



Child Protection Policy

Policy Statement

The King's Head Theatre believes that all children and young people should be encouraged to fulfill their potential, whilst being treated fairly and justly. We have a duty of care to children and young people who take part in our Education Programme activities. It is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind. The King's Head recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

We recognise that:

- * the welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- * in accordance with our **Equal Opportunities Policy**, all children and young people regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- * working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

The policy aims:

- * To provide protection for the children and young people who take part in The King's Head Theatre activities
- * To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, '**a child**' means anyone who is under 18 years of age.

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and Board of Directors, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, students or anyone working on behalf of The King's Head Theatre.

We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:



- * valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- * adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a **Code of Conduct** for staff and volunteers (see below)
- * recruiting staff and volunteers safely ensuring all necessary checks are made
- * sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- * sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- * providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

The King's Head Theatre has designated its Education Officer as the staff member responsible for ensuring effective safeguarding and implementation of Child Protection policies and procedures, as well as the first point of contact for any issues regarding child protection.

Though the number of children/ young people that can participate in projects may vary, our general policy is that there should be no more than 30 children in any project (including one-off workshops in schools). The ratio of adult to child for projects is at least two adults to every fifteen children.

Member of the King's Head staff delivering a project will carry out a **Risk Assessment** of the venue and all activities prior to the project commencing.

Parents/ carers of the children and young people involved in the King's Head Projects are expected to provide any relevant medical information as well as emergency contact details prior to the commencement of a project.



Safe Recruitment

The King's Head Theatre has the following procedures in place when recruiting staff to work with children and young people:

- interview applicants
- investigate employment history
- take up two written references
- proof of identification

It is our policy that all permanent and freelance staff who work with children and young people must have passed a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check.

Induction and Training for Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers are given details of this policy, as well as all related policies such as **Health and Safety Policy**, as part of their induction training. They are also provided with adequate guidance and supervision when participating in King's Head Youth Theatre Projects.



Dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse

1) Responding to a child making an allegation of abuse

- **Stay calm.**
- **Listen** carefully to what is said.
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – **do not promise to keep secrets.**
- **Allow** the child to continue at her/his own pace.
- **Ask questions for clarification only**, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- **Reassure** the child that they have done the right thing in telling you
- **Tell them** what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.
- **Record** in writing what was said using the child's own words as soon as possible – note date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.
- Contact the **designated person**.

REMEMBER: The person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is **not** responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies following a referral to them of concern about a child.



2) Where abuse is suspected

- **Record** any noticeable injuries a child arrives with and follow disclosing information procedures if you feel abuse may be occurring away from the venue.
- The King's Head Theatre encourages **peer support** and **communication** between The King's Head staff and freelancers to ensure that any suspicions of abuse can be **monitored** and where appropriate **reported** to external agencies.
- Contact the **designated person**

Please see Appendix 1 for definitions of the four kinds of abuse and for signs of abuse.

Please see Appendix 2 for a contact list of the designated child protection person at the King's Head Theatre and other relevant contact names and numbers.



3) Reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse

It is the legal responsibility of all King's Head staff and volunteers to report all suspicions or allegations of abuse, following the King's Head procedures. It is important to remember that children are entitled to some confidentiality and therefore disclosure of abuse must not be widely circulated. **Please see Appendix 3 for Checklist for reporting suspected abuse.**



Code of Conduct

You must:

- treat all children and young people with respect
- provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow
- ensure that whenever possible there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy/encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned
- be aware that even physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted
- recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- operate within the King's Head Theatre's principles and guidance and any specific procedures
- challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse.

You must not:

- have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or young people
- allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour/make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people
- jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- show favouritism to any individual
- rely on your good name or that of the King's Head Theatre to protect you
- believe "it could never happen to me"
- take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach.



Anti-bullying policy

- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned. All forms of bullying will be addressed.
- Children from ethnic minorities, disabled children, young people who are gay or lesbian, or those with learning difficulties are more vulnerable to this form of abuse and may well be targeted.
- Children should know who will listen to and support them.
- Any advice and assistance should be given by an appropriately trained and experienced worker.
- Children should have access to helpline numbers.
- Children should be told what is being recorded, in what context and why.
- Anyone who reports an incident of bullying will be listened to carefully and will be supported, whether it is the child who is being bullied or the child who is bullying.
- Any reported incident of bullying will be investigated objectively and will involve listening carefully to all those involved.
- Any incident of bullying will be discussed with the child's parent(s) or carer.

Please see Appendix 4 for definitions of bullying.



Accidents and Injuries

Parents/ carers of all children and young people involved with the King's Head Theatre projects are expected to provide any relevant medical information as well as emergency contact details prior to the commencement of a project.

The King's Head staff and freelancers are expected to record any noticeable injuries a child arrives with.

All accidents and injuries are to be recorded in the King's Head Theatre Accident book. The Accident Book is kept at:

The King's Head Theatre office, second shelf by the Associate Director's desk.



Photography/ Video Policy

- * The King's Head Theatre will not use children's full names (first name and surname) in photograph captions. If the child is named, his or her photograph will not be used. If the photograph is used, the child will not be named.
- * The King's Head Theatre will always use a parental permission form to obtain consent for a child to be photographed/ videoed.
- * We will also obtain child's permission to use their image.
- * We will only use images of children in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.
- * We will supply written expectations of professional photographers or the press who are invited to an event, making clear the King's Head expectations of them in relation to child protection.
- * We will not allow photographers unsupervised access to children.
- * We will not approve photography sessions outside the event or at a child's home.

Please see appendix 5 for Photography/ Video consent form.



