

Gravesend Theatre Guild

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Responsibilities of Gravesend Theatre Guild

The Gravesend Theatre Guild will

1. Ensure that all supervising adults have completed a criminal record disclosure, vetted by the Criminals Record Bureau and completed their Chaperone licence.
2. Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the rehearsal and production process.
3. Identify at the outset of each rehearsal/performance the person with designated responsibility for child protection.
4. Ensure that children are supervised at all times.
5. Group leaders/Chaperones will know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case they need to report a concern.

Parents

6. Parents will ensure that suitable clothing and footwear is worn to all rehearsals. A uniform of black T-shirt and black joggers is expected with sensible trainers.
7. Gravesend Theatre Guild believes it is important that there is a partnership between parents and the Guild leaders. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the Guild and to share responsibility for the care of children.
8. All parents will be able to view the Gravesend Theatre Guild's Child Protection Policy and Procedures via the Theatre Guild Website.
9. All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of the Gravesend Theatre Guild to take children home.
10. No child will be left waiting alone for collection by a parent.

11. Gravesend Theatre Guild will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.

12. Wherever possible there will always be two adults in the room when working with children.

13. If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimise risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area.

Physical Contact

14. All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.

15. Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity.

16. 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

1 Gravesend Theatre Guild has a policy and procedures for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images of children.

2. Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional purposes.

3. The Gravesend Theatre Guild's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use by the administrator.

4. The Gravesend Theatre Guild 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.

5. Information will be stored securely in line with GDPR.

Suspicion of abuse

1. If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of the Gravesend Theatre Guild, please make this known to the person with responsibility for Safeguarding. If you suspect that the person

with responsibility for Safeguarding is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the Chairman David Ames or Vice-Chairman Gemma Dand.

2. 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.

3. If a serious allegation is made against any member of the Gravesend Theatre Guild, Chaperone, venue staff etc, that individual will be suspended immediately until an 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

1. 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 Safeguarding. 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 Safeguarding. 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, using a cause for concern sheet complete a record 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

1. 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.
2. An accurate note shall be made on a **Cause for Concern Sheet**, found in the **Safeguarding Pack** 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 eg. 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.
3. The record will be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation.

Rights & Confidentiality

1. If a complaint is made against a member of the Gravesend Theatre Guild he or she will be made aware of the situation.
2. 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.
3. In criminal law the Crown or other prosecuting authority has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Criminal Record Disclosures

1. It is in the Gravesend Theatre Guild's best interests to obtain criminal record disclosures for chaperones and other personnel who work with the Youth Theatres. We 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.

2. The Gravesend Theatre Guild will have a written code of practice for the handling of disclosure information.
3. The Gravesend Theatre Guild will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

Chaperones

1. Chaperones will be appointed by the Gravesend Theatre Guild for the care of children during a 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 8. They will complete the application via KCC or their own local council for their registration number.
2. Chaperones will be made aware of the Gravesend Theatre Guild's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
3. Chaperones will not usually have unsupervised access to children in their care. If unsupervised access is unavoidable, an enhanced criminal record disclosure will be sought.
4. Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the Production Manager. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily the chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue.
5. If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the Production Manager and not allow the child to continue.
6. 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 Production Manager to cease using children in this way and should contact the local authority.
7. During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the stage door and signing them into and out of the building.
8. Children will be kept together at all times except when using separate dressing rooms.
9. Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times.

10. Children are not to leave the rehearsal venue or the theatre unsupervised by chaperones unless in the care of their parents.
13. Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
14. Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms.
15. 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.
16. Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by the Gravesend Theatre Guild.
17. 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.
18. If a parent has not collected their child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child or plan for them to be taken home.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND IMAGES OF CHILDREN

Photographs can be used as a means of identifying children, particularly when they are accompanied with personal information, for example, “this is X who goes to such-and-such a school and who likes Busted”. This information can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to start to ‘groom’ that child for abuse.

Gravesend Theatre Guild will carefully consider any image it uses in programmes, on the web site and in publicity material to ensure they are suitable and appropriately represent the Theatre Guild, without putting children at increased risk. When assessing the potential risks in the use of images of children, the most important factor is the potential for inappropriate use.

In the context of a programme, it is of course difficult to avoid the use of the first name and surname of individuals in a photograph. However, we will avoid any additional information that might help locate the child and only use images of children in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.

