

Child Protection Policy

1 Principles

Youth Music Theatre UK is fully committed to safeguarding the health and welfare of all children and young people in their care by taking all reasonable steps to protect them from neglect, physical, sexual or emotional harm. Paid staff and all volunteers will, at all times, show respect and understanding for the rights of all members of the company regardless of gender, sexual orientation, disability, race or nationality.

This policy establishes that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children without exception have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All the charity's trustees, staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report concerns.
- As defined in the Children Act 1989, anyone under the age of 18 years should be considered as a child for the purposes of this document. YMT also accepts a moral responsibility for those aged 18 – 21 who are participants in YMT projects.

1.1 **Statement**

To achieve these commitments, YMT will:

- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are carefully selected, monitored and cleared by the relevant authorities. They will be informed of and make themselves familiar with the Child Protection Policy.
- Carry out risk assessments at rehearsal, accommodation and performance venues.
- Inform parents and young people how complaints or concerns should be reported.
- Let parents and young people have information about YMT and the Child Protection Policy and explain what they can expect of YMT.

This Policy Statement applies to all paid staff, members of YMT and all volunteers whether these people's involvement is full or part-time, seasonal or permanent. A copy of this statement along with the subsequent procedures will be given to all of the above .

1.2 **YMT promises to:**

- Employ all staff and volunteers only after receipt of satisfactory references.
- Conduct Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure checks of all staff and volunteers before commencing employment or immediately thereafter. Similar appropriate checks will be made in regions not covered by CRB, i.e. POCVA in Northern Ireland and Disclosure Scotland.

Using the appropriate system YMT will re-check any member of staff every three years, where they are expected to be employed or volunteering on future projects.

- Issue the YMT's Handbook and a copy of the Child Protection Policy to all company and staff members.
- Nominate a Child Protection Officer (CPO) on each course, normally the Head of Pastoral Team.
- Ensure that each Head of Pastoral Team will be supported and kept informed about how Child Protection, Drug Awareness, Emergency Aid and Health & Safety all relate to their period of employment.
- Ensure that all information received in the recruiting process of staff will be treated with confidentiality.

2 Application

This policy and associated procedures apply to all staff that has contact with children in YMT. This includes trustees, employees and volunteers.

3 Legal and Procedural Framework

This policy has taken into consideration the following UK and Government legislation and guidance such as:

- Children Act 2004
- The Children Act 1989
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (Every Child Matters)
- The UN convention on the rights of the Child
- Human Rights Act 2000
- The Protection of Children Act 1999

3.1 *Additional Legislation includes:-*

The Children (Performance) Regulations 1968

Each local authority must license every child under the age of 16 who does four or more performances per year for which the general public pay to see. The regulations govern the length of performance and rehearsal periods, the accommodation in which the child is housed, time spent in travelling to and from such rehearsals and performances and the use of approved 'matrons'. Where YMT has a paying audience and has performances of 5 or more, childrens' performance licenses should be sought.

3.2 *Licensing of Pastoral Team*

All Chaperones will be expected to agree to an Enhanced CRB Disclosure check. Many local authorities no longer offer the Licensing service, since the introduction of the CRB Check. Where Licensing is still offered we request and recommend that a License is obtained. Where a child requires a performance license, a named chaperone is

responsible for the children in the ratio of ten children to each chaperone. This chaperone should be fully licensed.

4 Definition of Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by adults and often by people they know and trust and sometimes by other children. It refers to the damage done to a child's physical or mental health. Children can be abused within or outside their family, at school and in a sports or community environment. Child abuse can take many forms.

4.1 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 or induces illness, or deliberately causes ill health to a child in their care.

4.2 Sexual abuse.

Boys and girls are sexually abused when adults (male or female) or other young people use them to meet their own sexual needs.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. It may involve physical contact including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at child abuse, or involving them in the production of such images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

4.3 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child, which causes 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 in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may, as in some cases of domestic violence, involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger and includes the exploitation or corruption of children. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of children, although it may occur alone.

4.4 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.

4.5 Bullying

Bullying may be seen as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. The bully may often be another young person.

Although anyone can be a target of bullying, victims are typically shy, sensitive and perhaps anxious or insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for reasons of physical appearance, race, beliefs, gender or sexuality.

YMT operates a zero tolerance policy to bullying.

5 Recognising Abuse

It is not always easy to identify when children have been abused even for the most experienced carers. However, some of the more typical symptoms, which should arouse suspicions may include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries (elbows, small of the back, buttocks, behind the ears etc).
- Use of sexually explicit language or actions by a child maybe to an adult or another child.
- Sudden change in behaviour such as becoming quiet or withdrawn.
- A general distrust of adults especially with whom a close relationship would be expected.
- An unreasonable reaction to normal physical contact.

