



Safeguarding Policy

(Children and Young People)

Last Updated: 1 September 2025

Organisation Contact Details

Name: The Oast Theatre (Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club)

Address: London Road, Tonbridge, Kent, TN10 3AN

Organisation Type: Theatre

Telephone: 01732 363849

Email: enquiries@oasttheatre.com

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Contact: Jason Lower

Role: Youth Theatre Director / Trustee

Telephone: 07840 207017

Email: jason.lower@oasttheatre.com

Aim

Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club, its staff, volunteers, and freelance practitioners take seriously their responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of all the people the people with whom they work. This policy addresses how the organisation works with children and young people below the age of 18.

Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club's board are committed to implementing and establishing best practice to ensure that staff and others, work in line with the latest published guidance on *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2018) and *The Children Act* (2004), to achieve the best possible outcomes.

All staff have a responsibility to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded, but those who come into contact with children and their families in a professional capacity have particular responsibilities as outlined in this document.

Introduction

Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club aims to provide the very best opportunities for children and young people to enjoy and participate in a wide range of high-quality artistic activity.

To this end, Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club will actively provide pastoral care in all situations where it is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people below the age of 18, protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club will seek to create relationships of trust between young people and responsible adults acting on behalf of Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club in which the views of young people can be expressed and respected.

In order to protect young people and responsible adults working on behalf of Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club this Safeguarding Policy and the following Code of Conduct should always be adhered to, and every staff member, volunteer and freelancer must read the policy before working with any young people.

A list of definitions of abuse and indicators to assist staff in recognising young people who may be suffering abuse is included to assist staff in identifying those who they feel may be at risk.

The policy applies to all staff members, freelance practitioners, helpers, volunteers, and chaperones who may come into contact with young people from unborn up to 18 years of age.

Safeguarding young people is everyone's responsibility and all staff should have a basic understanding of their role in protecting young people.

Commitments

Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club is committed to:

- a. valuing, listening to and respecting children and young people as well as promoting their welfare and protection
- b. safe recruitment, supervision, and training for all workers within the theatre who come into contact with children or young people
- c. encouraging and supporting parents/guardians
- d. having a system for dealing with concerns about possible abuse
- e. maintaining good links with the statutory childcare authorities and other organisations
- f. observing outside organisations' safeguarding policies when working on their premises

Children's Rights

Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club works within the boundaries of the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1991).

Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club agrees that:

- a. all children have a right to expect that their best interests are a priority when decisions are being made by Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club about them;
- b. all children have a right to have a say in anything that affects them;
- c. all children have a right to be protected by those who look after them;
- d. all children have a right to rest, play and have the opportunity to join in with a wide variety of activities;
- e. all the rights in the Convention must apply to all children without discrimination of any kind. Every child has equal rights, as disclosed in Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club's Equal Opportunities Policies.

Section 1

Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club Responsibility as an Organisation

In appointing those who work in direct contact with children and young people, Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club will be responsible for the following:

1. Before Appointment

- a. meeting the applicant in person;
- b. obtaining the results of a valid Enhanced Disclosure;
- c. obtaining and following up a minimum of two references with particular attention as to the applicant's suitability for working with children;
- d. informing the applicant of the preceding two requirements and, where appropriate, of the subsequent results.

2. Upon Appointment

- a. setting an appropriate induction period to assess the individual's suitability to the position through observation and discussion;
- b. providing appropriate information and training about Safeguarding and Health and Safety responsibilities;
- c. issuing the policy;
- d. discussing any problems arising during this period.

3. During Appointment

- a. providing opportunities to discuss work programmes and areas of concern with other staff;
- b. reviewing the appointment on a regular basis;
- c. DBS checking the relevant employees every three years;
- d. informing employees of any changes to Safeguarding or Health and Safety policies.

4. Assistants and Freelancers

Assistants and Freelancers should hold/have appropriate qualifications/experience and Disclosure and Barring Service checks. Otherwise, they should be clearly working under the direct supervision of an appropriately qualified person.

Section 2

Individual's Responsibilities

All individuals – be they staff members, applicants, volunteers, or employees – who work in direct contact with children and young people will be responsible for the following:

1. Before Appointment

- a. providing all the information requested.

