



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

(reviewed Spring 2021)

REVIEWED BY: Natalia Barrett & Re:ACT Team

This Policy acts in full accordance to:

- 'Guidance for Safer Working Practise for Adults who Work with Children and Young People'
- 'Children's Act 1989 & 2004'

1. INTRODUCTION

Re:ACT ensures the safety and happiness of all our pupils and has a moral and legal obligation to do so. Our Policy applies to all staff, guest workshop leaders and volunteers.

We ensure we establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop. An incident and accident report log is kept to record any incidents/accidents that may occur; to display transparency.

There are three elements to our policy:

- Prevention through awareness of each individual child's needs
- Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect
- Procedures for identifying and reporting cases or suspected cases of abuse

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of Re:ACT and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

PREVENTION

We recognise that the arts can be a very adult environment and we expect that all staff, chaperones, parents/legal guardians, volunteers and anyone else who comes into contact with children behave in an appropriate manner at all times, and remember that the welfare of the child is paramount.

Re:ACT will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel welcome and familiar with their environment and are informed of personal (toilets, dressing rooms etc) and emergency arrangements (fire exits, meeting points etc) and any Health and Safety Procedures (Dangerous equipment, First aid etc)
- Inform each child who the appropriate person or people are to speak to if they have any questions, problems or concerns.
- Ensure that all children are treated with respect and dignity and are treated as individuals and offered equality of opportunities.
- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and unnecessary physical contact with children)
- Recognising the individual needs of the child (e.g. recognising when a child may be tired and may need a break)
- Ensure that children are supervised appropriately
- Ensure that all staff and crew who don't necessarily have close contact with children but who are assisting in the production are aware of their conduct around children

DEFINITIONS

A child is abused or neglected when somebody inflicts harm, or fails to act to prevent harm. A child or young person up to the age of 18 years can suffer abuse or neglect and require protection.

- Physical Abuse - May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child
- Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates or induces illness in a child whom they are looking after
- Sexual Abuse - Forcing or enticing a child/young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening, may involve: physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts; non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities; or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- Neglect - 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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs
- Emotional Abuse - The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional and behavioural development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age and developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, for example witnessing domestic abuse within the home or being bullied, or the exploitation or corruption of children
- Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone

PROCEDURES

Should a Re:ACT staff member have concerns of a home safeguarding issue of a pupil, (e.g. bruising, change in behaviour etc.) we do follow the whistle-blower policy – contacting the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline and the local council safeguarding officer.

Suspicion of Abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child, immediately make this known to the designated individual responsible for child protection

Disclosure of Abuse

If a child tells you that they or another child or young person is being abused:

- Always stop and listen straight away, show that you take their allegations seriously
- Encourage the child to talk, but do not ask leading questions, interrupt or ask the child to repeat itself.
- Never promise that you will keep what is said confidential or secret – explain that if you are told something of concern that you will need to let someone know but that you will only tell the people who need to know and can help.
- Record what you have been told accurately and as soon as possible. Use the child's own words. Make a note of the time, location, whether any one else present and of the child's demeanour
- Ensure that your concerns are reported immediately to the designated individual/manager
- Do not confront the alleged abuser

Handling Allegations

- If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff it must be reported as a matter of urgency to the designated manager/individual for child protection who will refer to Social Services department for Children's Services. If the allegation is against the designated person then the information should be reported to another senior manager or directly to Social Services department for Children's Service

- The alleged perpetrator should not be made aware of the allegation at this point

Recording

- In all situations the details of allegation or reported incident must be recorded. Make accurate notes of time, dates, incident or disclosure, people involved, what was said and done and by whom, action taken to investigate, further action taken e.g. suspension of individual and if relevant: reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, name of person reporting and to whom it was reported
- The record must be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know
- DO NOT worry that you might be mistaken; you have a responsibility to pass on your concerns following a disclosure. Never think abuse is impossible, or that an accusation about a person you know well and trust is bound to be wrong
- It is your duty to refer concerns on, not to investigate

2. STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND CRBS

All Re:ACT Staff are CRB checked, with years of previous experience of working with children of all ages and abilities. Some staff are also trained to work with children with disabilities be it learning, physical or behavioural.

Any volunteers are asked to provide a CRB. If under any circumstances in which they cannot, they must be accompanied by a member of staff who is CRB checked.

There is a first aid trained member of staff in each branch with continued, up to date training.

No parents/carers are allowed to watch any of the rehearsals.

3. PHOTOGRAPHY PERMISSION

Re:ACT pupils will only appear in any photographs, be it for a newspaper report or for our own website, when we have full parental/carer consent. (OPTION STATED ON REGISTRATION FORM)

4. PHYSICAL CONTACT

In a performance, there are numerous reasons in which a staff or a fellow pupil may need to have physical contact with one another. For example: a dance duet or a scene of a mother and a daughter. We ensure this contact is appropriate and only when needed.

5. CONTACT AND ACCESSIBILITY

We pride ourselves in having a close, working relationship with our parents/carers who can voice any concerns in person or via Phone, Email or our Website.