



CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

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 administration round issues of child protection;
- engage Volunteer Chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting in consultation with the Local Education Authority (LEA);
- Comply with the requirements of the LEA to secure a 'body of person exemption' or individual licences as required under the provisions of the 'CHILDREN & YOUNG PERSONS ACT 1963 37(3)(b) Children employed in entertainment to which the public are admitted by payment' and The Children (performances and Activities) regulations 2014. WMDC Guidance attached at Appendix A
- ensure that children are supervised at all times;
- know how to get in touch with the Local Authority Children's Services, in case it needs to report a concern.

Parents

- The Society believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and the Society. Parents should be a member of Patron of 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. During the week of the production parents are responsible for ensuring that an emergency contact is always available and notifying the Volunteer Chaperone of any changes to the usual emergency contact details.

Unsupervised Contact

- The Society will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.
- 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 predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, he or she will be required to obtain a criminal record disclosure.

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

- The Society has procedures for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images of children.
- Permission will be sought annually from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional 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 criminal record disclosures.

Suspicion of abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of the Society, please make this known to an Officer of the Committee.
- 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, volunteer 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 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 an officer of the Management Committee. 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 an Officer of the Committee. It is that person's responsibility to ensure that liaison takes place 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 & Confidentiality

- If a complaint is made against a member of the Society he or she will be made aware of his rights under the Society's disciplinary procedures.
- 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, volunteer chaperones, parents, guardians 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 in the venue's accident book.
- 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 counter-signed by a member of the Management Committee. 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 or rehearsals.

Criminal Record Disclosures

- Where the Management Committee of the Society believes it is in its best interests to obtain criminal record disclosures through the DBS process for Volunteer chaperones or other personnel the Secretary will inform the individual of the necessary procedures and the level of disclosure required. The Committee has agreed that where a disclosure is to be pursued it will be at the enhanced level.
- The Society will adhere to NODA's code of practice for the handling of disclosure information.
- The Society will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

Volunteer Chaperones

- Volunteer Chaperones will be appointed by the Society for the care of children during the production process.
- Potential Chaperones will be well known to the Society and will undertake an enhanced DBS check or other checks as required by WMDC.
- Only Volunteer Chaperones may accompany the children outside of the dressing room including onto the stage.
- A schedule of Volunteer Chaperones will be collated 2 months in advance of the Production.
- Volunteer Chaperones will be made aware of the Society's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

As Agreed by the Management Committee June 2015

To be approved by the AGM 2016

**WMDC CHILDREN IN ENTERTAINMENT
Body of Persons Licence Guidance Information**

Updated August 2012 (from WMDC website 7th June, 2015)

Background

The Children & Young Persons Act 1963 gives a local authority under Section 37(3)(b) the power to issue a licence to a **Body of Persons** e.g. a group of responsible adults - youth organisations, amateur dramatics, etc. (**but not usually professional companies**) to enable them to engage children in non broadcast and recorded performances without the need to apply for separate licences for each child for each production.

The Body of Persons must then provide the Local Authority with the following information in advance:

- The names, addresses and dates of birth of all the young people who will be performing;
- The venue and dates of performances;
- The names and addresses of the adults forming the Body of Persons.

Applicants should apply for this licence not less than 21 working days prior to the first performance provided they can meet the following criteria.

Approval can be granted providing

- The child performers receive no payment other than expenses;
- The performance is for a stage production;
- The performances all take place within the Wakefield MDC area;
- The child performers are supervised by licensed chaperones;
- The organisation complies with the regulations on days and permitted hours of Performance contained in the Children (Performance) Regulations 1968;
- That the Child Employment Team agreed that the rehearsal/performance venue(s) are suitable places for children to perform;
- The organiser/Body of Persons have ensured appropriate arrangements are in place to transport child performers to and from the venue and released into the care of an appropriate person;
- The organiser/Body of Persons will not allow the children to take part in performances that may be dangerous;
- The organiser can demonstrate that it can meet any health, safety and welfare conditions set by the local authority;
- The organiser has obtained from each child's parent a medical consent form saying the child is fit to take part in the performance;
- The Body of Persons has a Child Protection Policy in place and has supplied a copy to the Local Authority;
- The Body of Persons/Organiser allow access to an authorised member of the Local Authority to carry out an inspection at both dress/technical rehearsals and productions;
- No child of compulsory school age requires any absence from school for a rehearsal or performance (Full licence applications are required where absence from school is required).

