



Founded:- 2019

Founder:- Michelle Moses

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Stagezone Youth Theatre 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 the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

Stagezone Youth Theatre recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it is physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. Stagezone Youth Theatre is committed to practice which protects children from harm. All adults involved with Stagezone Youth Theatre accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

Stagezone Youth Theatre 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 adults involved with Stagezone Youth Theatre should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

Stagezone Youth Theatre will ensure that:

- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity;
- The duty of care to children will always be put first;
- A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers the children to share in the decision-making process;
- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism;
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned; all adults involved with Stagezone Youth Theatre will 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;
- It will undertake relevant development and training;
- It will hold a register of every child involved with Stagezone Youth Theatre and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

Stagezone Youth Theatre has child protection procedures which accompany this policy.

Stagezone Youth Theatre has a designated Child Protection Officer, who is in charge of ensuring that the child protection policy and procedures are adhered to. That person's name is Michelle Moses, and she can be contacted on 07967 828770.

This policy will be regularly monitored by Stagezone Youth Theatre, and will be subject to annual review.

Signed:- \_\_\_\_\_ M MOSES \_\_\_\_\_ Date:- \_\_\_\_ 01.01.2022 \_\_\_\_\_



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## Model Child Protection Procedures – Responsibilities of Stagezone Youth Theatre

Stagezone Youth Theatre will:

- Undertake regular risk assessments and monitor risk;
- Identify the person with designated responsibility for child protection;
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting (if necessary in consultation with the local education authority);
- Ensure 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

- Stagezone Youth Theatre believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and the society. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of Stagezone Youth Theatre and to share responsibility for the care of the children. All parents can request a copy of the Child Protection policy and procedures, and a digital version is available on the website of Stagezone Youth Theatre.
- All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances.
- It is NOT the responsibility of Stagezone Youth Theatre to take children home.

### Unsupervised Contact

- Stagezone Youth Theatre will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children;
- If 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 predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, he or she may 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 necessary in relation to a 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 and GDPR

- The information you provide is collected by Stagezone Youth Theatre for the purpose of
- Stagezone Youth Theatre has procedures for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images of children.



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- Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes.
- Stagezone Youth Theatre's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.
- Stagezone Youth Theatre 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.
- Registration forms are held securely and confidentially in a locked file, and will be retained only until the end of the academic year following the last date of attendance, after which time, they will be destroyed in a secure manner, and a new registration form will be required for each academic year.
- Information may also be shared with other professionals in conjunction with the nature of the request or enquiry.
- If you wish to see the information held by Stagezone Youth Theatre, or ask that we rectify this data or erase the data, you should contact the Designated Child Protection Officer.

### Suspicion of abuse

- If abuse of a child is seen or suspected while in the care of Stagezone Youth Theatre, please make this known to the designated Child Protection Officer.
- Please make a note for your own records of what was witnessed as well as your response, in case there is follow-up in which you are involved.
- If a serious allegation is made against an individual, that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from Stagezone Youth Theatre, and will not have unsupervised contact with any other child in Stagezone Youth Theatre.

### Disclosure of abuse

If a child discloses 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 designated Child Protection Officer. Make it clear to the child that you will need to share this information with others. Make it clear that you will only tell people who need to know and 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 records.



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### Recording

- In all situations, including those in which the cause for 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, e.g., suspension of the 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 Stagezone Youth Theatre, he or she will be made aware of their rights under the 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 release.
- In criminal law, the Crown or other prosecuting authority has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

### Health and Safety

- 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 Stagezone Youth Theatre, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in Stagezone Youth Theatre’s accident book.
- This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for child protection.
- If a child arrives at Stagezone Youth Theatre with an obvious physical injury, a record will be made of this in the accident book. 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 Stagezone Youth Theatre.

### Criminal Record Disclosures

- If Stagezone Youth Theatre 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.



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- Stagezone Youth Theatre will have a written code of practice for the handling of disclosure information.
- Stagezone Youth Theatre will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

### Chaperones

- Chaperones will be appointed as required by Stagezone Youth Theatre, for the care of children partaking in its activities. By law, the chaperone is acting in loco parentis and should exercise the care which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give a child. The maximum number of children in the chaperone's care shall not exceed 12.
- Potential chaperones will be required to produce photographic proof of identity (e.g. a passport, driving licence) and two references from individuals with knowledge of their previous work with children, as required by the local authority,
- Chaperones will be made aware of and asked to sign a copy of Stagezone Youth Theatre's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Chaperones will not usually have unsupervised access to children in their care. If unsupervised access is unavoidable, or if this is a requirement of the local authority, a criminal record disclosure will be sought.
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the designated Child Protection Officer or producer. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily, the chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue.
- If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the designated Child Protection Officer or producer and not allow the child to continue.
- 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 designated Child Protection Officer or producer to cease using children in this way, and should contact the local authority.
- During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the stage door and signing them into the venue.
- 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.
- Children are not to leave the building unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents/carers.
- Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
- Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms.
- 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.
- Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by Stagezone Youth Theatre.
- Chaperones should examine the accident book before a performance, and if an accident has occurred, the producer is not allowed to use that child until a medically qualified opinion has been obtained (not just the word of the parent or child).
- 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.
- Children should be signed out when leaving and a record made of the person collecting.
- If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child until they are collected, inform Stagezone Youth Theatre, and if required, the chaperone will need to make arrangements to take the child home.



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