CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The Tower Theatre Company, (the Company) recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, the Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014, the Protection of Children Act 1999, the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 and The Children's Act 2004.
Safeguarding is the action and processes taken to promote the welfare of all members of the Company and protect any children working with the Company from harm. Child protection is part of this process and focuses on protecting these children from physical, emotional or sexual abuse, neglect, grooming or online abuse.
Amateur theatre needs children for specific productions and, more importantly, because they often form the cast, crew and audience of the future. The Government sees amateur theatre as an integral part of its agenda to get more young people involved in the wider society.
Whilst we all believe it could never happen to us, it has to be recognised that abuse does exist within theatres, and we must do our best to ensure that children engaged in, or visiting, our theatre are protected from the small minority of those who would wish them harm.
Children need to feel safe and respected; their parents need to be confident about their child's welfare. Members of the Company also need guidelines in order to fulfil their responsibilities.

Definition of a child

- A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years.
- However, regulations relating to children in theatrical performances apply only up to the age of 16. A child requires a performance licence until the last Friday in June following their 16th birthday.
- Young people between the ages of 16-18 need to be treated differently from children under 16.

Definition of child abuse

"Children may be in need of protection where their basic needs are not being met, in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development, and they will be at risk through avoidable acts of commission or omission (This means children at risk through either something a person has done to them OR something a person is failing to do for them) on the part of their parent(s), sibling(s) or other relative(s), or a carer (i.e. the person(s) while not a parent who has actual custody of the child."

Safeguarding Policy Statement

Everyone within the Company has a responsibility to the safeguarding of children and must be aware of, and adhere to, the policy and procedures in force.
The Company is committed to practice which protects children from harm. All members of the Company accept and recognise their responsibility to be aware of types of abuse which cause children harm.
The Company 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 and employees of the Company should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

The Company will ensure that

- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity. Constructive feedback rather than negative criticism will be given.
- There is a balanced relationship, based on mutual trust, which empowers children to share in decision making processes.
- Bullying is not accepted or condoned.
- All adult members of the Company provide a positive role model for dealing with other people.
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
- It keeps up to date with Health & Safety legislation.
- It is informed about changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children.
- It undertakes relevant development and training.

- It holds a register of every child involved with the Company and retains a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies (with due regard for data protection issues).
- All adults with substantial access to children have been appropriately vetted and cleared.

Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Know how to contact the local authority social services in case a concern needs to be reported. (Appendix 1)
- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process. (Appendix 2)
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting (if necessary, in consultation with the local education authority).
- Ensure the Policy is distributed to all cast and crew of a production involving children.
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times throughout the production process.
- Ensure the Policy is reviewed annually and clearly displayed or published.

Parents

- The Company believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and the Company. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the Company and to share responsibility for the care of their child.
- All parents will be given a copy the Company's Child Safeguarding Policy.
- The Company will communicate directly with parents; children will not be asked to convey verbal messages.
- All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their child after rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of the Company to take children home.

Working with children - Good Practice guidelines

- Respect all children, as befits their age, and their right to privacy
- Be aware of speech, tone of voice and body language
- Ensure the child has a nominated person with whom they can speak, in confidence
- Do not bully, scapegoat, ridicule a child
- Avoid showing favouritism to any one child
- Avoid inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour e.g. sexually suggestive comments or physical or sexually provocative activities.
- Be aware that someone might misinterpret our actions even if they are well-intentioned.
- Do not allow children to involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly physical or sexual in nature.
- Never give a lift to a child when alone. When this is not avoidable, ask the child to sit in the back of the car. Do not invite a young person to your home.
- Do not share sleeping accommodation with young people (E.g. Touring productions)
- Do not allow unknown adults access to children

Unsupervised Contact - protecting the child and the adult

- All cast and crew of a production involving children will be sent a copy of the Policy and advised on its contents, which they must read and respond that they have read and understood it.
- The Company, and production Director, will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.
- 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 minimize risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area, or in a designated room with the door open.
- If it is predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, they will be required to obtain a criminal record disclosure. (DBS check). The relevant DBS Referral Form and guidance can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbsreferrals-form-and-guidance
- Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary i.e. in relation to the particular activity/role in a production.
- The Director will make clear to the child and to the adult actors, the purpose of any physical contact and will ensure the child understands and consents prior to the rehearsal.

Managing sensitive information

- Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes.
- Members of the cast/crew will not, at any time, take photographs on their mobile 'phones that include

any pictures of children in the production.
- The Company's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.
- Members of the cast/crew are strongly discouraged from exchanging personal details with children in the production.
- The Company 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 you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of the Company, please make this known to the chaperone. If you suspect that the chaperone is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the Child Safeguarding Officer and Chair of the Management Committee.
- Please make a note of what you witnessed, as well as your response, for your own records in case there is a follow-up investigation in which you are involved.
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of the Company, chaperone, venue staff etc., that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms etc. and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production.

