

CURTAIN UP THEATRE COMPANY – SAFEGUARDING POLICY

At Curtain Up Theatre Company, we aim to use drama, singing and dance to increase individual self-esteem and confidence whilst learning the basic principles of musical theatre performing.

We are an inclusive theatre company that strives to provide endless possibilities for children's imaginations.

Legal Framework:

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in Wales

A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from nspcc.org.uk/childprotection.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

To protect all children and young people under 18 who receive Curtain Up Theatre Company's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.

To provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection. This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Curtain Up Theatre Company, including senior managers, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

We, at Curtain Up Theatre Company, will give equal priority to keeping all children and young people safe regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Terms and Definitions:

For the purpose of this document:

'Child' refers to anyone under the age of 16

'Young person' refers to anyone aged 16 or over but under 18 and anyone aged 18 who is in sixth form or college

'Adult' refers to anyone 18 years of age or older who is no longer in sixth form or college

'Vulnerable adult' refers to any person who is 18 or over that is or may need community care services because of a disability (mental or other), age or illness and is someone who could be unable to look after themselves, or protect themselves from harm or exploitation

'Member/student' refers to any child, young person, adult or vulnerable adult who attends Curtain Up Theatre Company sessions or activities

'Staff' refers to anyone working for or on behalf of Curtain Up Theatre Company including paid staff, volunteers and temporary workers,

'CUTC' is an abbreviation of Curtain Up Theatre Company

We believe that

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that

- The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse

We seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them
- We have appointed a nominated child protection lead for our children and young people and a deputy for safeguarding
- We ensure to adopt child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- We have developed and implemented an effective safety policy and related procedures
- We have provided effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently.
- We have ensured all staff have undertaken our safeguarding training,
- When recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made and have their DBS checks on file.
- We continually record, store and use information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance.
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with everyone involved with Curtain Up Theatre Company
- We make sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- We use our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- We would use our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- We continually create and maintain an anti-bullying environment and ensure that we have a procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise. As we strive to be an inclusive company. This is very important to us.
- We have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place

- We ensure that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- We have built a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

Safeguarding Officer

Our Safeguarding Officer within the theatre group is responsible for ensuring the safety and welfare of children and young people. The Safeguarding officer is also responsible for the monitoring and recording of any safeguarding concerns and for ensuring that all concerns are shared with the appropriate statutory authorities.

The safeguarding officer is the first person to contact for concerns about the safety of children and young people.

The safeguarding officer ensures that all staff and volunteers know where to find the safeguarding policy and procedures. They also communicate any changes to the policy and procedures.

The safeguarding officer ensures that new staff and volunteers understand the safeguarding policy and procedures during their induction period. Will also deliver safeguarding training to all new staff working with all our students below the age of 18.

The safeguarding officer ensures that we (Curtain Up Theatre Company) follow the relevant legislation and guidance for child performers.

The safeguarding officer's primary function is to prevent abuse, harm, or neglect from occurring.

We understand the safeguarding officer cannot be a parent, guardian, or carer of any child or vulnerable adult to whom the policy relates

Nominated Child Protection Lead/ Designated Safeguarding Officer

Name: Amanda Smith

Email: curtainuptheatre@outlook.com

Contact Number: 07540 434046

Nominated child protection deputy/ Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer

Name: Benjamin Joseph Smith

Email: ben_joseph01@outlook.com

Contact Number: 07511 047259

Health & Safety

All staff members have a duty to take reasonable care for the health and safety of the children, young people or vulnerable adults who attend CUTC. Whilst attending any CUTC related activities. CUTC will ensure that:

- All staff, children, young people and vulnerable adults are advised of best practice rules regarding health and safety including any areas that are out of bounds, and appropriate clothing/footwear for sessions.
- There is always a minimum of one staff member with a First Aid Qualification present at each CUTC session or activity
- If anyone is injured while in the care of CUTC, a trained First Aider will administer first aid, record the incident in the accident book, and inform their parent or carer of the situation.
- If a child, young person or vulnerable adult joins a CUTC session or activity with an obvious injury, this will be recorded in the accident book.
- Medication is not given to a child, young person or vulnerable adult without the written consent of a parent or carer.
- If medication is administered, it must be documented in the accident book.

