to remain in attendance at any read through/audition/rehearsal until a membership form and parental consent is received by the director.
- Membership enquiries prior to rehearsals will be provided with an electronic copy of the membership/consent form to be completed and brought to the first attended read through/audition/rehearsal. For those who attend without a completed consent form, a hardcopy must be provided by the director and completed by the parent/guardian before the child is able to remain in attendance unaccompanied. Membership does not need to be paid at this point, however it must be paid by the date stated on the form, upon commitment to the production and continuing attendance.
- The directors will be provided with a contact list of existing under-18 members and must then record all new under-18 memberships on this same list. The directors must ensure this is kept up-to-date throughout the production in case of emergency. All recorded membership forms should then be passed onto the treasurer to be kept securely.
- The directors must ensure that all email correspondence sent to any under-18 member is also sent to their parent/s / carer/s using the contact information provided.

- The director/s must remain at the rehearsal/performance until all members have left and have a register of attendance/absence of all members (please see health and safety policy) for each rehearsal/performance. The directors must not allow any under-18 members to wait outside the hall building to be collected, unless they are accompanied by the director themselves. The director/s must be the last to leave the rehearsal/performance space and lock up securely to ensure no re-entry.

Photography and Video Recording – All members' responsibilities

- Photography and/or video recording of members under 18 is not permitted without the consent of parent/guardian and the young person. No personal information, such as age or school, will be included alongside any advertised photographs.
- Parish Players takes all steps to ensure the publication of all still and moving images are used for off and online advertisement purposes only through direct links to Parish Players, including social media and website.
- Photographs & personal information will not be shared with a third party without parental permission.
- Personal photography by cast and crew is permitted as long as **no under-18 members are included in any over-18 member's photographs** and all persons within the photo consent to the photo being taken.
- Photography by any member, in any dressing room, is **NOT** permitted.
- Publication of any photographs/videos on any member's social media platform is **NOT** permitted, regardless of age.
- Audience photography and video recording is **NOT** permitted – this is communicated both verbally at the start of each performance and in print in the production programme and foyer posters.

Travel Arrangements for Under-18 members

- All parent/guardians of members under the age of 18 are expected to make arrangements for their child to be accompanied by an adult to and from all rehearsals. If the parent/guardian is not the person accompanying their child home, Parish Players must receive written notice of the named adult that will accompany them home, This named adult has sole responsibility for the care of this child during the travelling to and from rehearsals, not Parish Players. This notice can be emailed directly to the production director or to any member of the committee. Please note, it is not the responsibility of Parish Players to take any under-18 member home.
- Parents/guardians are most welcome to sit in the hall foyer whilst waiting for the end of a rehearsal.
- A member of the Committee and/or the director will remain in the hall until all members have left.

Dressing Rooms – All members' responsibilities

- Two main dressing rooms will be single sex and alternative changing spaces can be provided for those who desire and request increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason. Any person identifying as non-binary or transgender may discuss with the committee, in confidence, which

dressing room space feels appropriate and comfortable for them. Arrangements for this will be discussed with the member and the committee and made as appropriate.

- Each main dressing room will have a nominated supervisor, responsible for ensuring the smooth running of the dressing room and that all safeguarding procedures are adhered to
- Each dressing room will have a printed summary of the safeguarding and Child Protection Policy present during every performance

The 'Littlies' terms of involvement – Pantomime only

- Any little involved in a production must be closely connected to a current Parish Players member.
- All littlies must be aged between three and seven at the time of the performances.
- There will be a minimum of one chaperone (ideally two) to supervise the group of littlies at all times. The chaperone must be a member of Parish Players and must not be part of the cast, crew or directing team of the production involved in the performances.
- The number of littlies per production/performance will be at the discretion of the directing team and the committee.
- All littlies will be supervised in the ladies changing room before and during the performances.
- The littlies performance should take place as early as possible during the run of each performance, within the first act.
- Littlies are **NOT** permitted to wait in the changing room for the remainder of the performance or join the audience to watch the remainder of the show (bar the Saturday matinee, where they will be seated with and supervised by their chaperone and join the end-of-show walkdown.
- All littlies must be collected immediately after their on-stage performance by their parent/guardian or named adult (Parish Players must be informed in writing prior to each performance of the named adult collecting their child). Parents/guardians/named adults will be asked for photo ID upon collection, no child will be handed over without this being provided.
- All littlies' parents/guardians must complete a consent form prior to attendance at any rehearsals or performances. Parents/guardians must also sign that they have read and understood the safeguarding policy and the terms of their child's involvement in the production.
- If the terms of involvement are not adhered to during the production run, Parish Players has the right to disallow any little's continuing involvement in a production or performance.

Unsupervised Contact

- Unsupervised contact means when only one adult is present with one or more children.
- Most activities will be in groups of various sizes. However, if unsupervised contact is unavoidable (e.g. rehearsing a solo song), care will be taken to avoid risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area or in a designated room with windowed doors/doors open.

Appropriate Physical Contact

- All adults will maintain an appropriate distance from children
- Should any child initiate inappropriate physical touch with an adult, the adult should remove themselves from the situation and inform the person responsible for safeguarding

- If/when physical contact is absolutely necessary in relation to a particular dramatic activity, all members will be sensitive to the feelings of others, particularly children and verbal consent sought for this. If consent is not given, an alternative re-direction must be made by the director. Rehearsals of these moments must only take place with other members present in a public area.

Suspicion of abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of the society, please make this known to the person with responsibility for safeguarding & child protection. If you suspect that the person with responsibility for safeguarding & child protection is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the Chairperson.
- Please make a factual written note of what you witnessed as well as your response, in case there is follow-up in which you are involved. This record should be passed to the safeguarding & child protection officer or chairperson.
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of the society, venue staff etc., that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from all rehearsals and performances until the investigation is concluded.

Disclosures

If a child discloses an experience of concern to you:

- DO remain calm and in control but do not delay taking action.
- DO listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child to tell you at their own pace and ask open (*What? Where? Who? When?*) questions only for clarification. DO NOT ask potentially leading questions that suggest a particular answer.
- DO NOT promise to keep it a secret. Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the person with responsibility for safeguarding & child protection either in person or by telephone. 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.
- DO reassure the child that 'they did the right thing' in telling someone.
- DO tell the child what you are going to do next.
- DO speak immediately to the person with responsibility for safeguarding & child protection. It is that person's responsibility to inform the Chairman and liaise with the relevant authorities if necessary, usually social services or the police.
- DO as soon as possible after the child made their disclosure to you, make a factual written 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. This record must be given to the person in responsible for safeguarding & Child Protection. DO NOT keep a record for yourself.

Recording of concerns/disclosures

- 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.

Criminal Record Disclosure / Disclosure and Barring Service Check (DBS)

- The obtaining of a criminal record disclosure (DBS) is not mandatory for organisations outside of the regulated sector – in other words, there is no legal requirement for amateur societies to carry out police checks.
- If the committee feel it is in Parish Players best interests to obtain criminal record disclosures for any person 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).

Training

- The Safeguarding and Child Protection officer will have appropriate safeguarding and child protection training prior to the commencement of their role and responsibilities.
- Training will be renewed at least bi-annually to ensure the officer is up to date with any necessary amendments and updates.

Policy last reviewed: September 2022

Signed: Caroline Chick

Agreed by committee: October 2022

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Agreed by committee: August 2023