5.1 Self Protection

- Do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Do not take children alone in a car on journeys, however short.
- Do not take children to your home.
- Where any of these are unavoidable, ensure they only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the organisation or the child's parents.
- Only publish or reproduce photographs or video of young people where consent has been granted by the young person's parent or carer. Use a YMT Photo and Video release form for this purpose. Be sensitive to the risk that images could be misused by a third party. Do not publish information, in print or on a website, that might enable someone to contact the child.
- Remove, at the earliest opportunity, any personal contact details left by young people on the YMT website discussion forum and remind young people of the rules thereof.
- Contact emails may be given to young people and any correspondence with a young person should be copied to mail@ymtuk.org .The content of any email correspondence should maintain the same professional conduct as when working face-to-face. This same professionalism applies when using online forums or

external websites (as well as other emerging media not immediately covered by the above).

5.2 You should never:

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- let allegations a child makes go unchallenged or unrecorded; always act.
- do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves.

5.3 Medical consent

Medical consent should be obtained in the event where medication or treatment is required to be administered in the absence of the parent/carer/guardian; this includes hospitalisation. Consent for emergency medical attention and the administering of paracetamol by chaperones are covered on the YMT Medical Form. It is imperative that this is signed and returned before the start of the given project. Such procedures would cover the organisation from accusations of neglect.

It may sometimes be necessary to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and written consent of parents. In case of an emergency situation which requires this type of help, parents should be kept fully informed despite having signed the appropriate consent form.

In such situations, it is important to ensure all staff are sensitive to the child and undertake personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

6 Disclosure

Disclosure is a term used to describe the act of a child telling an adult or another child that something has happened and they want to talk about it or they may just come right out and tell you that they are hit or indicate being sexually abused. It is when the child is away from an abuser that they may use that opportunity to tell. In cases of child abuse the main aim is to keep calm and provide a positive, friendly attitude to encourage the child to talk.

If a child confides in you then the following gives you an idea of some 'Do's and Don'ts':

6.1 The Do's

- Do involve the Child Protection Officer as soon as possible. This is usually the Head Chaperone.
- Do stay calm and listen without interruption. Try not to appear shocked with the allegation. Let the young person speak at their own pace.
- Do use open questions/statements and only ask questions if an explanation is

not clear. You are not investigating, just gathering initial information.

Would you like to tell me what happened?

Can you tell me where/when this happened?

Would you like to tell me who was involved?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

- Do write down all that is reported in as much detail as possible and in the exact way it is described to you. Try not to put things in your own words but use the exact words of the young person.
- Do ensure, if the young person does not object, that another member of staff is present. This person can then record all the details using the words the young person has used.
- Do allow the the young person to write down details of the incident if preferred. The young person and the member of staff dealing with the alleged incident should sign, date and time anything that is written.
- Do reassure the young person that they have done the right thing in reporting the incident and that they will be told of any resultant action.
- Do thank the young person for telling you this and explain that it is very important that they have told you.
- Do explain that you will have to tell someone who can help and do something about it and maybe make it all stop.
- Do feel free to check the CPO has passed all concerns onto the Child Protection Coordinator (Paul Byrne), even where the incident is believed to be resolved.
- Do consider reporting any concerns to the Executive Producer (Jon Bromwich) of YMT if the Child Protection Coordinator is unavailable or if, in your opinion, the concern has not been taken seriously.

Details of the above Reporting Process are also shown on the Flow Diagram, Appendix 2 of this policy.

6.2 The Don'ts

- Don't try to stop the child telling you about their problem.
- Don't ask direct question or leading/closed questions/comments such as:
 - Was it your father/coach/friend that did this to you?
 - Are you sure that's what happened?
 - Why did you let them do that to you?
 - Why do you think this happened?
- Don't offer any judgements or say 'I expect you must be very upset about this'.
- Don't say 'this can be our little secret'. You cannot promise total confidentiality.
- Don't make promises you may not be able to keep.
- Don't allow anyone else outside the police or social services to interview or ask questions of the child.
- Don't contact the parent /guardian/carer without taking advice from Paul Byrne.

You also need to be careful about physical contact during the conversation because it may not be what the child wants. The rule is to remain positive and supportive throughout.

Remaining Calm

The complexity of child protection issues means that there can never be a set of prescriptive questions. The key is to allow the child to tell their story and tell them that you believe what they have told you. Do not badger the child into answering too many questions, especially leading or closed questions as the child may well be interviewed later by police on video. The adult listening should be relaxed and be as natural as possible throughout. Make notes if possible or at least at the earliest opportunity and ensure you inform the Child Protection Co-ordinator immediately.