The holders of the licence must ensure that they keep records of each young person's performance as required by Schedule 3 Children and Young Persons, The Children (Performances) Regulations 1968.

Approval can only be granted for young people who perform solely for the holder(s) of the Body of Persons Licence.

An individual child can only be included in one Body of Persons Licence in any six month period.

The Applicant

The chair person or secretary of each society is normally the person who applies for the Body of Persons Licence and must complete an appropriate application form.

The Application

The application must be made on the appropriate application form. The application form asks for details of the society/company that is running the production together with details of the performance dates, times and venue.

The licence applicant must provide a list of the names, dates of birth and addresses of the children taking part in the performance.

Medicals are not required for each child, but the licence applicant should ensure that each child's parent has signed a form declaring that the child is fit and healthy and that participation in the performance will not impact on his health.

The applicant must also provide the names and addresses of the adults who are to be named as part of the Body of Persons and Licensed Chaperones

Wakefield MDC grants a Body of Persons licence on a single production basis, however the right is reserved to withdraw a licence if it is felt the above conditions are not being met.

Body of Persons licence – do's and don'ts

The following relates to children who are part of a Body of Persons licence which is only applicable to stage productions.

Payment

Children must not receive payment for any performance, other than expenses.

Education

Children who are part of a Body of Persons are not individually licensed therefore they are not allowed to take time off from their education for a performance. For this reason, no child must perform or rehearse at a time when they should be in school.

Place of performance

The place of performance is defined as the area backstage that includes the stage, wings, dressing rooms and green room.

All performances must be within the jurisdiction of the Wakefield MDC to whom the Body of Persons has applied to for a licence.

Supervision

All children must be chaperoned by their own parent/s or a licensed chaperone with a regulatory requirement of a ratio of 1 adult to 12 children.

Good Practice, recommends that a male and a female chaperone is available to enable gender issues to be accommodated as well as allowing for continued supervision of the children should it be necessary for a chaperone to deal with individual issues when they arise.

Unless the parent is a licensed chaperone they cannot chaperone other children.

Number of performances

A child cannot take part in a rehearsal or a performance on more than 6 days in any period of 7 days (note that in this context rehearsal is defined as one taking place during the life of the licence).

If in the life of a Body of Persons Licence a child is additionally called upon to take part in or rehearse for another production other than that that is covered by the Body of Persons Licence then the child cannot take part on more than 5 days in any period of 7 days.

Length of time performing

- A child must not take part in a performance that lasts for more than 3.5 hours.
- A child's appearance in each performance must not exceed 2.5 hours.
- A child must not take part in more than 2 performances or one rehearsal and one performance in a day.
- A child must have a break of 1.5 hours between 2 performances or rehearsals in the same day. This break of 1.5 hours can be reduced to 45 minutes on 2 days in a week as long as the child is not at the same place of performance for more than 6 hours.
- If a child performs or rehearses on consecutive days there must be a break of 14 hours or more between each day that they are performing. e.g. if there is a performance with an end time of 10:00 pm then the child cannot take part in another rehearsal or performance until 12:00 noon the following day.

Permitted hours for stage performances

After each performance the regulations allow 30 minutes after their performance for the children to shower and change, therefore standard start and finish times are:

Age	Earliest start time	Latest finish time	Latest departure time from theatre
A child aged younger than 13 years	10:00 am	10:00 pm	10:00 pm
A child aged 13 years and over	10:00 am	10:30 pm	10:30 pm

The latest finish time may be extended by 30 minutes on a maximum of 3 evenings in any one week at the discretion of the Local Authority (LA) this then means that finish times and theatre departure times could be:

Age	Earliest start time	Latest finish time	Plus discretionary 30 minutes	Latest departure time from theatre
A child aged younger than 13 years	10:00 am	10:00 pm	10:30 pm	10:30 pm
A child aged 13 years and over	10:00 am	10:30 pm	11:00 pm	11:00 pm

Information/records to be retained

A record must be kept by the Body of Persons applicant on each child's performance, for 6 months after the last performance of each production, for inspection if called upon.

Queries

Any queries should be addressed to the Child Employment Officer for Wakefield MDC on telephone number 01924 307413