Gravesend Theatre Guild will ask for parental permission to use an image of a young person. This ensures that parents are aware of the way the image of their child is being used to represent the Guild.

The use of cameras or mobile phones with camera or video capability in dressing rooms and other inappropriate environments is expressly forbidden. Anyone taking photographs of rehearsals must be made aware of our expectations and reminded that the law, in any case, forbids the videoing of copyright material.

The young people will be expected to hand in their mobile phones at the beginning of each rehearsal/performance. The young people will be given an opportunity to take show photos at appropriate times, managed by the adults supervising the group.

Work Experience

Whilst the Gravesend Theatre Guild identifies that supporting Youth to gain experience around all areas of theatrical skills is valuable for personal development, it is recognised that the safety and wellbeing of the young people must always be paramount, this includes youth members who attend general weekend set build sessions and those who would also like to be considered for School Placement Work Experience.

For students requesting a work experience placement they must:

- 1) Be Sixteen Years of age or over.
- 2) They must send in a letter/email application to the Youth Director at least 4 weeks in advance of the dates required.
- 3) They must inform their School of the venue and times they will be completing their work experience as this may fall outside of the recommended times by the school and may include some weekend and late night commitment.

The Youth Director will:

- 1) Ensure there is a Chaperone within the building throughout the work experience programme agreed.
- 2) Agree a programme that is appropriate, safe and meets the needs of the Work Experience Student.

- 3) Be the named contact person for School, throughout this period of time
- 4) Ensure all relevant information, emergency contact details etc are taken and stored securely.

Young Members who wish to extend and develop their own knowledge within other fields of the theatre i.e. Set Design and building may do so following discussion with their Youth Section leader who will ensure the adequate safety precautions are taken.

Date 02/03/2024

Signed *S Edmonds* Safeguard Lead

Date

Signed

Chairman

Gravesend Theatre Guild

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Statement

A child is defined as anyone who is under 16 years of age. The Gravesend and District Theatre Guild recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Child (Performances) Regulations 1968, the Protection of Children Act 1999, the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 and Every Child Matters (2004).

Gravesend Theatre Guild recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. We are committed to practices that protect children from harm. All Committee members of the Gravesend Theatre Guild agree that the purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect children and young people who attend Youth Theatre Groups from harm.
- To provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to Child protection.

This policy applies to anyone volunteering on behalf of The Gravesend Theatre Guild.

Gravesend Theatre Guild accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues that cause children harm.

Gravesend Theatre Guild believes that:

1. The welfare of the child is paramount.
2. All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.

3. All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
4. All members of the Gravesend Theatre Guild Youth Section should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

It is **NOT** the role of the Gravesend Theatre Guild to decide whether a child has been abused or not. This is the task of Social Services or the NSPCC. It is however everybody's responsibility to ensure that concerns are shared and appropriate action taken.

Gravesend Theatre Guild will ensure that:

1. All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.
2. The welfare of each child will always be put first.
3. A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers the children to share in the decision-making process.
4. Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism.
5. Bullying will not be accepted or condoned.
6. All adult members of the Gravesend Theatre Guild will provide a positive role model for dealing with other people.
7. Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
8. It will keep up to date with health & safety legislation;
9. The Safeguarding Officer will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children and will undertake relevant development and training.
10. All Youth Group leaders will hold a register of every child involved with the Guild and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

Concerned about a child.

To tell us about a child safeguarding concern, either:

Speak directly to the Gravesend Theatre Guilds Safeguarding Officer Sandra Edmonds

Mobile No 07738416183 or e-mail Sedmo1@blueyonder.co.uk

- call [03000 41 11 11](tel:03000411111)
- email social.services@kent.gov.uk

Out of hours and in an emergency

If you need to contact us outside of normal office hours, for example during the night, call [03000 41 91 91](tel:03000419191).

If you think someone is in immediate danger, please call 999 for the emergency services.

The Gravesend Theatre Guild has a dedicated Safeguarding Lead, who is in charge of ensuring that the child protection policy and procedures are adhered to. That person's name is **Sandra Edmonds** and she can be contacted on 07738416183 or via e-mail Sedmo1@blueyonder.co.uk

This policy will be regularly monitored and will be subject to annual review.

Date 02/03/2024

Signed *S. Edmonds*