



Colchester Theatre Group SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Colchester Theatre Group (hereafter mentioned as CTG) recognizes its 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. This policy applies to children aged under 16.

CTG recognizes that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. CTG is committed to practice which protects children from harm. All members of CTG accept and recognize their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

CTG 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 CTG should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

CTG will ensure that:

1. All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.
2. The duty of care to children will always be put first.
3. The role of the parent will be clearly explained prior to acceptance of any child into a production
4. A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers the children to contribute to the artistic development of the production.
5. Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism.
6. Bullying will not be accepted or condoned.
7. All adult members of CTG provide a positive role model for dealing with other people.
8. Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
9. It will keep up-to-date with health & safety legislation.
10. It will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children.
11. It will undertake relevant development and training as a body in Child Protection policy matters
12. It will hold a register of every child involved with CTG and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

CTG has child protection procedures which accompany this policy on pages 2-5.

CTG has a nominated Child Protection Officer, who is in charge of ensuring that the child protection policy and procedures are upheld

That person's name is

He/she can be contacted on

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

Date Agreed: Date Reviewed



Colchester Theatre Group
CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

1. Responsibilities of CTG

At the outset of any production involving children CTG will:

- a) Undertake a risk assessment in conjunction with the Director, and monitor risk throughout the production process.
- b) Identify at the outset the person with designated responsibility for child protection.
- c) Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones, where required, including appropriate vetting (if necessary in consultation with the local education authority).
- d) Ensure that children are supervised at all times.
- e) Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case it needs to report a concern.
- f) Arrange for the person with responsibility for child protection, together with the Director, to undertake a specific briefing for adult actors at the commencement of the rehearsal schedule.
- g) Arrange for specific briefing of the cast and technical team prior to accessing the venue to ensure that the arrangements for children are specifically understood.

2. Parents

CTG believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and CTG. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of CTG and to share responsibility for the care of children.

- a) The parents of any child applying to audition will be supplied with details of the play and the requirements for the production prior to audition
- b) All parents of children selected to perform will attend a meeting with the Director to be briefed on the organisation and scheduling of rehearsals and performances
- c) All parents will be given a copy CTG's Child Protection Policy and procedures and asked to sign a Use of Photographic Material consent form.
- d) All parents have the responsibility to deliver and promptly collect (or arrange delivery/collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances and to ensure that there is an up to date contact number. It is NOT the responsibility of CTG to transport children to and from venues.

3. Unsupervised Contact

- a) CTG will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.
- b) If possible there will always be two adults in the room when working with children.
- c) 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.
- d) If it is predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, he or she may be required to obtain a criminal record disclosure.

4. Physical Contact

5.

- a) All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.
- b) Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity in the context of the production or where it is reasonable in order to prevent harm to the child.

- c) Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

6. Managing sensitive information

7.

- a) CTG has a policy and procedures for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images of children.
- b) Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes.
- c) CTG's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.
- d) CTG 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.

8. Suspicion of abuse

9.

All members of CTG should be made aware of their individual responsibility to safeguard children and should note the following:

- a) If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of CTG, please make this known to the person with responsibility for child protection.
- b) 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 Chairman.
- c) 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 CTG, chaperone, venue staff etc., the membership and activities of 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.

10. Disclosure of abuse

If a child confides in you that abuse has taken place:

- a) Remain calm and in control but do not delay taking action.
- b) Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child to tell you at their own pace
- c) and ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- d) 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.
- e) Reassure the child that 'they did the right thing' in telling someone.
- f) Tell the child what you are going to do next.
- g) 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.
- h) 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.

11. Recording

- a) 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.
- b) 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 in accordance with Clause 5 of the CTG constitution, 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.
- c) The record will be stored securely by the CTG secretary and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation.

12. Rights & Confidentiality

- a) 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.

13. Accidents

- a) 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.
- b) If a child is injured while in the care of CTG, reasonable steps will be taken to administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in CTG's accident book. The child's parent/guardian will be notified on collection. This record will be countersigned by the person with responsibility for child protection. Where necessary the parent/guardian will be contacted to collect the child, or in more severe cases, the Ambulance Service will be called.
- c) If a child joins a rehearsal or a production with an obvious physical injury a record of this will be made in the accident book. This record will be countersigned 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.

14. Criminal Record Disclosures

- a) If CTG believes it is in its best interests to obtain criminal record disclosures for chaperones or other personnel, 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.
- b) Any disclosure information will be held securely by the CTG Secretary and shredded if no longer required.
- c) CTG will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

15. Chaperones

- a) Chaperones will be appointed by CTG 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.
- b) The maximum number of children in the chaperone's care shall not exceed 12.
- c) Potential chaperones will be required to supply photographic proof of identity (eg. passport, driving licence) and two references from individuals with knowledge of their previous work with children, unless already well known to CTG. They will also be asked to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children.

- d) Chaperones will be made aware of CTG's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- e) Chaperones will not usually have unsupervised access to children in their care.
- f) If unsupervised access is unavoidable, or if this is a requirement of the local authority, a criminal record disclosure will be sought.
- g) Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the Director and CTG Chairperson. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily, the chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue.
- h) If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the producer/director and not allow the child to continue.
- i) 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 electrical wires and lighting or heavy lifting. Chaperones should tell the producer/director to cease using children in this way and should contact the local authority.
- j) During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the theatre and signing them into the building.
- k) Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times.
- l) Children are not to leave the theatre unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents.
- m) Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
- n) Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms unless under the supervision of a chaperone.
- o) 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.
- p) Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by CTG.
- q) Chaperones should examine accident books each day. If an accident has occurred, the producer/director is not allowed to use that child until a medically qualified opinion has been obtained (not just the word of the parent or child).
- r) 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.
- s) During the production run Children should be signed out when leaving the theatre and a record made of the person collecting.
- t) If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child or make arrangements to take them home. CTG will seek to recover any costs incurred.

Child Protection Policy, July 2011