



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

POLICY

Woking Amateur Operatic Society (WAOS or the Society) is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. It recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. WAOS acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. Members will work together to encourage the development of an ethos which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children, young people and adults.

WAOS recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014, the Children Act 1989 and 2004 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

A child is defined as anyone up to the age of 18 years. The regulations relating to children taking part in performances apply up to the statutory school leaving age. Children do not reach the statutory school leaving age until the end of June in the academic year in which they become 16. Organisations have a duty of care towards young people between the statutory school leaving age and 18. They may not be required to be supervised by chaperones but they still need to be protected according to safeguarding policies and procedures.

WAOS 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 members of the Society should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

WAOS will ensure that:

- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.
- The welfare of each child 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 adult members of the Society 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 a production and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.
- Parents and/or carers will be asked to provide information about their child's health needs, including allergies and medication requirements.



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

WAOS has a dedicated Child Safeguarding Officer, who is in charge of ensuring that the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are adhered to. That person's name is Vicky Campbell, and she can be contacted by phone on **07899 826678** or by e-mail at **vickysimon_9@msn.com**.

In implementing this Child Safeguarding Policy, WAOS will:

- Communicate to all members their legal and moral responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation.
- Communicate to all members their responsibility to work to the standards that are detailed in the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership and the need to work at all times towards maintaining high standards of practice in protection of children.
- Ensure that all members understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a child or young person, or a member's conduct towards a child/young person, to the organization's named person for child protection.
- Ensure that the organization's named person for child protection understands his/her responsibility to refer any child protection concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (i.e. Police and/or Children's Social Care).
- Ensure that any procedures relating to the conduct of members are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner.
- Facilitate opportunities for children and young people to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues in connection with the service they are provided with and to have access to the organization's Complaints Procedure.
- Facilitate involvement of parents or carers in the work of the organization and to make the Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures available to them.

This policy and the accompanying procedures will be shared with all members of the cast and crew of WAOS shows which include children in the cast, and with the parents/carers of those children. The policy and procedures will be reviewed by the WAOS committee prior to any show involving children. This policy and attached procedures should be read in conjunction with the Society's Constitution, its Health and Safety Policy and its Disciplinary and Grievance Policy, available on the WAOS website: www.waos.info



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

PROCEDURES

These procedures have been designed to ensure that the welfare and protection of any child and/or young person who accesses the opportunities provided by WAOS. The procedures recognise that child protection and safeguarding can be a very difficult subject to deal with to the extent that it is sometimes easier to close your eyes to what is happening or believe that it is somebody else's problem to deal with.

WAOS is committed to the belief that protecting children and young people is everybody's responsibility and therefore the aim here is to provide guidelines that will enable all members to act appropriately to any concerns that arise in respect of a child/young person.

WAOS is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among its members and in all areas of its activities as declared in its Constitution.

Definitions of abuse:

See Appendix 1.

Responsibilities of the Society:

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

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process.
- Identify at the outset the person with designated responsibility for child safeguarding.
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones approved by Surrey County Council for all performances, as well as other individuals with responsibility for children or ensure that parents understand their responsibilities in supervising their own children.
- Ensure that children are also supervised during rehearsals.
- Know how to get in touch with Surrey's children's services, in case it needs to report a concern.
- Advise cast and crew members of special precautions to be taken when working with children.

Child Safeguarding Officer:

The society's Child Safeguarding Officer is Vicky Campbell, and she can be contacted by phone on **07899 826678** or by e-mail at **vickysimon_9@msn.com**.

The role and responsibilities of the Child Safeguarding Officer are:

- To ensure that all staff are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they are concerned that a child/young person may be subject to abuse or neglect.
- Ensure that any concerns about a child/young person are acted on, clearly recorded, referred on where necessary and followed up to ensure the issues are addressed.
- The Child Safeguarding Officer will record any reported incidents in relation to a child/young person. These will be kept in a secure place.



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Stages to follow if you are worried about a child:

Suspicion of abuse:

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the Society's care, please make this known to the accompanying chaperone or the Child Safeguarding Officer.
- If you suspect that the accompanying chaperone is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the Child Safeguarding Officer. If you suspect the Child Safeguarding Officer is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the local authority designated officer (LADO).
- Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed as well as your response, in case there is a follow-up in which you are involved.
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of the Society, chaperone, crew member, etc., action will be taken to ensure the individual does not have further contact with the child until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre or rehearsal rooms and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production.
- Deliberate abuse of a child will constitute gross misconduct, as described in the Disciplinary and Grievance Policy.

Disclosure of abuse:

If a child 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 child to tell you at his/her own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Don't promise to keep 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.
- 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 accompanying chaperone or to the Child Safeguarding Officer. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually Children's Social Care or the Police.
- Never investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where a child makes a disclosure.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, 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.

