



Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

SCOPE OF THIS POLICY:

This Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy - hereinafter "This Policy" applies to all staff, volunteers, and members of A Peel Drama Group, otherwise referred to as "The Society".

It is acknowledged that: *Child Performance and Activities Licensing Legislation in England defines a child as anybody "under the upper limit of compulsory school leaving age (as defined by section 8(3) of The Education Act 1996)." This being, the last Friday of June in the school year in which the young person has or will have reached their 16th birthday.*

PURPOSE AND INTENDED AIMS OF THIS POLICY:

- To protect & safeguard children, young people and all vulnerable individuals during their attendance or participation in activities, events and performances organised by the society.
- To provide staff, volunteers and society members in general, with details of the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.
- To ensure that all society members have a clear understanding of what might constitute a safeguarding concern and how they are expected to respond in the event of such concern.
- To make clear that all concerns, suspicions and/or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and will be responded to swiftly and in an appropriate manner.

SOCIETY VALUES:

The society believes that the safety and welfare of our youth members is paramount.

The society believes that no person should ever be exposed to abuse, harassment or risk of harm of any kind, regardless of age, disability, gender identity, race, heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or other individual characteristic.

The society believes that we collectively have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults, and to keep them safe.

SOCIETY PLEDGE:

The society is committed to engaging in good and safe practice. Operating in ways that aim to ensure the safety and protection of those who participate in society organised activities.

SOCIETY AIMS:

Revision Date: 03-JUNE-2025

To value, listen to and respect our youth members, including them in the development of any plan or policy intended to support them.

To create and maintain a safe and supportive environment for all our members, ensuring that we have appropriate policies and procedure in place to help us deal effectively with any concerns that may arise.

To adhere to applicable law and regulatory guidance.

To adopt, implement and regularly review, robust child protection and safeguarding procedures; establishing a clear code of conduct which applies to all staff, volunteers & members.

To support staff and volunteers to access supervision, training and regular review of their duties in relation to safeguarding and child protection.

To record and securely store information relating to safeguarding processes and activity.

To share information and to cooperate fully with relevant agencies, services and appropriate individuals in a timely/consistent manner, in the event that safeguarding concerns are identified.

To share information relating to policy changes or best practice guidance with staff volunteers and members in a timely manner.

Responsibilities of The Society

To respond immediately to suspicions, allegations or safeguarding concerns

At the outset of any productions involving youth members or vulnerable adults, the safeguarding team will be responsible for:

- Undertaking a safeguarding risk assessment and monitoring risk throughout the entire production process; including rehearsals and performance.
- Discussing and considering any potential issues with the director at regular intervals
- Ensuring that The Society knows how to get in touch with the Local Authority Social Services in the event that concerns need to be reported to them.

Responsibilities of members

All members must ensure that:

- They do not knowingly place themselves at risk of harm or potential abuse of any kind
- They are aware of the safeguarding policies and procedures
- They are aware of what actions would violate safeguarding policies and how they can report those concerns

Managing Sensitive Information

When signing their membership form all members are asked to confirm their consent or objection to use of their personal information and/or image for specified purposes.

Consent can be withdrawn at any time by notifying a member of the committee.

The Society acknowledges its responsibility to ensure that secure storage, management and disposal of confidential information and confirms its pledge to use information only for the agreed upon and specified terms.

Suspicious of Abuse

If any member sees or suspects abuse of a youth member or vulnerable adult associated with the society, or a youth member or vulnerable adult discloses abuse to them, this must be reported to a member of the Safeguarding Team immediately (see Important Contacts below).

If a member suspects that a person with responsibility for Safeguarding or Child Protection is the source of concern, then those concerns should immediately be brought to the society chairperson or available senior staff member.

If in doubt, reach out to the Local Authority Safeguarding Team, and/or the Police

In all circumstances, members must make a record of concerns, including the date, time, those involved or present, and what was witnessed/disclosed.

Members must also record details of their immediate response, and any follow-up action.

If the safeguarding lead deems the allegation to be of a serious and harmful nature and that a member is at risk of harm, or if a criminal offence has been committed, the member who has the allegation against them will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded.

This individual will be asked to leave the premises and will not be permitted to return until it is deemed appropriate by the safeguarding lead, chair, and committee*.

Disclosure of abuse

If a member 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 member to disclose to you at their own pace and ask questions for clarification. Do not ask any leading questions.
- Do not promise to keep anything secret. Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the Child Protection Officer. Make it clear to the member that you need to share this information with others but make it clear that you will only disclose relevant information to those who need to know.
- Reassure the member that they “Did the right thing” in telling someone

- Advise the member what you are going to do next
- Speak immediately to the appropriate Safeguarding Lead.
- If no members of the safeguarding team are in attendance, you must contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead by phone to inform them. *It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to inform a parent or carer (if required), and/or 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 person'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 must be recorded, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a statutory body. i.e., Social Services

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, and any action taken to investigate the matter, any further action taken for example 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 the allegation.

Rights & Confidentiality

If a complaint is made against a member, he or she may be made aware of the accusation in confidence, so as to enable them to seek appropriate advice and/or understand any actions taken, which may include immediate suspension or removal from the premises.

No matter how you may feel about the accusation, both the alleged abuser and the member who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998. Please be aware that any potential criminal investigation could be compromised by inappropriate disclosure of information being released. You must not discuss allegations with anyone other than the investigating team or appropriate authorities.

Training

If deemed to be a necessary aspect of their role within the society, members will be required to undertake specific safeguarding training either via e-learning or in person.

In person training (where necessary) shall be held at the theatre where possible and will be conducted by either a suitably qualified professional or a member of the safeguarding team.

All members are expected (as a minimum) to attend an annual safeguarding briefing as a condition of their membership. This is a mandatory condition required by the local authority.

Any member who does not undertake required training or attend annual briefing will be unable to renew their membership at the theatre, and at the discretion of the Safeguarding Team may not be permitted to attend various activities or events.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

The Society's dedicated **Child Protection and Safeguarding Team** is responsible for ensuring that Child Protection & Safeguarding policies and procedures are adhered to:

Should you have any concerns regarding the implementation of policy and/or the safety and wellbeing of any staff member, member or visitor, you **MUST** take action now by contacting a member of the team below:

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Neil Ogden

In the event that the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable and/or is temporarily undertaking a role which might lead to a conflict of interest - i.e., chaperoning youth cast members during a society performance – then the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will assume overall responsibility and authority in respect of the implementation of this policy and will become the designated point of contact for safeguarding concerns.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Janet Aspinall

In the event that all members of the safeguarding team are unavailable, the nominated point of contact will become:

Geoff Millard – Society Chairperson

Please be aware:

This policy will be reviewed and amended as part of a compulsory annual review process but may be subject to change at any time where review or amendment appears necessary.