Disclosure of home

If the child has told you about their parent or carer to whom they are returning after their trip, more immediate action may have to be taken depending on the nature of the disclosure. You are not fully trained and it is NOT your responsibility to decide if it is abuse but it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about identifying the situation. If you have any doubt then always contact the NSPCC or Child line for advice (the numbers are shown below)

7 Recording and reporting Information

7.1 Reporting a Concern

The reporting of a concern should be made to the Child Protection Officer, and then to The Child Protection Co-ordinator, as soon as possible to safeguard the child, particularly if the child is concerned about returning home. The Incident Report Form (Appendix 1) should be completed by anyone who has a concern about a Child Protection issue. This form should be completed as soon as possible following the incident which has prompted the concern and should be presented to the Child Protection Co-ordinator who will assess the situation and decide on the most appropriate response to the concern.

7.2 Recording Information

When recording information, it is important that you do not start a deeper investigation but rather gather information. Unnecessary interviews with child complainants could prejudice the integrity of evidence that may eventually have to be presented in court. The environment for recording information needs to be considered carefully. Try and ensure that you are in sight of another adult, but your conversation will not be overheard.

If a child discloses any information that causes concern that the child has or is likely to be at risk of significant harm if they are returned to their carer, it may cause further problems for the child if you talk to the parents before talking to the Child Protection Co-ordinator (Paul Byrne). The information must be recorded on the Incident Report form (Appendix 1) using extra pages if necessary. That information should then be relayed to the nominated Child Protection Officer (normally the Head Chaperone for the course) who should

immediately inform the Child Protection Co-ordinator for action to be considered.

If the information raises significant concerns about the child returning home, the welfare of the young person is your first priority. Advice can be sort from the NSPCC who have a 24hour helpline 0808 8005000, as it is not always going to be practicable to contact social services.

7.3 Reporting allegations / concerns about other members of staff

The reporting of allegations or concerns about another member of staff and their behaviour towards a child should be done by using the incident report form as mentioned above and contact made with the Child Protection Co-ordinator as soon as possible.

It is always difficult to report matters about another member of staff as that action could cause anxiety and stress for all parties concerned, but it is better to report concerns than not to, as this action may help to safeguard a child. Advice can be sought from the NSPCC or Childline before reporting but it should not be left too long as delay may put a child or children at risk. Consideration may be given to inform the alleged perpetrator of the allegation and any evidence provided. However, this must be done with caution and the welfare and safety of the child must be paramount as informing the alleged perpetrator may put the child at further risk.

7.4 Responding to a Concern

Following the report of a concern or abuse, the Child Protection Co-ordinator will assess the information and report it to the parents/carers of alleged victim, local social services or police depending on the seriousness of the concern as soon as possible, in some cases this may need to be immediately, depending on the nature of the information provided.

The role of the Child Protection Co-ordinator, or any other member of YMT, is **not** to make an independent investigation into any allegations as this could delay the retrieval of vital evidence and also put a child at risk.

If in doubt advice should always be sought from the NSPCC who have a 24 hour help line or Childline, or contact the local police.

If the allegation or concerns are about the parent or carer of the child that parent or carer should **not** be informed before contacting or seeking advice form NSPCC or Social services as that could put the child at further risk or prompt the parent/carer to take steps to avoid an investigation by speaking to the child.

Alternatively, if the allegations are being made against another young person then the parents/carers of the accused should also be informed. If there is a need to call in police before parents/carers have arrived then a member of YMT staff may act as the appropriate adult in order for the Police to conduct an appropriate investigation.

Any action taken by the Child Protection Co-coordinator must be recorded and include details of who they have spoken to, date and time and the advice given.

7.5 Response to Allegations / Concerns about Staff

YMT will ensure that all young people, parents/carers and staff are aware that any allegations will be taken seriously.

Although it is a sensitive and difficult issue, child abuse can and does occur outside the family setting. Child abuse has occurred within institutions and may occur in other settings such as those where there is a 'position of trust', such as that held by those working closely with children during YMT activities.

There may be three types of investigation:

A disciplinary or misconduct investigation by YMT.

A child protection investigation carried out by Social Services.

A criminal investigation.

The results of the police and social services investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation.

If, in the first instance, the concern is regarding general behaviour and a threshold of concern does not appear to have been breached, then the staff in question will only be subject to an internal investigation. This may be use of inappropriate language or 'horse-play', which could be misinterpreted. Such action may lead to disciplinary proceedings. If, however, during the course of the internal investigation a threshold of concern does appear to have been breached then the investigation will cease and the police would be called. Any such investigation would be documented with date, time and signatures.