2. During Appointment

- a. promptly providing details of any criminal convictions or investigations;
- b. co-operating fully with any request made or action taken by Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club related either to the Safeguarding or Health and Safety policy.

3. Reasons for Not Appointing / Discontinuing a Relationship

Reasons for the above may include:

- a. a history of previous offences against children;
- b. a history of offences that are unsuitable when working with children (ie. drugs or violence);
- c. unsuitable references;
- d. unsuitable behaviours during employment;
- e. a failure to disclose relevant information;
- f. an inability to do the job.

Section 3

Supervision of Children and Young People

Staff working with children and young people will:

- a. always take responsibility for their wellbeing;
- b. find out and comply with Health and Safety, and Fire Evacuation procedures relevant to the location;
- c. ascertain the whereabouts of the nearest qualified First Aider;
- d. the practitioner must inspect the space before the group is admitted ensuring it is a safe environment. If any dangers can be foreseen, the practitioner must discuss the matter with the appropriate person who will attempt to make the space safe or find an alternative space;
- e. take a register for each session, documenting (in writing, with date and time) any observations or concerns regarding a child's welfare;
- f. make sure that they have completed a registration form from the child's/young person's parent or guardian detailing emergency contact details and any medical information in their folder. It is important that these are completed before the child/young person is involved in any activity at Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club;
- g. the Designated Safeguarding Lead must attend regular Child Protection Training and read the Kent Safeguarding Children Board Procedures (KSCB - www.kscb.org.uk). It is every staff member's responsibility to ensure that Safeguarding issues are addressed correctly, with compassion, and that the strictest confidence is maintained at all times;
- h. it is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to pass on information and train workshop leaders and their assistants where necessary;
- i. the moment the group is admitted to the rehearsal / activity space and continues until the last member of the group has left the space;
- j. the practitioner must familiarise him/herself with the fire evacuation procedure for the space. In the event of fire alarm being activated or in any other emergency (such as a bomb scare), all employees must leave the building by the nearest available exit and assemble at the designated assembly point: in front of the building at The Oast Theatre;
- k. A First Aid box can be found in the Front of House desk and in the top floor of the Barn. The parent/guardian must be informed at the end of the session if the child has had any kind of accident during the session and what First Aid was administered;

- l. children aged 16 and under must not be allowed to leave the building without a responsible adult without prior permission from parents/guardians.
- m. no participant may be allowed to leave the space without first informing the practitioner;
- n. where there are workshops involving children aged 16 and under, there must always be direct supervision from one responsible adult, with another responsible adult on site and easily accessible;
- o. at the end of the session, the practitioner must ensure that all children have been collected by their parent/guardian. If a child is not collected, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed so that the parent/guardian can be contacted. No child should be left alone while waiting to be collected;
- p. no child should come into contact with any hazardous substances, such as print room inks, acids, lead etc.

Section 4

Code of Practice

This Code of Practice has been designed to ensure the best possible protection for the children and young people and the adults working with them. Please refer to the Kent Safeguarding Children Board Procedures (KSCB - www.kscb.org.uk).

1. All should respect the rights, dignity and worth of all and treat everyone with equality.
2. Always be publicly open when working with young people. Situations where an adult and an individual child are completely unobserved should be avoided.
3. If physical contact is necessary, it should be done openly.
4. Adults should ensure that the activities, which they director advocate, are appropriate to the age, maturity and ability of the participants.
5. Adults should consistently be aware of differing customs and cultural requirements.
6. If an adult accidentally hurts a child, or causes distress in any manner, the adult should:
 - a. report the incident to their line manager;
 - b. support with a brief written report of the incident as soon as possible.
7. All staff members and practitioners working directly with young people shall have up-to-date DBS clearance.
8. Respect should always be shown and fostered, between young people themselves and between young people and adults.
9. A young person's right to personal privacy shall be respected.
10. Always ensure that there are sufficient numbers of volunteers present to
11. prevent a situation arising in which a young person is alone on any premises with just one adult present.
12. Always avoid situations that may compromise your relationship with young people and are unacceptable within a relationship of trust (e.g. sexual relationships between a theatre worker and young person over the age of consent).
13. Remember that caution is required in sensitive moments, such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse.
14. Do not permit abusive peer activities.
15. During residential trips, ensure that there is separate sleeping accommodation for young people and for leaders.
16. Any incident or suspicion of abuse must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, following the chain of reporting (see Procedure for Responding to Reported or Suspected Abuse).

17. Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and confident enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like.
18. Responsible adults must deal with any difficult emotional or violent situation in as calm and detached a manner as possible.
19. An individual must not transport young people without the express consent of their parent(s) or guardian.
20. Where two or more people acting on behalf of Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club intend to transport young people, they must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead beforehand.
21. Staff members and people working on behalf of Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club must avoid favouritism and emotional subjectivity in relationships with young people.
22. Pastoral care should be exercised sensitively and thoughtfully.
23. Do not make suggestive remarks or gestures, even in fun.
24. Any concerns about inappropriate behaviour must be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible, following the chain of reporting (see Procedure for Responding to Reported or Suspected Abuse).
25. All such concerns must be recorded and dated in a secure file accessible only to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and appropriate authorities where necessary.
26. A detailed record of actions taken in response to incidents and concerns shall be kept in the same secure file.
27. All staff and practitioners should be aware that young people with disabilities may need to communicate their difficulties in a different way. They should be supported with alternative approaches if necessary and this should be done with sensitivity.
28. A photograph or image of a child should not be published without written consent from a parent/guardian, and personal information of the individual, other than the name, should not accompany the image (see the Media Consent section of the Membership Information form).

Section 5

Definitions, Categories, and Indicators of Abuse

Staff members or practitioners may be made aware of alleged or suspected abuse through the following:

- a. a child may disclose to a theatre worker something that has upset or harmed them;
- b. someone else might report that a child has told them, or that they believe that a child has been or is being harmed;
- c. a child's behaviour may suggest he or she is being abused (refer to Indicators of Abuse);
- d. the behaviour or attitude of one of the workers towards a child is worrying;
- e. a theatre worker witnesses worrying behaviour from one child to another.

1. What is Child Abuse?

- a. 'Child abuse and neglect' is a generic term encompassing all ill-treatment of children, including serious physical and sexual assaults as well as cases where the standard of care does not adequately support the child's health or development.
- b. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. This may also result in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship or responsibility, trust or power.
- c. Children may be abused in the family or an institution or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. This abuse may be carried out by an adult or adults or another child/children.
- d. NSPCC similarly specify "cruelty to children" or "child abuse" as 'behaviour that causes significant harm to a child. It also includes when someone knowingly fails to prevent serious harm to a child. All forms of cruelty are damaging - it can be harder to recover from the emotional impact than from the physical effects.'
- e. *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2018) sets out definitions and examples of the four broad categories of abuse:
 - I. **Physical abuse:** including hurting or injuring a child, inflicting pain, poisoning, drowning or smothering.

- II. **Sexual abuse:** including direct or in direct sexual exploitation or corruption of children by involving them (or threatening to involve them) in inappropriate sexual activities.
 - III. **Emotional abuse:** repeatedly rejecting children, humiliating them or denying their worth and rights as human beings.
 - IV. **Neglect:** the persistent lack of appropriate care of children, including love, stimulation, safety, nourishment, warmth, education and medical attention.
- f. These categories overlap, and an abused child does frequently suffer more than one type of abuse – e.g. a child may be suffering both physical and emotional abuse.
 - g. Discrimination, harassment, and bullying are also abusive and can harm a child, both physically and emotionally.

2. Generic Indicators of Abuse¹

Generic indicators include a sudden change in behaviour, running away from home, lack of self-esteem and confidence, regressive behaviour, attention seeking, hyperactivity, unusual attachment/clinginess to youth workers or staff, aggression, bullying, temper tantrums, over anxiety or fear, resistance to comfort.

