

CHILD PROTECTION

Ashton Group Theatre Child Protection Guidelines

The Ashton Group Theatre has developed this set of guidelines for all employees to ensure clear procedures are in place when dealing with issues of child protection.

The term "child" in this policy refers to children and young people up to the age of 18 and also includes vulnerable adults.

In addition, a minimum of two staff will work together at all times. This policy is also to protect employees from false accusations and un-witnessed interpretations of incidents and events and to ensure a level of support in case of emergency.

GOOD PRACTICE

All employees are expected to ensure the safety of the children, young people and vulnerable adults they are working with by:

- Producing an Enhanced Disclosure document as a contractual requirement.
- Carrying out the company's risk assessment and health and safety requirements for each session/workshop/rehearsal
- Adhering to the Ashton Group's equal opportunities policy (issued and agreed to when signing contract of employment)
- Following these child protection guidelines (issued and agreed to when signing contract of employment)

THE COMPANY WILL NEVER SANCTION EMPLOYEES USING PHYSICAL OR VERBALLY ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR OR ANY BEHAVIOUR THAT IS IN BREACH OF OUR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY.

The Ashton Group recognises that the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount. Employees must always take suspicions and allegations seriously and report any incident immediately to the designated person.

When working in schools/organisations the company will report any relevant information or incident to the designated teacher or worker responsible for child protection.

When working in the community, the company will seek advice from appropriate professional/statutory organisations when any situation arises that they believe may be a child protection issue.

The company will give all employees a set of basic guidelines/procedures to assist them when dealing with child protection issues. These guidelines are based on Cumbria County Council Child Protection Information.

The Company will not use images of young people for any purpose other than the promotion and delivery of its work and never without the written consent of parents or guardians given on the Company's Health and Consent Document.

The Company will hold data on young people only in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998

BASIC PROCEDURES FOR CHILD PROTECTION.

1. If you suspect a child/young person is being abused because of marks /bruising /behaviour/ hearsay from others then:
 - Report this to Rachel Ashton who will tell the designated teacher/worker/appropriate agency.
 - Maintain confidentiality.
 - Do not ask the child/young person about the situation yourself.
2. If a child/young person tells you he/she has been subject to physical or sexual abuse or neglect then:
 - Never agree to keep "secrets" even if the child is upset or persuasive.
 - Listen carefully and allow the child to say what they need to say.
 - Avoid using closed or leading questions.
 - Never interrogate the child/young person. The designated teacher/worker only needs to know abuse has taken place/is likely to take place.
 - Reassure the child/young person that they have done the right thing. If age appropriate, tell the child that the designated teacher/worker/social services may need to be involved in the case.
 - Do not tell anyone else about the incident and report it immediately.
 - Write down the facts of the situation as you have experienced them. Give a copy to Rachel Ashton and keep a copy yourself.
 - Remember that, even if a person is 16 or 17 and has left home, there may be other siblings/minors who are still being abused.

PROTECT CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS
PROTECT YOURSELF
IF IN DOUBT-ASK
ALWAYS REFER-NEVER INVESTIGATE

For more information about child protection issues ask Sarah Miller or Rachel Ashton or look in the child protection file in the office for general information.

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