Staff Recruitment

Curtain Up Theatre Company is committed to take all reasonable steps to ensure that unsuitable applicants are prevented from working with children. CUTC will ensure that:

- All new staff members have a current and clear DBS check before beginning work.
- All staff members DBS checks are renewed no longer than 3 years after their most recent check was issued.
- All staff members have read, understood and agreed to adhere to this Safeguarding policy and its outlined procedures
- All staff members are aware of their responsibility to report any concerns about non-adherence to this policy or signs of possible abuse
- All staff members respond quickly to any concerns raised by a child, young person or vulnerable adult

Good Practice during Sessions and Activities

All Curtain Up Theatre Company staff will ensure that they are working with its members in a safe, respectful and effective way at all times. This will include:

- Wherever possible having two members of staff aged 18 or over present for CUTC sessions and activities
- Working in an open environment where possible (e.g avoiding private/unobserved situations, leaving doors open where safe to do so, encouraging open communication)
- Treating all of CUTC's members with respect, dignity and equality.
- Putting the welfare of CUTC's members first.
- Only having physical contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults when absolutely necessary in relation to a particular activity, and only after gaining consent to do so and making clear the purpose of the physical contact.
- Involving parents and carers wherever possible.

- Being a positive leader and role model
- Giving encouraging and constructive feedback
- Recognising the individual needs of its members and adapting its practice and activities to ensure all of its members have the opportunity to be challenged and to grow. This is essential to us as a company.

All staff are strictly prohibited from:

- Being physically rough with CUTC's members
- Engaging in or encouraging sexually provocative games or behaviour during CUTC sessions or activities, or make sexually suggestive comments to any of CUTC's members
- Sharing a room with a child, young person or vulnerable adult
- Inviting or allowing children, young people or vulnerable adults to stay with them at their home unsupervised
- Reducing a member to tears as a form of control
- Allowing allegations made by one of CUTC's members to go unrecorded or not acted upon
- Doing things of a personal nature for one of CUTC's members that they can do for themselves

Media Consent

In order to publicise the work and productions of Curtain Up Theatre Company, photographic images and videos may be taken of its members for use in advertisements, social media, and on the website. On occasions, CUTC may take photographs and videos for use in CUTC sessions both in-person and online. Videos and photographs will only be taken under the following conditions:

- In the case of children, after formal permission in writing has been obtained from a parent or carer.
- In the case of young people and adults, after formal permission in writing has been obtained from the young person themselves or their parent or carer.
- Photographs and videos are only taken of/for CUTC related activities or projects
- No inappropriate images will be taken

A parent, carer, young person or adult may withdraw their permission to use images at any point and should do so in writing by emailing curtainuptheatre@outlook.com

Social Media

Social media should never be used in a way that would result in a breach of any CUTC policy or any CUTC procedure. This includes but is not limited to 's privacy policy, bullying and harassment policy, and safeguarding policy.

CUTC recognises that social media can be a legitimate and effective way to communicate with children, young people and adults. However, contact between CUTC and its children, and young people must only occur via CUTC's official social media accounts, listed below:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/curtain.up.theatre>

Instagram @curtainup_theatrecompany

Safeguarding children with additional learning needs and disabilities.

We are aware of the additional vulnerabilities of some children, including children with additional learning needs and disabilities and our policies and procedures ensure that all children get the support they need.

- We understand that children with additional learning needs may be at increased risk of abuse, neglect and harm
- We understand the barriers they may face (especially around communication)
- We will provide any additional safeguards needed to protect them.

Safeguarding children with specific cultures/beliefs.

- We ensure we get to know the culture and beliefs of families in their community
- We deal with sensitive issues like female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.
- We are sensitive to other language and cultural needs when talking about sensitive issues

Safeguarding and protecting LGBTQ+ children and young people

All children and young people have the right to be protected and kept safe from abuse and neglect.

LGBTQ+ children and young people face the same risks as all children and young people, but they are at greater risk of some types of abuse. For example, they might experience homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or hate crime. They might also be more vulnerable to or at greater risk of sexual abuse, online abuse or sexual exploitation.

At Curtain Up Theatre Company, we are known for our inclusivity and creating a safe space for those children and young people within the LGBTQ+ community. Many of our students are within this community.

We, at Curtain Up Theatre Company, aim to create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for all children and young people.

We ensure that LGBTQ+ children and young people are fully represented in all our policies and procedures as part of our work to ensure your organisation is fully inclusive.

We aim to work collaboratively to ensure we include the views of people in the LGBTQ+ community, engaging with the LGBTQ+ adults and children in your organisation so that they feel comfortable. We fully support transgender and non-binary children and young people to wear the clothes (e.g uniform or dancewear) and use the toilets and changing rooms that they feel comfortable with.

