

## **KATS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

Kennet Amateur Theatrical Society or KATS, (the society) has a duty of care to safeguard all children and adults at risk (vulnerable adults) involved in their productions and protect them from harm. All children and vulnerable adults have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled people and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.

The society recognises this 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 (in Scotland change to Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003).

Amateur theatre needs children both for specific productions and, more importantly, because they often form the cast, crew, and audience of the future. The Government sees the amateur theatre as an integral part of its agenda to get more young people involved in the wider society. However, children need to feel safe and respected; their parents need to be confident about their children's welfare and members of the society need to feel able to exercise their responsibilities. This policy addresses many of the issues that may arise when children are involved in the theatre's activities and performances.

A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years. (The Children Act 1989) It should be borne in mind, however, that the regulations relating to children in theatrical performances apply up to the age of 16. Young people between the ages of 16 and 18 need to be treated differently from children under 16. The Society is committed to practice which protects children from harm. All members of the Society accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

The Society believes that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All members and employees of the Society should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

The Society will ensure that:

- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.
- The duty of care to children will always be put first.

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- A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers the children to share in the decision-making process.
- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism.
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned.
- All adult members of the Society provide a positive role model in line with our respect policy
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
- It will keep up to date with health & safety legislation.
- It will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection and safeguarding of children.
- It will undertake relevant safeguarding development and annual training for the committee.
- It will hold a register of every child involved with the Society and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

The Society has safeguarding and child protection procedures which accompany this policy.

This policy will be regularly monitored by the Executive Committee of the Society and will be subject to annual review.

### **CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

Details of websites have been included within these procedures, so that up to date current guidelines are used at all times.

#### **Responsibilities of the Society**

At the outset of any production involving children the Society will:

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process.
- Identify at the outset the person with designated responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, who will undergo the relevant Local Authority safeguarding training.

Identify someone who is at rehearsal/performances to be an initial contact for any safeguarding and child protection concerns.

- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting (if necessary), in consultation with the local education

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authority. Current guidelines can be accessed via <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/child-employment>

- 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.

### **Training**

The committee will receive relevant safeguarding training at their first meeting after the AGM. This will include the various types of abuse alongside the signs and symptoms of abuse and how to raise concerns.

### **Parents**

The Society believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and the Society. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the Society and to share responsibility for the care of children. All parents will be given a copy the Society's Child Protection Policy and procedures. All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of the Society to take children home.

### **Unsupervised Contact**

The Society 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 check (DBS)

### **Physical Contact**

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.

### **Dressing Rooms**

Children under the age of 18 will have a designated area as a dressing room which will only be accessible by the Chaperone(s) and will be inaccessible for the rest of the cast and crew of a production.

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## **Managing sensitive information**

Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional, show photographs and videos or other purposes. The Society's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use. The Society 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 Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS)

## **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 chaperone. If you suspect that the chaperone is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the Chair of the Executive Committee, Designated Safeguarding Officer or representative at rehearsals/performances.

If no-one is available or you have suspicions or abuse outside of rehearsals/performances then you should contact Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership's LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) for guidance and advice. Current contact information can be accessed via: - <https://www.berkshirerwestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp/west-berks/concerned-about-a-child-in-west-berkshire>

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 the Society, 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 in 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.

## **Recording**

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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. All suspicions or abuse and/or disclosures of abuse will be referred to Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership's LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) for guidance and advice. This should be completed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or member of the committee. Current contact information can be accessed via: -

<https://www.berkshirerwestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp/west-berks/concerned-about-a-child-in-west-berkshire>

### **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 the Society, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded by the Society. This record will be countersigned by the person with responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.

If a child joins the production with an obvious physical injury a record of this will be made by the Society. This record will be countersigned by the person with responsibility for safeguarding and 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.

### **Chaperones**

Chaperones will be appointed by the Society 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 be in accordance with the West Berkshire County Council rules but must not exceed 12 children in total.

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During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the stage door and signing them into the building.

Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times.

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 and/or make arrangements for them to get home.

Chaperones must wear their identification badge at all times when on duty and have their license available for inspection. Current guidelines can be obtained via <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/child-employment>

Kennet Amateur Theatrical Society Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, March 2023

Based on the Model Child Protection Policy produced by NODA

CHAIRMAN – John Hicks

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER – Dave Marsh

The society has a dedicated Safeguarding and Child Protection Officer, who is in charge of ensuring that the child protection policy and procedures are adhered to. That person's name is David Marsh, and he can be contacted on [cpo@kats.org.uk](mailto:cpo@kats.org.uk). There will also be a named person who is attendance at rehearsals/performances who will be an initial contact for any safeguarding and child protection concerns if the Safeguarding and Child Protection Officer is unavailable.

This policy will be regularly monitored by the Committee of the society and will be subject to annual review.

Date: March 2023