Consideration will also be given to the person reporting as this can bring feelings of guilt and anxiety and support will be provided where appropriate.

7.6 Reporting Processes

The processes of such a report being received by the Child Protection Co-ordinator are as follows:

- The Incident Form (Appendix 1) should be used to report any concerns or allegations against a member of staff.
- Any incident should be reported to the Child Protection Officer, normally the Head of the Pastoral Team.
- The CPO will pass all concerns to the Child Protection Co-ordinator, even where the incident is believed to be resolved.
- If concerns relate to the Head Chaperone, contact the Child Protection Co-ordinator directly.

- The CPC will make sure that, where appropriate, all information is passed onto the police or social services.
- You should consider reporting any concerns to the Executive Producer of YMT if the Child Protection Co-ordinator is unavailable or if, in your opinion, the CPC has not taken your concern seriously.
- Steps will be taken to ensure that the person being reported does not continue to have access to children until the matter is resolved.
- The matter may be so serious that it is reported to police immediately and they will control the investigation and contact relevant parties with the assistance of the Child Protection Co-ordinator
- For less serious matters advice may be sought from appropriate statutory authorities such as social service or from the NSPCC.
- Parents/carers of the child will be informed , as appropriate, about the concerns /allegations that have been made and they will be kept informed of the progress made in respect of any investigation.

7.7 If the alleged incident occurred before the young person arrived

This situation needs very careful handling.

- It is advisable to speak to the NSPCC or the police or social services before speaking to the family as informing the family may cause further risk to the child or siblings that remain with the family.
- It is important that the young person is reassured but inform the child that certain people will have to be informed for his or her own safety.
- Do not carry out any physical examination if the abuse is thought to be physical or sexual.

10 Role of Child Protection Co-ordinator

**The current Child Protection Coordinator is Paul Byrne,
Pastoral Manager for YMT**

The role of Child Protection Coordinator(s) will be responsible for:

- ensuring the organisation has an up-to-date Child Protection Policy with appropriate procedures in support thereof.
- ensuring relevant paid and volunteer staff understand the procedures and put them into practice.
- receiving reports of any concerns or allegations in conjunction with the person reporting.
- deciding, in conference with the Executive Producer, on appropriate action to be taken in the event of a concern, which may include contacting the social services or police.
- acting as point of contact for parents/carers as appropriate .

9 Training and Raising Awareness

YMT will ensure that all Heads of Pastoral Teams, and where possible all YMT staff working with children, receive continual Child Protection awareness guidance which educates on how to recognise abuse and the reporting procedure to be followed in the instance of a concern.

10 Retention of Information

For the protection of the child, and out of respect for the right to privacy of all individuals, information obtained by YMT in following the measures set out in this policy shall only be used for the purpose of complying with this policy. Such information shall be kept secure, treated as confidential and not disclosed to other staff or third parties except in exceptional or relevant discipline cases.

In accordance with the recommendations in the ECM Working Together to Safeguard Children document, records about staff will be kept until the age 65 or for 10 years whichever is longer. The information will be kept securely and access is kept to a minimum and confidentiality is paramount.

FURTHER SOURCES OF ADVICE AND INFORMATION:

YMT 0844 415 4858

Child Protection Coordinator, Paul Byrne 07906 633106

NHS Direct :0845 4647

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

ChildLine: 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk

Every Child Matters: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Incident Report Form

(Extra pages to be used as appropriate)

Appendix 2

Flowchart of the Reporting Process for Child Protection Issues

Appendix 1

Sample of Incident Report Form.

Blank copies to be found in Head Chaperones Admin Pack.

**YMT
Incident Report Sheet**

Record only known facts – do not record opinions.

Complete a separate form for each person involved/affected.

Completing this form does not constitute an admission of liability

Name of Project

Name and contact details of person completing this form

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Signature of person completing this form.....

Details of person affected by incident

Name

D.O.B

Home Address

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.....
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Contact Telephone No

Location of incident

Date and time of incident

Witnesses (full names and addresses)

Nature of Incident – Please circle appropriately

Near miss Fire Damage to Property Violence/Abuse Accident Theft

Details of Injury.....

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Did the person receive any attention? (E.g. treatment, advice, counselling)

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Outline apparent circumstances of incident. Where applicable, what was the person doing? Were there any contributory factors? Was any property/equipment involved?

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Outcome

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Appendix 2

Flowchart of the Reporting Process for Child Protection Issues