Our policies reflect that these decisions need to be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration all children's safety. We will discuss options with the young person and their parents or carers (as long as this does not put the young person at risk of harm)

It's important to use appropriate language when talking to and about children and young people. You should ask LGBTQ+ children and young people what language they use to describe themselves and use these terms in your policies and procedures.

Incidents that must be reported and/or recorded

If any of the following incidents occur, staff must report or record them as soon as reasonably possible in the manner set out in this document:

- Any accident or injury that happens during a CUTC session or activity must be recorded in the accident book, including accidents or injuries caused by staff or other children, young people or vulnerable adults
- If any child, young person or vulnerable adult seems distressed or is exhibiting notable changes in their behaviour this should be recorded and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer
- If any child, young person or vulnerable adult appears to be sexually aroused by your action this should be recorded and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer
- If any child, young person or vulnerable adult misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done this should be recorded and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer
- If you have concerns or suspicions of abuse or neglect, or a child makes a disclosure of alleged abuse or neglect to you this should be recorded and reported in the manner set out in this document.

Allegations or suspicions of abuse or neglect

CUTC staff are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of its children, young people and vulnerable adults.

One aspect of this is recognising the signs of abuse and acting accordingly when they have suspicions of or are made aware of, alleged abuse or neglect. It is important to remember that abuse can occur at the hands of other children or young people.

According to Working Together 2018 abuse is defined as:

“A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.”

According to Working Together 2018 Physical abuse is defined as:

“A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.”

According to Working Together 2018 Emotional abuse is defined as:

“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 a child 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 feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection 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 frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.”

According to Working Together 2018 Sexual abuse is defined as:

“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 assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.”

According to Working Together 2018 Neglect is defined as:

“The persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: a. provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment) b. protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger c. ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers) d. ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment It may also include neglect, of or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.”

There are a number of ways in which abuse may become apparent:

- A child or young person makes a disclosure of abuse
- Someone else discloses that a child has told them they have been abused or they strongly believe they are being abused
- A child or young person may show signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation
- A child’s behaviour may indicate that it is likely that they are being abused
- A member of staff’s behaviour or the way in which they relate to a child causes concern

What to do if you are concerned:

If you wish to report concerns directly to the Police, please call 101, or in an emergency where the immediate safety of a child, young person or adult is at risk, dial 999.

It is not the responsibility of any CUTC staff member to decide if abuse has taken place, however, it is their responsibility to act on any concern via the procedure set out in this document:

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child, young person or vulnerable adult whilst in the care of CUTC, you must make this known to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (hereafter referred to as the DSO)
- If you suspect the DSO is the source of the problem you should make your concerns known to the Local Authority Designated Officer (hereafter referred to as LADO)
- You should make a note for your own records of what you have witnessed or your concerns as well as your response
- If an allegation is made against any CUTC staff member, CUTC will ensure that the staff member does not have further contact with the child or young person, or any contact with other CUTC children or young people until the investigation is concluded.

Disclosure

If any child or young person discloses something to a member of staff that causes concern, it should be recorded as soon as possible whether or not it will be passed onto the DSO or other local authorities.

During disclosure, staff should:

- React calmly
- Remember the child or young person may be anxious or scared
- Tell the child that they were right to tell and is not to blame
- Listen carefully and take what the child says seriously
- Recognise the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by young children
- Remember that young or disabled children may not be able to express themselves verbally
- Ask no more questions than is necessary to ensure clarity about what has happened
- Reassure the child but do not promise confidentiality. Explain you may have to speak to someone else who can help.
- Make a fully written record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible

During disclosure staff should **not**:

- Panic
- Allow their feelings of shock or distaste show
- Ask for any more information than what is offered by the child or young person
- Speculate or make assumptions
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Agree or promise to keep the disclosure a secret

Recording a disclosure or concerns:

- In order for a record of disclosure or concerns to be as helpful as possible it should be recorded as soon as possible and contain the following:
- The child or young person's name, age and date of birth
- The child or young person's home address and telephone number
- Who the disclosure was made to, or who has concerns (whether it is the person making the record or someone else)
- The nature of the allegation including any dates, times or other relevant information: the alleged abuser, if any, and their details
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, hearsay and opinion.
- A description of any visible injury or bruising.
- A description of any indirect signs or abuse, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of any witnesses to the incident
- The child, young person or vulnerable adult's account, if a disclosure, of what has happened or how any injury or bruising occurred.
- Whether the parents or carers have been contacted and if so, what was said
- Whether anyone else has been consulted and if so, detail who
- If not a direct disclosure, has the child, young person or vulnerable adult been spoken to, and if so, what was said
- If referred to the police or social services, a record of this should be taken in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

All records of concerns or disclosures and referrals should be stored in a secure place with access limited to the person making the record, the DSO and deputy DSO, in line with our privacy policy and data protection law. If the allegation concerns the DSO or deputy DSO, they will not have access to the record. Safeguarding records will be kept for 10 years in order to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future requests for reference.