Recording of concerns – duties of person with responsibility for safeguarding:

- 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 safeguarding 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 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 allegation.



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Creating a safe organization:

Photographs and images of children:

- Photographs of children/young people on the website and in other publications such as the theatre programme will not be accompanied with personal information that may help locate the child/young adult.
- If parents are intending to photograph or video a Society event, they should ask the Society's permission by approaching a member of the Committee who has knowledge of the Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- An announcement will be made before the start of each performance in the Rhoda McGaw Theatre that the taking of photographs and videos is strictly forbidden.
- The use of cameras or mobile phones with camera or filming capability in dressing rooms and other inappropriate environments with children/young adults in is expressly forbidden.

E-safety:

- All communications to children/young adults will be by phone, text or email to their parent/carer, including groups via text or email.
- Cyber-bullying by children, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying.

Parents:

- WAOS 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 the society and to share responsibility for the care of children.
- All parents will be given a copy of WAOS's Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. The Society has a responsibility to ensure suitable arrangements are in place to take children home.

Unsupervised contact:

- WAOS will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children unless they are a registered chaperone or hold DBS clearance.
- 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, e.g. 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 from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Gifts made to the children:

- Gifts of any sort, including sweets and chocolate given to the children, must be made via the chaperone and with consent of the parents.
- Chaperones will be mindful of any allergies/food intolerances in the group before accepting gifts for the children.
- Favouritism of any child(ren) is not appropriate.
- All gifts should be made to all the children rather than any specific child(ren).



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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.

Managing sensitive information:

- Permission will be sought from parents for the use of photographic or video material featuring children for promotional or other purposes.

Rights and confidentiality:

- If a complaint is made against a member of the Society, he or she will be made aware of his/her rights under the Society's Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure.
- 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. Any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released.

Accidents:

- To avoid accidents, chaperones and children will be advised by the Stage Manager or Child Safeguarding Officer of "house rules" regarding health and safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds. This includes any potential risk areas and risky behaviour onstage and backstage. 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 the Society's accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for child safeguarding.
- If a child arrives at rehearsal or for a show with an obvious physical injury, a record of this will be made in the accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for child safeguarding. 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.

Chaperones:

- Chaperones registered with their local authority, will be appointed by the Society for the care of children during show week. The chaperone is acting in loco parentis and should exercise the care that a good parent might be reasonably expected to give to a child. The maximum number of children in the chaperone's care shall not exceed 12.
- Potential chaperones will be required to obtain a chaperone registration from their local authority and to supply this registration to the Society once the local authority has approved them as a chaperone.
- Chaperones will be made aware of the WAOS Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the Director. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily, the chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue.



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Chaperones continued:

- If a chaperone considers the child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the Director 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. Chaperones should tell the Director to stop involving children in dangerous performances and should contact the local authority.
- During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the stage door or dressing room door and signing them into the building.
- 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 place of performance unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents or their representatives.
- Children will be adequately supervised the children while going to and from the toilets.
- Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing areas.
- No adults will be permitted into the children's dressing rooms unless they are chaperones, assistant chaperones with DBS clearance or parents of the children, unless the specific permission of the chaperone in charge is given.
- 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 the Society.
- Chaperones should examine accident books each day. If an accident has occurred, the 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).
- 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 arrangement, unless the parent has previously notified the chaperone of this plan.
- 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 arrangements have been made to take the child home.



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

APPENDIX 1: Definitions

A child: A Child is defined as anyone up to the age of 18 years. The regulations relating to children taking part in performances apply up to the statutory school leaving age. Children do not reach the statutory school leaving age until the end of June in the academic year in which they become 16. Organisations have a duty of care towards young people between the statutory school leaving age and 18. They may not be required to be supervised by chaperones but they still need to be protected according to safeguarding policies and procedures.

Physical Abuse: Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, and burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the Child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate. It may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying) causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect: Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or a carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, (including exclusion from home or abandonment) failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers) or the failure to ensure access to the appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsive to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Bullying: Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else – such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumors, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally.



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Bullying that happens online, using social networks and mobile phones, is often called cyber bullying. A child can feel like there's no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night.

Child Sexual Exploitation: Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, drugs, alcohol, accommodation or gifts as a result of them performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can also occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet or mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. Child sexual exploitation is a hidden crime. Young people often trust their abuser and don't understand that they're being abused. They may depend on their abuser or be too scared to tell anyone what's happening. Children who work in entertainment may be sexually exploited in return for offers of TV, film or modelling/ photographic work and roles in professional stage productions.

APPENDIX 2: Useful contacts

Child Employment office

01483 517838

Child Employment Manager

01483 518464

07971 664861

Surrey Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA) - 0300 470 9100

Children's Services emergency duty team (out of hours) - 01483 517898