3. Physical Abuse

- a. 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 guardian fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- b. Physical signs-bruises e.g. frequent or in unusual places where accidental injuries are unlikely to occur e.g. thighs, shoulders, chest or back, face, or any bruising to pre-crawling, pre-walking children. Bruises in or around mouth. Burns. Bone fractures. Serious injuries with no adequate explanation. Frequent accidental injuries. Delay in getting treatment for a child's injury. Or leaving injuries untreated.
- c. Behaviour signs - aggressive behaviour in children. Restlessness or hyperactivity. Fear or over-anxiety to please. A child may have frequent absences from school. Child may respond to caregivers with resistance to being comforted, or show 'frozen watchfulness' - a heightened awareness by children anticipating further abuse. These behaviour signs may apply in any of the forms of abuse.

¹ The descriptions of abuse are taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (2018) and the indicators are taken from the NSPCC website.

4. Emotional Abuse

- a. 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 children 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 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 serious bullying (including cyberbullying), 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.
- b. Physical and emotional signs – May be seen in developmental delay. Child withdrawn, excessively quiet. Sadness. Suicidal ideas. Compulsive stealing. Awareness by outsiders that parent/s or guardians seldom interact with or talk to the child.

4. Sexual Abuse

- a. 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.
- b. 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 (including via the internet).
- c. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
- d. Physical signs – there may be none but could be pain or physical discomfort, signs of urinary tract infections (UTI) or sexually transmitted infections (STI); under-age pregnancy or parenthood.
- e. Behavioural signs - sexualised behaviour/language inappropriate to child's age/understanding. Knowledge of smells, tastes, physical sensations

involved should cause concern. Fear about being left with certain person/s or fear of bedtimes. Self-harming, depression, suicidal thoughts or actions. Eating disorders. Hysteria. Other significant changes in behaviour or personality. Arson (fire setting). Sexual offending. Risk of, or actual, prostitution.

- f. Remember:
 - I. NSPCC say research study showed: 75% children sexually abused did not tell anyone at time it happened. 31% had still not told anyone by early adulthood.
 - II. Stranger abuse - another study showed 14% female children and 22% male children were abused by strangers.

5. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

- a. A child is sexually abused when they are forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities. This doesn't have to be physical contact, and it can happen online.
- b. CSE is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol.
- c. Children are more vulnerable to abuse through sexual exploitation if they have experienced one or more of the following:
 - I. child sexual abuse;
 - II. domestic abuse within the family;
 - III. family breakdown;
 - IV. physical abuse and emotional deprivation;
 - V. bullying in or out of school;
 - VI. family involvement in sexual exploitation;
 - VII. parents with a high level of vulnerabilities (drug/alcohol, mental health etc.);
 - VIII. drug/alcohol, mental health or other difficulties themselves.
 - IX. being looked after in residential care;
 - X. going missing frequently.

6. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- a. 'Female Genital Mutilation' (FGM) comprises of all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or non-medical reasons. It has no health benefits and harms girls and women in many ways. The practice causes severe pain and has several immediate and long-term

consequences, including difficulties in childbirth also causing dangers to the child.

- b. FGM is illegal in the UK. It is a form of child abuse and as such is dealt with under this Safeguarding policy.
- c. All staff have a duty to report FGM. Further details can be found on the Prevent Duty Guidance, England and Wales:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>
- d. Indications that FGM may have taken place:
 - I. prolonged absence from the group with a noticeable behaviour change (depression or withdrawal);
 - II. disclosure that FGM has taken place;
 - III. an extended holiday to a country where the practice is prevalent;
 - IV. a girl having difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may look uncomfortable;
 - V. a girl spending more time in the toilet due to difficulties urinating or with menstrual problems;
- e. Indications that FGM may be about to take place:
 - I. disclosure that FGM may be about to take place;
 - II. a girl expressing concern about forthcoming overseas travel;
 - III. a girl confiding that she is to have a 'special procedure' or is to attend a special occasion 'to become a woman'.

7. Neglect

- a. 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 guardian failing to:
 - I. provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
 - II. protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
 - III. ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
 - IV. ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- b. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.
- c. Physical signs - Appears frequently hungry e.g. stealing food from other children's lunches at school; begging. Very tired. Pale. Personal hygiene poor e.g. dirty or smelly. Delayed language or motor development. Other physical neglect e.g. rotten teeth. Nappy rash. Poor/inappropriate clothing. Failure to care for child with special medical needs. Missing medical

appointments. Children left unsupervised in-home setting or when out of doors. Child shows repetitive behaviours e.g. head banging, rocking.

d. Remember:

- I. Research into child abuse demonstrates that Neglect and Emotional abuse have most harmful long-term effects on physical and psychological well-being of children.
- II. Disabled children are twice as likely to become victims of abuse.