Disclosure of abuse

If a child confides in you that abuse has taken place

- Remain calm. However difficult it is to listen to the child, think how hard it is for them to say it.
- Acknowledge the age of the child.
- Try to remain neutral and not show emotion, (anger, disbelief, disgust), as the child may stop talking for fear of upsetting you further. You have been chosen because the child feels they can talk to you.
- Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification. (If the matter is to be investigated further, it will be done so by professionals)
- Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Do not ask the child to repeat themselves over and over, they may think you do not believe them.
- Never trivialise or exaggerate child abuse issues.
- Reassure the child that you are glad that s/he has told you what happened and that 'they did the right thing' in telling someone.
- Be honest and tell the child that you cannot promise to keep their disclosure a secret; you must talk to someone else that can help.
- Tell the child what you are going to do next; make it clear that you will need to share this information with others, but you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help.
- Immediately, or as soon as is possible, contact and share the information with the Company's Designated Safeguarding Lead and Chair of the Management Committee.

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.
- Everything the child discloses must be written down. This is confidential and should only discussed with the Child Safeguarding Officer, or in his or her absence, the Chair of the Management Committee.
- 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.

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 Company, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the Company's incident/accident book. This record will be countersigned by the person with responsibility for child protection.
- If a child joins the production with an obvious physical injury a record of this will be made in the accident book. 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.

Chaperones

- Local authorities, responsible for licensing chaperones, do not have consistent requirements and many chaperones do not receive training.
- Potential chaperones will be required to supply photographic proof of identity (e.g. passport, driving licence) and two references from individuals with knowledge of their previous work with children. Chaperones will not usually have unsupervised access to children in their care. If unsupervised access is unavoidable, a disclosure and Barring service (DBS) check will be sought.
- A set of guidelines for chaperones will be provided. They should be considered as crew and included in all briefings.
- Chaperones will be appointed by the Company for the care of children during the production 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. The maximum number of children in the chaperone's care shall not exceed 12.
- During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the main door and signing them into the building.
- Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times and adequately supervise them while going to and from the toilets. Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms.
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the Director/Stage Manager. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily, the chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue. If a chaperone considers a child is unwell or too tired to continue, they must inform the Director/Stage Manager.
- Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures 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 Company.
- Children are not to leave the theatre unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents. Children should be signed out when leaving and, if someone different arrives to collect the child, a telephone call should be made to the parent to confirm the arrangements. If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child or make arrangements to take them home.

This policy will be regularly monitored by the Management Committee and will be subject to annual review.

Based on the NODA Model Child Protection Policy and the LTG Best Practice Guidance

Written:	September 2016
Reviewed by: Safeguarding Leads/Trustees	June 2024
Next Review:	June 2025

Appendix 1

Contact details:

Tower Theatre Designated Safeguarding Lead:
Nick Edwards/Chaachi Deane safeguarding@towertheatre.org.uk

Hackney Children and Families Services Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Hackney Service Centre, 1 Hillman St, E8 1DY

- **020 8356 5500** 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday only, excluding bank holidays
- **020 8356 2710** outside of office hours
- **email** MASH@hackney.gov.uk

Police
33 Stoke Newington High St, Stoke Newington, London N16 8DS
101(Non-emergency) 999 (emergency helpline)
24 hours a day.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING RISK ASSESSMENT	Management Committee	**Location:**	Tower Theatre, Northwold Rd, N16 7HR
Assessment Date:	June 2024	**Review Date:**	June 2025
Assessors Name:	Jude Chalk	**Job Title:**	Trustee
Task: Risk assessment for the activities associated with children/young people performing in the theatre			

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed?	What are the risks	Are the following control measures in place to eliminate or reduce the risks?	Yes/ No	Corrective actions required	Risk Evaluation			Risk Rating
						Consequence (1 – 3)	Likelihood (1 – 3)	Overall risk (C x L)	Low, Medium or High
ENVIRONMENT									
Exposure to extremes of temperature Exposure to adverse weather conditions	C/YP	• May feel too hot/cold or suffer other general discomfort • Could suffer injury e.g. sprains and fractures as a result of pathways not being gritted in icy conditions	• Is the temperature of the theatre normally kept within a comfortable range and adequately ventilated? • Is theatre entrance gritted in icy conditions	Y	No - ongoing monitoring Heating/cooling units installed	2	2	4	M
Injuries from staging/ scenery Participation in stunts/in the vicinity of stunts/ special effects	C/YP	• Falling from height • Obstructions/ in insufficient circulation space, trailing cables, spillages	• Work areas should be kept clear of obstructions. • Any spillages should be cleaned up immediately. • All areas should be well lit • Any hazards such as trailing cables, faulty lighting etc. should be reported immediately to a member of the Technical Group	Y	No - ongoing monitoring	1	2	2	L
Inadequate hygiene and welfare facilities	C/YP	• General discomfort or stress.	• Are toilets supplied with hot/cold water, soap and towels • Is an area available for refreshment with drinking water?	Y	No - ongoing monitoring	1	1	1	L

