Incorporating RATS Youth Theatre

Child Protection Policy & Procedures

Introduction

Ribchester Amateur Theatrical Society (the Society) has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that when given responsibility for children, all members, chaperones, parents/legal guardians and volunteers accept their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to ensure that everyone follow procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

This Child Protection Policy & Procedures sit alongside the Society's Safeguarding Children Policy, which sets out the Society's overall commitment to ensuring the safety and welfare of children, and this document sets out specific expectations during performances.

As such, this document should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Children Policy, and also the Society's *Chaperoning of Children in Entertainment Guidance & application process.

Children

A child is defined as anyone up to 18 years of age, but the regulations relating to children in theatre performances apply to up to 16 years (including those turning 16 that academic year), so young people between 16 and 18 years will need to be treated differently from those under 16.

Chaperones

When a child takes part in a performance they must be chaperoned by their own parent or a chaperone registered with the local authority. A chaperone acts in "loco parentis" and should exercise the care which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give that child. The Society has several trained volunteers for this purpose. Further details are available in the above-mentioned document *.

Photographs / videos

At the time of completing a Society's Membership Form, parents/legal guardians are asked if they consent to the use of their child's photograph to be use for promotional materials. This information is logged on confidential records. However, where children are involved in a production, parents/legal guardians will be asked again, to ensure the Director is clear about who may or may not be included in any photographs.

In the context of programmes, it is difficult to avoid the use of names of individuals in a photograph. However, the Society will avoid any additional information that might help locate a child and only use images of children in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.

The use of cameras or mobile phones with a camera or video capability, in dressing rooms and other inappropriate environments will be expressly forbidden.

The Society's members and volunteers will ensure:

- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity
- Our duty of care to children will always be put first
- A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empower the children involved with the Society to share in decision making processes
- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given to children rather than negative criticism
- Bullying will never be accepted or condoned
- All adult members of the Society provide a positive role model, acting appropriately in the presence of children
- Any inappropriate or harmful behaviour towards or in the presence of children by any adult member will be challenged
- We keep up to date with legislation and guidance relating to the protection of children and undertake relevant development and training
- We maintain a record of every child (and person with parental responsibility for them) presently involved with the Society with their consent, to be accessible in case of emergencies
- All personal information we may collect relating to children will be processed and stored in accordance with the Society's General Data Protection Regulations Policy and Privacy Policy.

Specific expectations during Performances

<u>Responsibilities of the Society</u>

At the outset of any production involving children, we will:

- Undertake child focussed risk assessments and monitor and record risk throughout the life of the production. This will include risk assessments in relation to the performance venue/s with reference to its safety and suitability for children. Where any activities are to take place at other locations, we will also carry out a further risk assessment
- Identify at the outset the person within the Society who holds responsibility for overseeing Safeguarding Children
- Ensure effective engagement of registered chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate checks (e.g. DBS) if necessary
- Ensure that children are always supervised appropriately
- Know how to contact local authority social services, in case we need to report a concern.

Parents and carers

- We believe a partnership between those with parental responsibility for the child and The Society is important. We encourage parents or carers to be involved in the activities of the Society and to share responsibility for the care of children. They will be given a copy of our Safeguarding Children Policy and a copy of this document.

  All parents or carers have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. We cannot accept responsibility for taking children home.

Unsupervised Contact

- We will endeavour to ensure that no unqualified adult has unsupervised contact with children
- There should always be at least 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, we may require a DBS check.

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

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 Society, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in our accident log. This record will be countersigned by the person with responsibility for Safeguarding Children.
- If a child joins the production with an obvious injury a record of this will be made in our accident log. 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.

Suspicion of abuse and reporting procedure

Full details are contained in our Safeguarding Children Policy, in summary:

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child, immediately make this known to the designated individual responsible for Safeguarding Children, the second in line committee member, or any other committee member. Record what you witnessed as well as your response, in case there is follow-up in which you are involved
- If a child confides in you that abuse has taken place, remain calm and in control but do not delay action:
    - Listen carefully, allow the child to tell you at their pace and ask questions only for clarification
    - Do not promise to keep it a secret and make it clear to the child that you will need to share this information with other people who need to know
    - 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 Safeguarding Children
    - As soon as possible, make a note of what was said, using the child's own words. Note the date, time, any names that were mentioned or involved and who you gave the information to. Sign and date your record.

The Designated Person for Safeguarding Children and Child Protection is:	
Committee Vice Chair	Viki Mason
Mobile Telephone	07976 836 359
Email address	viki.mason@hotmail.com

Second in line for Safeguarding Children and Child Protection is:	
Committee Chair	Rebecca Soper
Mobile Telephone	07860 921 463
Email address	rebecca.soper@btopenworld.com