

# GLOUCESTERSHIRE DRAMA ASSOCIATION

Registered Charity 1011080

## Child Protection Policy information for Drama Groups

If a Group runs a Junior or Youth Drama section then a policy is necessary. This may be formulated by the individual group to suit their circumstances using the following guidelines, or the following policy may be accepted.

The Child Protection Unit are happy to provide assistance and advice.

Contact: Duncan Siret  
Lead Co-ordinator  
01452 425144

The Policy has three sections.

- 1 Standards of Conduct of volunteers who work with Youth Drama.
- 2 Responding to allegations of abuse - concerns outside group
- 3 Responding to allegations of abuse within the group.

It also outlines availability of Vetting procedures necessary before employing 'unknown' personnel to help with the young people. Vetting is also recommended as standard for all members involved with working with young people.

A code of conduct for your leaders is also included. All those working with the youth group should be aware of the policy and should understand it. The welfare of the young people should be an important issue.

### 1 Standards of Conduct.

The young people should be treated with respect at all times. There should be no physical punishment, no racist/homophobic language, or use of language which might undermine their confidence. Avoid physical contact eg wrestling, tickling, hugging.

When abuse is suspected or a child attempts to make an allegation they will be listened to, and concerns will be recorded and acted on.

There will be no promise of confidentiality. (But should be restricted to a need to know basis.)

Include health and safety issues when planning activities.

No bullying tolerated by leaders or peers.

Young people whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse and exploitation.

### Code of Practice for Youth or Junior Drama Group Workers

- All adults to be given a copy of the policy and impressed with the importance of young people's welfare.
- Child Protection Policy should be read and adhered to by all involved as leaders.
- Leaders and adult helpers should avoid actions or behaviour that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive.
- Never behave in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative. Remember others may misinterpret your behaviour, no matter how well intentioned.
- Never use offensive language or behaviour. Don't make suggestive remarks or gestures.
- Never photograph a young person without permission.
- Be visible when working in a 1-1 situation. Always have two adult workers present.
- Inform others when working alone with a young person.
- Respect a young person's right to privacy.
- Never exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.
- Only give lifts to and from home with parental permission.
- Leaders to be mindful of cp issues - be alert to behaviour of other members/leaders i.e. inappropriate relationships, adults singling out individuals for special treatment, or spending time with them on their own.
- Ask for two references when people join as volunteers - see section on vetting.

## **2 Responding to Allegations of Abuse - outside the Group.**

### **Areas of Abuse**

**Physical Abuse** - young person is hurt or injured – hitting, shaking, biting or burning. Given alcohol under age, or inappropriate drugs.

Neglected, left alone, refused attention or affection.

**Sexual Abuse** – adults use a young person to meet their own sexual needs. ( Sexual intercourse, masturbation, fondling, inappropriate touching.)

Showing them pornographic books, photos or videos. Taking pornographic photographs.

Asking them to improvise sexual activities of an explicit nature.

**Emotional Abuse** – persistent lack of care or affection. Over protection preventing them from socialising. High criticism from the director/youth worker.

**The aim** is to ensure that any allegation or disclosure of abuse is dealt with professionally.

It is not your responsibility to decide if it is abuse but it is a responsibility to act on any concerns and do something about it.

Seek advice from the Child Protection Unit - tel: 012452 425144, who will help to make decisions about what to do next.

Make referral to Social Services or the Police if serious concerns are expressed. Be guided by statutory requirements and supporting procedures of Social Services.

Keep a written record of circumstances, dated, or a diary of concerns. Confirm in writing to Social Services if necessary.

Consider the appropriateness of informing parents of the intention to involve Social Services.

## **3 Responding to Allegations of Abuse within the Group.**

### **DO NOT**

- Rridicule or show disbelief:

### **DO**

- Listen:
- Reassure they are right to tell:
- Take it seriously:
- Be honest with the child:
- Take time:
- Be clear that in order to help you may not be able to keep it to yourself:
- Explain what happens next:
- Write down immediately what the child has said:

Consult and get support but only from someone who needs to know – confidentiality. All concerns about allegations of abuse by a group member should be reported to the most senior person within the group who is not implicated in the allegation. Advice may be sought from CPU, Social Services or the Police. ( See appendix numbers. )

Full co-operation should be given to any investigation that may ensue. The group member under consideration should be suspended from meetings/ rehearsals until the investigation is completed.

### **Children and young people can be helped by being taught self-protection.**

- To say NO if someone touches them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- That adults will take them seriously, and need top know about problems in order to help.
- That it is right to yell if in danger.
- That some secrets should be shared.
- To tell an adult and seek help. To know who represents the group through the CPS.
- If asked to go with a stranger - always check with another adult that they know.

**It is vital that you:**

- Appoint a designated person within your group to take responsibility in these matters.
- Do not investigate: this is the role of the statutory authority - police, social services.
- Do not speak to anyone implicated in the allegation.
- Only talk to those responsible for taking action in these matters.

**Vetting Procedure for Members New to the Group.**

- All new members should be asked if they have previous convictions.
- References should be gained as to character and suitability.
- If further vetting is considered necessary contact can be made to the Criminal Records Bureau through our Umbrella Scheme with Gloucester City Council, who comply fully with the Code of Practice. They will liaise with the Bureau to carry out Police checks for prospective helpers with your society. This should be done **by obtaining a form from the Glos Drama Association Executive Committee** who have registered with the Council for them to act as an Umbrella Organisation.
- Individual groups shall be responsible for paying £22 towards the statutory cost for administering this service.
- **Contact should be made through our designated representative;**

## Appendix

### Contact Numbers for Help Organisations

- **Social Services**, Children and Families.  
Glos           01452 426565  
Chelt         01242 532500
- **Area Protection Unit**   01452 425144
- **Police**  
Glos and Chelt:   08450901234
- **NSPCC Helpline** - 0800 800 500
- **Childline**               0800 1111
- **Criminal Records Bureau – vetting information.**  
June Butt  
Corporate Personnel - 01452 396914

