

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:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people, a deputy and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding
- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- ensure all members of The DODS know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently

- recruiting and selecting volunteers chaperones safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- recording and storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
- making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- using 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
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring 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
- building a safeguarding culture where members of The DODS, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are 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

Definition and types of safeguarding

The definition of safeguarding in the Government's guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024" states:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

The government guidance "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (July 2018) categorises abuse in the following categories: physical; emotional; sexual; child sexual exploitation; neglect; extremism; peer on peer abuse. Further information about these categories is found in the appendix.

It is the responsibility of everybody who works with children to ensure that they are fully aware and up to date on ways they should be keeping children safe. The DODS recommends every member of staff familiarises themselves with these relevant publications from the government each year.

- [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children)
- [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education)

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 with children only 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

Policy updated 7 November 2024

Approved at board of trustees meeting 13 November 2024

APPENDIX

Further information about definitions about types of abuse.

From “Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018)

1. **Physical 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.
2. **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 a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar 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.
3. **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 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.

4. **Child sexual exploitation** is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.
5. **Neglect** is 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 care-givers)
 - d. ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
 - e. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs
6. **Extremism** goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society. Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist.
7. **Peer on peer abuse** includes, but is not limited to: physical and sexual abuse; sexual harassment and violence; emotional harm; on and offline bullying; teenage relationship abuse. It can even include grooming children for sexual and criminal exploitation.

This list has since expanded to include FGM, modern slavery and trafficking.