

# Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy



## **Purpose of the policy**

The policy describes how the DODS will ensure the safeguarding and wellbeing of children taking part in DODS productions in any capacity both during rehearsals and performances.

## **Scope of the policy**

This policy applies to all children and young people up to the age of 18 who are involved in The DODS in any capacity. The regulations regarding child chaperoning for performances apply to children and young people up to school leaver age (to end of school year 11).

## **Legislation and regulations**

This policy is based on the following legislation, regulations and guidance.

*Working together to Safeguard Children 2018, updated Feb 2024 (DfE)*

*The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulation 2014*

*DfE advice on Child Performance and activity licencing legislation Feb 2015*

*Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP)*

## **Policy Statement**

We believe that everyone involved in the DODS has 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 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. We recognise that some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of discrimination, previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues and we will support these children to fully engage in the activities of The DODS.

We will meet our commitment by:

- listening to children and respecting them
- appointing a child protection lead and a member of the trustee board who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding
- writing detailed safeguarding and child protection procedures
- making sure anyone involved in The DODS understands and follow the safeguarding and child protection procedures

- ensuring children, young people and their families know about the organisation's safeguarding and child protection policies and what to do if they have a concern
- building a safeguarding culture where anyone involved The DODS knows how they are expected to behave and feel comfortable about sharing concerns.

### **Key objectives**

The DODS' key objectives with regard to child safeguarding are:

- To keep children safe
- To respond to any child protection concerns
- To protect children in any activity at The DODS from any kind of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual and neglect)
- To comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) tailored by the Data Protection Act 2018

The society will ensure that:

- All children are treated equally and with respect and dignity
- The welfare of the child will be put first, a balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers the child/children to share in the decision-making process
- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism
- Every attempt will be made to build the child's/children's confidence to bring out their full potential on and off stage
- 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
- Members are informed of any changes in legislation and updates to the policies for the protection of the children.
- It will keep all up to date information of health and safety rules and legalisation

### **Responsibilities and procedures**

#### ***The DODS responsibilities***

At the beginning of any production involving children the society will:

- Obtain written consent forms from parents/carers for child/children to be involved in the production on or off stage, retaining contact numbers and numbers for use in an emergency
- These details are kept in a secure place in line with UK GDPR.
- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor throughout the rehearsal and production process
- Introduce the chaperones to the children and parents/carers
- Ensure all adults acting in a chaperone capacity undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS) and some will hold a Chaperone Licence.

- Ensure that children and parents/carers know the name and contact details of the safeguarding lead
- Ensure that the children are supervised at all times
- Ensure that the designated safeguarding lead knows who to contact within the social services in case of the need to report a concern
- Have a BOPA (Body of Persons Approval) in place

### ***Parent/Carers responsibilities***

- The society believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and the society. Parents/Carers are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the society and to share responsibility for the care of the children. The society's Child Protection Policy and Procedures will be accessible to all parents/Carers and on the society's website.
- All parents/Carers have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their child/children after rehearsals or performances.

### ***Physical Contact***

- All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from the children
- Adults will have physical contact children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity/part in the production and an adult acting in a chaperone capacity will be present at all times
- 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***

- The society has procedures in place for taking photographs and storage of images of the children
- Permission will be sought from the parents/carers for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes
- The trustees will ensure that The DODS web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use
- The DODS will ensure that all members' sensitive information regarding their Disclosure and Barring Service Records are safely stored and are confidential.

### ***Suspicion of abuse***

- If any abuse of a child is seen or suspected, then the designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed, or the Chairman, if the source of the suspicion is with the Safeguarding Lead
- All information regarding allegations must be documented stating date, time, place and who and stored securely
- If a serious allegation is made against a chaperone or another member of the society, then that individual will be suspended with immediate effect while an investigation is being carried out.
- That person will be excluded from the theatre/rehearsal rooms while the investigation is taking place.

### **Accidents**

- To avoid accidents, chaperones and children will be advised of 'house rules' and fire evacuation rules.
- Appropriate clothing and footwear will be worn around the dressing rooms/rehearsal rooms
- All members will know who the DODS First Aid Officer is and the location of the first aid box is kept.
- A record will be kept inside the first aid box of regular checks of the equipment to ensure it is complete and all items are within date
- Any accidents will be recorded and kept confidentially in a secure location.

### **Chaperones**

- At least one adult with an in date chaperone licence will be present at each performance and will be supported by other responsible adults who hold a DBS
- All adults acting in a chaperone capacity will be aware of the Child Protection and Procedures of the society
- Adults acting in a chaperone capacity will escalate any concerns regarding the children to the safeguarding lead and/or a member of the production team
- Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times
- During the performances the chaperones will be responsible for ensuring that each child is signed in/out at the stage door
- All chaperones must record any accidents/incidents as stated in the Child Protection Policy
- All chaperones must be aware of arrangements for the children after the performances
- After a rehearsal/performance if a child has not been collected by a parent/carer or their nominee it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child or make arrangements to telephone the parent/carer to arrange for the child to be collected
- Guidance information will be available to read in The DODS safeguarding folder

### **Complaints Procedure**

If a parent/carer wishes to make a formal complaint about the way an incident affecting their child/children has been dealt with at The DODS, they should in the first instance put the complaint in writing to The DODS's Safeguarding Lead. If the subsequent response is regarded as unsatisfactory they can then refer to the Chairman of the board of trustees for further investigation. The matter will be dealt with swiftly and in confidence.

### **Contact Details**

**Safeguarding Lead:** Catherine Hamilton  
 email: Catherine@the-dods.com  
 Telephone number: 07528 139479

**Chairman:** Frankie Telford  
email: Frankie@the-dods.com  
Telephone number: 07747 157283

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