Besides the above-mentioned child abuse disclosure, staff should also be alert to any information disclosed about other child welfare concerns, including domestic violence, children with medical needs, child trafficking and drug or alcohol abuse, etc.

Children need to be protected even when it appears that they are not aware that the physical abuse, or sexual activity that they are involved in or witness, or the neglect they experience, is harmful to them.

Section 6

Suspensions and Reports of Abuse

1. When a Responsible Adult Suspects Abuse

- a. Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, who will decide upon further action, contact parent(s)/guardian(s) (if appropriate) and make a full record of the information. The person reporting the suspected abuse should sign the record confirming agreement to the report, which must include the young person's name, contact details and those of the parent/guardian.
- b. See Procedure for Responding to Reported or Suspected Abuse in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead or if the allegation/suspicion involves the Designated Safeguarding Lead. As above, the allegation must be properly recorded.
- c. Ensure that the young person has access to an independent adult such as a youth worker or reliable relative.
- d. Take steps to provide a safe environment for the young person deemed to be at risk and attempt to create a calm situation.

2. When a Responsible Adult Suspects Abuse

- a. Allow the young person to speak without interruption or hindrance, accepting what they say. Believe them, often abusers tell their victims that no-one will believe them so there is no point in telling.
- b. Listen to them but do not push for information. Make sure that you have enough information to be sure that you are talking about abuse. Vague statements like "he makes me do things" need to be clarified before jumping to conclusions. However, do not probe or investigate and do not asking leading questions. All records should be as verbatim as possible.
- c. Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation while not passing judgement. Reassure the young person that they were right to tell you. Abusers often tell their victims that they (the child) have done something wrong to invite the abuse and that bad things will happen if they tell.
- d. Advise the young person that you will try to offer support but that you **MUST** pass on the information discreetly.
- e. Tell the young person what you are going to do next. If there is no cause for immediate concern and the young person is to be allowed home, make sure that they have access to support and further help if they need it later.

- f. Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Artistic Director (minimum of two people) as soon as possible. They will decide on the next steps and will make a proper record of the information. Use the child's own words where possible.
- g. See Procedure for Responding to Reported or Suspected Abuse in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead or in the event that the allegation/suspicion involves the Designated Safeguarding Lead. As above, the allegation must be properly recorded.
- h. Ensure that the young person has access to an independent adult such as a youth worker or teacher or relative.
- i. In the event of an allegation against the Designated Safeguarding Lead the incident must be reported to at least two members of the Management/Board not affected by the allegation. As above, the allegation must be properly recorded.

Section 7

Procedure for Responding to Reported or Suspected Abuse

Under no circumstances should a theatre worker carry out their own investigation into the allegations or suspicions of abuse.

The person in the receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse will do the following:

- a. concerns must be reported as soon as possible to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who is nominated by the Chair to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities;
- b. in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or if the suspicion in any way involves the Designated Safeguarding Lead, then the report should be made to the Chair.
- c. the Chair may then liaise with the Management Committee of Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club.
- d. if the suspicion implicates the Chair, then the report should be made to the Deputy Chair of the Management Committee of Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club.
- e. in the unlikely absence of all of the aforementioned, the report should be made to Kent County Council CHILDREN IN ENTERTAINMENT.
- f. suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with Theatre procedures and kept in a secure place
- g. whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Chair should not delay referral to the Social Services Department
- h. the Chair will support the Designated Safeguarding Lead in their role, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need-to-know basis
- i. it is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the child protection agencies or seek advice from the Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB - www.kscb.org.uk), although the Chair hopes that members of the Theatre will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Chair reported to has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Chair as to

the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope that by making this statement that Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club demonstrates the commitment it has to effective child protection.

