



St James Players

Child Protection Policy & Procedures

**Safeguarding children and young people
is the responsibility of us all**

St James Players recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within the legal framework of the Children Act 1989. Anyone under the age of 18 is considered to be a child/young person.

Any group or organisation working with children needs to be alert to the possibility of abuse occurring. It is the responsibility of us all to put the welfare of children and young people first and to recognise first and then respond to behaviours that can put children at risk.

We are aware that many children and young people are the victims of different kinds of abuse and that they can be subjected to social factors that have an adverse impact upon their lives, such as domestic abuse or substance misuse.

We have a safe and respectful environment within which children and young people can thrive and our members operate with the help and security of clear guidance.

Our guidelines are for the use of group members, volunteer helpers and visitors.

We are committed to:

- The care, nurture and artistic development of children and young people
- The safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults where they are vulnerable
- The establishment of a safe and caring atmosphere which provides an environment with a culture of 'informed vigilance' about the dangers of abuse.

The group 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 of the group should be clear on how to respond appropriately;
- we should all show respect for one another and behave accordingly.

The group will make sure that:

- all children will be offered equal opportunities and be treated with respect and dignity;
- the duty of care to children will always be put first;
- enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism;
- bullying will not be accepted or condoned;
- all adult members of the group provide a positive role model for dealing with other people;
- action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour
- it will keep up-to-date with health and safety legislation;
- it will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children;
- members of the group currently working with the children will have an up to date DBS certificate, a log will be kept and a copy given to the PCC;
- it holds a register of every child involved with the group and will retain a contact name, number and e-mail address close at hand in case of emergencies;
- training and updating on child protection issues will be provided as appropriate;
- this will be overseen by two designated child protection officers, ideally one male and one female
- we review our safeguarding children and young people policy, procedures and good practice on a regular basis.

Guidelines

Everyone is responsible for children while on the premises

Wherever possible one group member should not be left alone with a child.

The appropriate child ratio for church groups for 8 years+ is one adult to 10 children.

We should be alert to strangers frequently waiting around outside the premises after rehearsals finish.

At the end of rehearsals, children should not be allowed outside the premises unless their parents/guardians are waiting for them. Adults will need to wait with them until they arrive or arrangements made to contact the parents and if necessary take the child home in a manner that does not compromise an adult.

Group members needing to take children and young people on separate related activities such as costume fitting, visits to costume hire shops or individual coaching should always have another adult present, ideally a group member or parent.

Responsibilities

At the outset of any production involving children St James Players will:

- undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process;
- make sure 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:

- St James Players believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and the group;
- Parents are encouraged to be involved in our activities and to share responsibility for the care of children;
- All parents will be directed to our Child protection policy and procedures and given a hard copy if requested;
- All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. It is not the responsibility of St James Players to take children home.

Unsupervised contact:

- St James Players will attempt to make sure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children;
- Whenever possible there will always be two adults in the room when working with children;
- If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimise risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area or in a designated room with a door open;
- If it is an individual is likely to be in regular direct contact with children, he or she should hold a DBS certificate.

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:

- We have a policy and procedure for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images of children.
- All children will only be photographed fully clothed and in uncompromising positions.
- St James Players will minimise personal information about children in programmes and on the website in order to guard against inappropriate use

- Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes.
- Any photographs taken are for personal use only and may not be published anywhere including online or in print without the express written consent of the group.
- Recordings of the show must not be made due to copyright as this is a legal requirement of the terms of the licence agreement for each production.
- It will be made clear to young people that this includes social media and parents will be asked to support this.

St James Players will make sure confidentiality is applied 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 St James Players, 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 Chairperson.
- 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 group, chaperone, volunteer helper, etc., that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the church hall, rehearsals 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 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.
- The record will be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation.

Rights and confidentiality:

- If a complaint is made against a member of the group he or she will be made aware of his rights.
- 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 the group, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded by the group. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for child protection. The accident will be recorded in the group's accident book and that of the church hall.
- If a child joins the production with an obvious physical injury a record of this will be made by the group. This record will be counter-signed 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 Barring Certificates:

- The group will have a written code of practice for the handling of disclosure information.
- The group will make sure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

Volunteer helpers and visitors:

- Any volunteer helpers or visitors will be introduced to the group and their role in the production explained.
- Volunteer helpers will be made aware of the group's Child protection policy and procedures.
- A book will be provided for volunteer helpers and visitors to sign in when they attend rehearsals.

Chaperones - volunteers who care for the children during dress and technical rehearsals and performances:

- Our chaperones are volunteers who kindly look after the children during dress and technical rehearsals and performances.
- The maximum number of children in the chaperone's care shall not exceed 12.
- Chaperones will be made aware of the group's Child protection policy and procedures.
- If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the director and not allow the child to continue.
- 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.
- Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures and make sure 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 the group.