

Child Protection Procedures

“Every child has the right to be protected and it is everyone’s responsibility to protect children”

Responsibilities of the Committee of Petersfield Youth Theatre

(The member refers to a member of Petersfield Youth Theatre or young person taking part in an open workshop)

At the outset of any production or series of workshops the committee of PYT will:

- Monitor risk throughout the production/workshop process;
- Confirm who is the person responsible for child protection;
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for members, including appropriate vetting;
- Ensure that the members are supervised at all times.
- Ensure a register is taken at the beginning of each workshop or rehearsal.
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case it needs to report a concern.

Parents

Petersfield Youth Theatre believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and the Youth Theatre. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of PYT and, with the necessary vetting, to share responsibility for the care of the members.

All parents are made aware of PYT’s Child Protection Policy in the guidelines issued.

All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after workshops, rehearsals or performances. It is not the responsibility of PYT to take the members home. The workshop leader/chaperone must stay until all the members have been collected.

Unsupervised contact

Members will be suitably supervised at all times.

Chaperones must be DBS checked.

Physical contact

All adults will maintain an appropriate distance from members.

Adults will only touch members when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity.

Adults will seek the consent of the member prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

Managing sensitive information

Petersfield Youth Theatre has a policy for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images of the members.

Because of the nature of PYT's work, photographs may be taken and used for promotional purposes.

Petersfield Youth Theatre's publications will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.

PYT 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.

Suspicion of Abuse

If abuse is seen or suspected of a member whilst in the care of PYT, this should be made known to the person with responsibility for child protection. If that person is suspected as the source of the problem then the PYT Director should be informed.

If a serious allegation is made against any committee member, chaperone, workshop leader, helper etc., that individual must be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal room, workshop etc., and will not have any contact with any members.

Disclosure of abuse

If a member confides that abuse has taken place:

- Remain calm and in control but do not delay in taking action.
- Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child/young person to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Do not ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Do not promise to keep it 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/young person 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/young person that 'they did the right thing' in telling someone.
- Tell them 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 child protection team.
- As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was said, using the member'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 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, and any further action taken, for instance suspension of an individual. Where relevant the reasons should be stated as to 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 the youth theatre he or she will be made aware of his/her rights under PYT's disciplinary procedures.

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. Remember also that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released.

In criminal law the Crown or other prosecuting authority has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Accidents

To avoid accidents, workshop leaders, chaperones and members will be advised of 'house rules' regarding Health and Safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds. Members will be advised of the clothing and footwear appropriate to the work that will be undertaken.

If a member is injured while in the care of PYT, the injury will be recorded in PYT's incident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person responsible for child protection. The parent will be informed of the accident and must countersign the incident book.

If a member arrives for a workshop, rehearsal or performance 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 protection. This record can be useful if a formal allegation is made later, and will also be a record that the member did not sustain the injury while at a youth theatre event.

DBS Disclosures

DBS disclosures must be obtained for chaperones and practitioners working directly with the members.

PYT undertakes to ensure that the appropriate DBS checks are in place for our voluntary chaperones and that this is maintained via an external source who will ensure that all checks are updated on a regular basis.

Petersfield Youth Theatre will maintain confidentiality for the handling of disclosure information.

Petersfield Youth Theatre will ensure that information obtained in the disclosure is not misused.

Chaperones for Productions/Projects

Chaperones will be appointed by Petersfield Youth Theatre for the care of the cast during the production/project process. By law the chaperone is acting *in loco parentis* and should exercise the care which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give to a child/young person. During Performances the maximum number of cast members in the chaperone's care shall not exceed 12.

Potential chaperones must be appointed and approved by Petersfield Youth Theatre. They will have to complete a DBS form and provide the certificate to Petersfield Youth theatre for their records.

Chaperones will be given a copy of PYT's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the cast members, they should bring this to the attention of the person responsible for child welfare.

If a chaperone considers that a member is unwell and unable to continue, the chaperone must inform the person responsible for child welfare, who will inform the Director/Project Leader so that a decision can be taken on whether to allow the young person to continue with the Production/Project.

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. If the chaperone feels there is a danger they should speak to the person responsible for child welfare who will discuss their concerns with the Director/Project Leader.

Under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014, the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, performances that are licenced require that chaperones be responsible for meeting the cast members as they arrive and signing them into the building. Chaperones must be aware of where the members of the cast in their care are at all times.

Cast members of compulsory school age, i.e. up to the end of Year 11 of schooling, are not to leave the rehearsals or theatre unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents or designated person.

Cast members must be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets. Males and Females must have separate dressing rooms.

Chaperones should be briefed by a designated person on the safety arrangements, fire procedures and first aid procedures in the venue, and will ensure that cast members in their care do not place themselves or others in danger.

Chaperones must notify the person responsible for child welfare if an accident occurs so that an accident form can be completed.

Cast members must be signed out when leaving a performance. Cast members over compulsory school age, after the end of Year 11 of schooling, may sign themselves out.

If a parent has not collected the child, the chaperone must stay with that child until the parents arrive.

August 2020