Performances by children at the King's Head Theatre

The King's Head Theatre will take care to ensure that all children and young people taking part in performances are provided with suitable care backstage. Numbers in dressing rooms may vary on a project basis; however they will be agreed by the King's Head Education department and the production team. Drinking water will be provided in a suitably accessible space. The technical staff who will be in regular contact with children during performances will also undergo CRB checks.

Children attending performances

All performances which are likely to be attended by children are supported by an age guideline, however it is at the discretion of the adult accompanying the child to the theatre whether this guideline is adhered to.

Groups attending performances at the King's Head must have one adult for every ten children attending the performance. Minimum adult to children ratios are outlined by the King's Head Theatre in letters sent to school and group bookers. The King's Head expects groups visiting the theatre to follow the legal requirement covering the external organisation (e.g school) when taking children out on excursions.

The King's Head Child Protection Policy is devised according to the NSPCC guidelines for organisations. We are committed to reviewing the Child Protection Policy and good practice annually.

Jelena Curcic

Education Officer

September 2007



Appendix 1

Definitions of abuse

Taken and amended from NSPCC, firstcheck

It is generally accepted that there are four main forms of abuse:

1 Physical abuse Physical abuse 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.

Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act of commission can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

Signs of physical abuse:

- Any injuries, bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc. which are not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries, which occur to the body in places, which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc.
- Injuries which appear to have been caused by a weapon e.g. cuts, welts etc.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Instances where children are kept away from the group inappropriately or without explanation
- Self-mutilation or self-harm e.g. cutting, slashing, drug abuse.



2 Emotional abuse Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

These may include interactions that are beyond the 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 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 ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Signs of emotional abuse:

- a failure to thrive or grow, particularly if the child puts on weight in other circumstances, eg, in hospital or away from their parents' care
- sudden speech disorders
- developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress.

- Changes in behaviour:
 - neurotic behaviour, eg, sulking, hair twisting, rocking being unable to play
 - fear of making mistakes
 - self harm
 - fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour.



3 Sexual abuse Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (eg, rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts (oral sex). They may include 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.

Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes people from all different walks of life.

Signs of sexual abuse:

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, eg, becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- having nightmares
- running away from home
- sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level
- sexual drawings or language
- bedwetting
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- self harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- substance or drug abuse
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults.

4 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. 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 provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of adequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.



It is accepted that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse, and that some children are subjected to more than one form of abuse at any one time. These four definitions do not minimise other forms of maltreatment.

Signs of abuse by neglect:

- The physical signs of neglect may include:
 - constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
 - constantly dirty or smelly
 - loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
 - inappropriate dress for the conditions.
- Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect may include:
 - complaining of being tired all the time
 - not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
 - having few friends
 - mentioning their being left alone or unsupervised.



Other forms of harm

Chapter 10 of Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2005) and other inter-agency guidance draws attention to other sources of stress or harm for children and families such as social exclusion, domestic violence, the untreated mental illness of a parent or carer, or drug or alcohol misuse. All these areas may have a negative impact on a child's health and development and may be noticed by someone caring for a child. If it is felt that a child's well-being is adversely affected by any of these circumstances, the same procedure for reporting concerns should be followed. For example, children who are involved in prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation should also be treated primarily as victims of abuse and their circumstances require careful assessment by the statutory agencies.



Appendix 2

Contact List

1) Designated child protection person

Jelena Curcic
Education Officer
The King's Head Theatre
020 7226 8561

2) Deputy designated child protection person

Sherrill Gow
Associate Director
The King's Head Theatre
020 7226 8561

3) Local Social Services Office

The Children and Families Assessment Service
292 Essex Road
N1 3AZ
Mon- Fri 9am-5pm
Emergency Duty Team: 020 7226 0992

4) Local Police Station

Islington Police Station
2 Tolpuddle Street
N1 0YY
Child Protection Team: 020 7421 0307

5) NSPCC Child Protection Helpline

0808 800 5000

6) Childline

0800 1111



Appendix 3

Checklist for reporting suspected abuse

Name of child _____

Age and date of birth _____ Ethnicity _____

Religion _____ First language _____

Disability _____ Any special factors _____

Parent's/carer's name(s) _____

Home address (and phone no. if available). _____

Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of somebody else? Give details.

Brief description of what has prompted the concerns: include dates, times etc. of any specific incidents.

Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs? _____





Have you spoken to the child? If so, what was said?

Have you spoken to the parent(s)? If so, what was said?

Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, give details.

Have you consulted anybody else? Give details.

Your name and position.

To whom reported and date of reporting.

Signature

Today's date



Appendix 4

Definitions of bullying

- Bullying can include:
 - . • physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching etc.
 - . • name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing and emotional torment through ridicule, humiliation and the continual ignoring of individuals
 - . • racial or homophobic taunts, graffiti, gestures
 - . • sexual comments and/or suggestions
 - . • unwanted physical contact
 - . • abusive text messages, phone calls, emails or chatroom messages.



Appendix 5

Consent form for the use of photographs and video. (Parents and children)

The King's Head Theatre recognises the need to ensure the welfare and safety of all children.

In accordance with our Child Protection Policy we will not permit photographs, video or other images of children and young people to be taken without the consent of the parents/carers and children.

The King's Head Theatre will follow the guidance for the use of photographs a copy of which is available from the Education Department.

The King's Head Theatre will take all steps to ensure these images are used solely for the purposes they are intended. If you become aware that these images are being used inappropriately you should inform The King's Head immediately.

I (*parent/carer*) _____ consent to The King's Head Theatre photographing or videoing (*Name of child*) _____

Date: _____

I (*insert name of child*) _____ consent to The King's Head Theatre photographing or videoing my involvement in _____.

Date: _____