- j. If there are concerns about a member of staff, the Local Authority Designated Officer at Kent County Council (LADO at KCC) may be contacted for advice. The staff member or practitioner will then act on the advice of the LADO.
- k. The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Artistic Director is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to the Social Services Department. It is Social Services' task to investigate the matter. Contact details as of October 2019 are Kent Children's Services Integrated Front Door 03000 41 11 11.

2. Procedure for Responding to Allegations of Physical Injury or Neglect

If a child has a physical injury or symptom of neglect, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- a. contact Social Services for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- b. will not tell the parents or guardians unless advised to do so having contacted Social Services.
- c. seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions
- d. for lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting) encourage parent/guardian to seek help, but not if this places the child at any risk of injury.
- e. where the parent/guardian is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In case of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Social Services direct for advice.
- f. seek and follow advice given by Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB - www.kscb.org.uk) (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether to refer a case to Social Services.

3. Responding to Allegations of Sexual Abuse

If a child has a physical injury or symptom of neglect, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- a. contact the Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families. They will NOT speak to the parent/guardian or anyone else.
- b. seek and follow the advice given by CPAS if, for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Social Services. CPAS will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

Section 8

Procedure and Guidelines to Reporting and Responding to Bullying, Abuse and Violence Between Participants

The following procedure is how Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club will report, investigate and address the issue, following a participant suspected or reported of bullying, in conjunction with *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* (Department for Education, July 2017) and The Oast Youth Theatre Membership Agreement, which states the following:

- a. I accept that any of the following behaviour by member or parents can result in having membership withdrawn:
 - I. infringement of Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club's equal opportunities ethos through the discrimination of others;
 - II. verbal abuse to any participant, workshop leader, director or helper;
 - III. physical abuse to any participant, workshop leader, director or helper.

1. Definitions of Bullying, Abuse and Violence

This policy defines “abusive or causing deliberate physical or emotional harm” behaviour as Verbal Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Physical Harm, Violence or Bullying.

- a. Verbal Abuse is the excessive use of language to undermine someone's dignity and security through insults or humiliation, in a sudden or repeated manner.
- b. Emotional Abuse is the ongoing emotional maltreatment or emotional neglect of a person. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare or humiliate a child or isolating or ignoring them.
- c. Physical Harm is an act of a person involving contact of another person intended to cause feelings of physical pain, injury, or other physical suffering or bodily harm.
- d. Violence is the behaviour or treatment in which physical force is exerted for the purpose of causing damage or injury.
- e. Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, either on one occasion or repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyberbullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race,

religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities.

2. Procedure for Responding to Allegations of Bullying, Abuse and Violence

Under no circumstances should a theatre worker carry out their own investigation into the allegations or suspicions of bullying. The person (theatre worker, parent or participant) who receives the allegations or suspicions of bullying will do the following:

- a. concerns must be reported as soon as possible to the Designated Safeguarding Lead to act on Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club's behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of Bullying, including intervention or referring the matter on to the statutory authorities;
- b. suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with Theatre procedures and kept in a secure place.
- c. an investigation by the Designated Safeguarding Lead will take place, to examine the extent and severity of the actions of the accused, and validity of the report. This will involve interviews with staff present at time of incident/s, their observations and actions taken, Observations of participant interaction or workshops, and if so required discussions with parents and/or participants.

Once the investigation is complete, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide to take one of the following four actions:

- a. that there is insufficient evidence to act upon the report at present. They will continue to observe the situation, until they feel confident in their information to take disciplinary action;
- b. that information is falsified or exaggerated, resulting in no disciplinary action taken;
- c. that there is sufficient information taken, that they feel confident with their findings, and that disciplinary action must be taken;
- d. that the report of which is severe enough to pass on to the police or social services.

In the result of disciplinary action, the parent of the child at hand will be notified by the Designated Safeguarding Lead by phone call. Depending on the severity of the findings, disciplinary action will result in one of the following:

- a. An Official Warning - An official warning will be issued, notifying the child that this behaviour is unacceptable. An official warning does not result in

the removal of the child from the group. If further reports of abuse of bullying occur within six months of an official warning being issued, further disciplinary action may be taken.