Allegations against staff

- If the allegation is about poor safeguarding practice, a meeting of the company directors will be called as soon as is reasonably possible, in order for the directors to decide how to respond to the allegation and whether or not to discipline the member of staff involved in the allegation
- Any suspicion that a child or young person has been abused by a member of staff should be reported to the DSO, who will then take all necessary steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other children who may be at risk.
- The staff member in question will be suspended from work until a full investigation has been concluded.
- The DSO will refer the allegation to social services who may involve the police or go directly to the police if out of hours.
- The parents or carers will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from social services
- The DSO will notify the CUTC's company directors
- If the DSO is the suspect of the suspicion/allegation, the report can be made to the deputy DSO or any member of CUTC's company directors who will then refer the allegation to social services

Allegations of historical abuse

Any allegation of historical abuse (e.g by an adult who was abused as a child, or any allegation of abuse made some time after the event) will be dealt with in the same manner set out in this document for allegations of current abuse.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned and that information concerning allegations and suspicions is given out purely on a need-to-know basis.

Remember: If you wish to report concerns directly to the Police, please call 101, or in an emergency where the immediate safety of a child, young person or adult is at risk, dial 999.

Online Safety Policy

Some CUTC sessions are conducted online (1:1 acting lessons). Whenever online platforms are used, CUTC recognises the importance of protecting its children, young people and staff, and their families. When live video chat services are used to conduct sessions the following procedure and code of conduct will apply:

- No 1-to-1 sessions will take place between a staff member and child or young person, a parent/carer/guardian will always be present with the child/young person
- The parents and carers of children and young people will be made aware in writing of the date and time and platform to be used for each online CUTC session.
- All people on the live video chat must wear appropriate clothing, even on body parts which may not be seen
- The only adults present during online sessions will be CUTC staff or adult members

Anti-bullying and harassment policy

Bullying is not acceptable at CUTC and will not be tolerated in any form. It is important to remember that bullying can occur between staff, from between members, from member to staff and staff to member.

Bullying and harassment may include but is not limited to:

- Physical actions such as hitting, pinching, kicking, smacking or any unwanted physical contact
- Name calling, humiliation, exclusion, ignoring
- Making degrading or disrespectful comments
- Racist, sexist or Homophobic insults or gestures
- Continuously discriminating against an individual for any reason
- Making sexual comments or suggestions
- Making inappropriate comments relating to a person's personality
- Applying undue emotional pressure on an individual
- Cyber-bullying, including via text or email

If any staff member is made aware of bullying whether direct or indirect disclosure, or through observation, the matter will be taken seriously and all people involved will be given support. The following will likely occur:

- Any incident of bullying or harassment will be discussed primarily with the victim(s) and the alleged perpetrator(s) and if necessary, with their parents, carer or group leader.
- The staff attending to the allegation will attempt to identify the problem and suggest possible solutions
- Appropriate action will be taken quickly to end the bullying or harassing behaviour and if possible, those involved will be reconciled
- If the bullying or harassment continues a meeting with the appropriate parties will be called to attempt to find a solution. In cases involving children or young people this will involve their parents or carers. In serious cases, the solution may involve suspension
- In cases of serious bullying or harassment, incidents will be recorded by staff and reported to the appropriate person/people. This could include local authority services or the police.
- If necessary, the DSO will be consulted

Review

All good practice, procedure and policy set out in this document will be reviewed on an annual basis by the DSO and board of Directors.

Who to contact:

Curtain Up Theatre Company's Designated Safeguarding Officer:

Amanda Smith

curtainuptheatre@outlook.com

Other useful contacts

If you wish to report concerns directly to the Police, please call 101, or in an emergency where the immediate safety of a child, young person or adult is at risk, dial 999.

NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 5000

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually. This policy was last reviewed on:

01/02/26

Signed: 