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed?	What are the risks	Are the following control measures in place to eliminate or reduce the risks?	Yes/ No	Corrective actions required	Risk Evaluation			Risk Rating
						Consequence (1 – 3)	Likelihood (1 – 3)	Overall risk (C x L)	Low, Medium or High
			• Is the 'No smoking' policy implemented?	Y					
HEALTH									
Fire & Electrical Safety Portable heaters in unsafe condition Over loaded electrical sockets Inappropriate action in the event of discovering a fire.	C/YP	• Could suffer from smoke inhalation, burns or electrical shock	• All portable electrical equipment tested for electrical safety. • Electrical cables and plugs visually inspected regularly by the user for damage • Fire RAs for the theatre should be carried out periodically. • Provision of escape routes and fire extinguishers • Everyone is acquainted with the Emergency evacuation procedure for the theatre. • Designated person (SM) is familiar arrangements for calling the fire brigade/fighting the fire, location of assembly point • COSHH approved storage for hazardous substances e.g. solvents or solvent-based glues	Y Y	No - ongoing annual maintenance No - ongoing monitoring Cast/crew briefed on fire safety procedures during Get-in. No hazardous substances generally used; reviewed on a show-by-show basis.	2 3	1 1	2 3	L M
Infection Fatigue Dehydration Inappropriate diet	C/YP	• Sudden illness • Illness or injury • Illness/Fainting • Nausea	• Parents have given the theatre details about their child's health • Appropriate rest breaks are scheduled to avoid fatigue, dehydration, hunger.	Y	No - ongoing monitoring	1	2	2	L
PSYCHOLOGICAL									
Emotional content e.g. violence, sex, drug use Shock/trauma	C/YP	• Emotional distress • Engendered fears	• Parents briefed about content • Child is not present in rehearsals that could cause distress unless absolutely integral to the scene • Trained chaperone in place	Y	No - ongoing monitoring	2	1	2	L
Invasion of privacy Insult to dignity	C/YP	• Loss of autonomy • Embarrassment	• Trained chaperone in place	Y	No - ongoing monitoring	1	2	2	L

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed?	What are the risks	Are the following control measures in place to eliminate or reduce the risks?	Yes/ No	Corrective actions required	Risk Evaluation			Risk Rating
						Consequence (1 – 3)	Likelihood (1 – 3)	Overall risk (C x L)	Low, Medium or High
Sexual content Other content inappropriate to age of child e.g. occult/supernatural	C/YP	• Precocious sexualisation • Moral damage • Encouraging age inappropriate behaviour • Engendered fears • Anxiety	• Parents briefed about content • Child is not present in rehearsals that could cause distress unless absolutely integral to the scene • Trained chaperone in place	Y	No - ongoing monitoring	2	1	2	L
Stress /coercion	C/YP	• Insecurity • Distress/anxiety • Mental fatigue • Loss of autonomy	• Trained chaperone in place	Y	No - ongoing monitoring	1	1	1	L
Peer group activity Competition	C/YP	• Bullying • Peer disapproval • Emotional distress • Harm to self-esteem	• Trained chaperone in place	Y	No - ongoing monitoring	2	2	4	M

RISK MATRIX		Potential consequence of harm		
		1 – Minor Injury (e.g. hazard can cause illness, injury or equipment damage but the results would not be expected to be serious)	2 – Significant Injury (e.g. hazard can result in serious injury and/or illness, over 3 day absence)	3 – Major Injury (e.g. hazard capable of causing death or serious and life threatening injuries)
Likelihood of harm	1 – Unlikely	1 – Low	2 – Low	3 – Medium
	2 – Possible	2 – Low	4 – Medium	6 – High
	3 – Probable	3 – Medium	6 – High	9 – Extreme

RISK EVALUATION

This is calculated by multiplying the likelihood against the consequence e.g. taking a likelihood of 1, which is classified as Unlikely and multiplying this against a Potential Consequence of 2, which is classified as Significant Injury, would give you and overall Risk Rating of 2, which would result in an overall evaluation as a low risk.

1 to 2 = **Low risk**

Low risks are largely acceptable, monitor periodically to determine situation changes which may affect the risk, or after significant changes

3 to 4 = **Medium risk**

Medium risks at the upper end of this band should only be tolerated for the short-term and then only whilst further control measures to mitigate the risk are being planned and introduced, within a defined time period. Risks on the lower end should be reduced if practicable.

6 = High risk

High risks activities should cease immediately until further control measures to mitigate the risk are introduced. The continued effectiveness of control measures must be monitored periodically.

9 = Extreme Risk

Work should not be started or continued until the risk has been mitigated. Immediate action is required to reduce exposure. A detailed mitigation plan must be developed, implemented and monitored by senior management to reduce the risk before work is allowed to commence.