- b. Removal from Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club activities. Depending on the severity of the incident/s, the child will be removed from the Theatre activities for a stated period or all future Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club activities indefinitely. This is the ultimate action that can be taken by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Section 9

Tackling Extremism and Radicalisation

Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club recognises the positive contribution we can make towards the PREVENT strategy: "Supporting vulnerable individuals who are being targeted and recruited to the cause of violent extremism."

Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club's Tackling Extremism and Radicalisation Policy is intended to provide a framework for dealing with issues relating to vulnerability, radicalisation and exposure to extreme views.

Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club recognises that while it remains rare for children and young people to become involved in terrorist activity, young people from an early age can be exposed to terrorist and extremist influences or prejudiced views. As with other forms of safeguarding strategies, early intervention is always preferable.

1. PREVENT Duty Guidance - England and Wales

- a. The duty of schools and other providers in Section 29 *Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015* to have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism is outlined on the Government's website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>
- b. Radicalisation is defined as the act or process of making a person more radical or favouring of extreme or fundamental changes in political, economic or social conditions, institutions or habits of the mind.
- c. Extremism is defined as the holding of extreme political or religious views.
- d. There is no single route to radicalisation. However, there are some behavioural traits that could indicate a child has been exposed to radicalising influences.
- e. Radicalisation in children can happen over a long period of time. In some cases, it is triggered by a specific incident or news item and can happen much quicker. Sometimes there are clear warning signs of radicalisation, in other cases the changes are less obvious.
- f. The teenage years are a time of great change and young people often want to be on their own, easily become angry and often mistrust authority. This makes it hard to differentiate between normal teenage behaviour and attitude that indicates one of your participants may have been exposed to radicalising influences.

2. Outward Behaviours to Help Identify Possible Radicalisation

- a. Becoming increasingly argumentative.
- b. Refusing to listen to different points of view;
- c. Unwilling to engage with participants who are different.
- d. Becoming abusive to participants who are different.
- e. Embracing conspiracy theories.
- f. Feeling persecuted.
- g. Changing friends and appearance.
- h. Distancing themselves from old friends.
- i. No longer doing things they used to enjoy.
- j. Converting to a new religion.
- k. Being secretive and reluctant to discuss their whereabouts.
- l. Sympathetic to extremist ideologies and groups.

3. Online Behaviours to Help Identify Possible Radicalisation

- a. Changing online identity.
- b. Having more than one online identity.
- c. Spending a lot of time online or on the phone.
- d. Accessing extremist online content.
- e. Joining or trying to join an extremist organisation.

4. Procedure for Responding to Suspected or Alleged Radicalisation and Extremism

- a. If staff or practitioners have concerns about the wellbeing of a young person they are working with or suspect they might be at risk of extremism or radicalisation, they must report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who may then liaise with the Chair.
- b. The Designated Safeguarding Lead, with the support of the Chair, will then investigate the allegation, contacting parents or guardians where necessary, referring to the KSCB guidance on Radicalisation and Extremism: <https://www.kscb.org.uk/guidance/extremism-and-radicalisation2>
- c. If necessary, a PREVENT referral form will be completed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, with the support of the Chair.

Section 10

Missing Children

1. Definitions

- a. A child under 16 years, or under 18 years if disabled, whose whereabouts is unknown to the primary guardian: parent, close relative, or someone with parental responsibility. Children running away and going missing from home or care is a safeguarding issue.
- b. Looked after children missing from their placements are particularly vulnerable. In 2012, two reports highlighted that many of these children were not being effectively safeguarded: The Joint All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) Inquiry on Children Who Go Missing from Care and the accelerated report of the OCC's ongoing inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups.
- c. The key issues found were that:
 - I. Children in residential care are at particular risk of going missing and vulnerable to sexual and other exploitation.
 - II. Local Safeguarding Children Boards have an important role to play in monitoring and interrogating data on children who go missing.

2. Policy for Responding to Suspected Missing Children

- a. If a staff member or practitioner suspects that a child is missing, they must report it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who may then liaise with the Chair
- b. The Designated Safeguarding Lead has a statutory duty to notify the relevant Local Authority.
- c. The Designated Safeguarding Lead may refer to the government's guidance on children who go missing from home or from care:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-who-run-away-or-go-missing-from-home-or-care>

Section 11

Online Activities

1. Working from Home

- a. When working from home, staff will have access to their own accounts to access emails and digital storage.
- b. All organisation files are saved in the cloud and files with personal and contact details are password protected.
- c. No young person's details or images will be downloaded or saved on computers (unless it is a device designated for work use by the organisation).
- d. Organisation staff will not share their accounts or logins with other members of staff and only log into their own accounts.
- e. If young people's images need to be downloaded for photo or video editing then they will be deleted once the edit has taken place and the completed file is uploaded to the organisation's cloud.
- f. Freelance practitioners who need access to creative content containing young people are given links which enable them to view files online but not download.

2. Communication by Phone

- a. Staff working regularly with young people will have access to an organisation device to make contact with young people. All company mobile phones are to be PIN locked so that data is not accessible by others.
- b. Staff members should turn their work phones off when they are not working for the organisation. Status messages on WhatsApp and other instant messaging services and Voicemail messages should state that the phone will only be turned on during working hours.

3. Communication by Email

- a. Staff will be required to email young peoples' personal email addresses. In such cases staff should use clear language to avoid any misunderstanding on the part of the recipient. This should be done via the youth@oasttheatre.com email address. It may be appropriate to copy in another staff member for transparency.

- b. Staff members who have concerns regarding the content of an email that they send or receive from a young person should consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead for guidance.

3. Communication by Social Media

- a. Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club will use social media to communicate with young people. Current social media applications the Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club will use include WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.
- b. Contact with young people through such forums should only take place through organisational accounts. Organisation accounts not follow those of young people and and only invite members to follow organisation accounts.
- c. If a Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club staff member receives content from a young person which they believe is inappropriate they will not forward the content or delete it but immediately contact the DSL to report the content and the DSL will follow the organisational safeguarding procedures.
- d. Details of current access to accounts can be found in the appendix to this document.

4. Communication via Digital Platforms

- a. When communicating with young people via digital platforms, staff will use organisation accounts and phones and ensure that the personal numbers of young people and freelancers are not shared.
- b. Organisation staff and freelancers will be the only adults present on digital platforms.
- c. All parents will be informed of the platforms to be used and the dates and times of sessions and the adults who will be in these platforms.
- d. Staff will also remind young people that this is not a private space and whatever they share online will be seen by the group.
- e. Any young person who breaks the Code of Conduct will be removed from the platform by Oast staff and parents/carers will be informed.
- f. All online sessions will be recorded and stored in the organisation's cloud platform for three months.

5. Receiving a Disclosure Online or via a Mobile Phone

- a. If a staff member receives a worrying message that they think may indicate that the young person communicating with them is at immediate risk during or outside of work hours, they should immediately refer it for action to the

Designated Safeguarding Lead, ideally by speaking to them in person (if the disclosure takes place in working hours) or by phone.

- b. The DSL will follow the procedure below. If the staff member cannot get hold of the DSL, or a more senior member of staff, they should also follow this procedure:
 - I. Check with the young person – What is happening? Where are you? The staff member should not attempt to solve the problem.
 - II. Contact the young person’s parent/guardian, or – if applicable – the social worker/key worker associated with that young person. If there is no response:
 - i. Alert the emergency services (in most cases this will be the police) by calling 999 and giving as much information as possible.
 - ii. Write up an incident report on the situation within 24 hours.

6. Sharing Work Online

When work is shared online, the following steps should be taken:

- a. Share the final edits with the young people and their parents/carers before sharing.
- b. Not use a child’s surname in photography or video content.
- c. Gain parental/guardian consent for their child to be photographed and videoed
- d. Only use images of children in suitable clothing to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.
- e. Only share content through official organisation accounts.
- f. If, for whatever reason, a parent/carer or young person is not happy with the use of content, then the content will not be shared.

Important Contact Information

Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club

Jason Lower, Designated Safeguarding Lead for Children and Young People

- jason.lower@oasttheatre.com
- 07840 207017

Phil Porter, Chair of the Board

- chair@oasttheatre.com
- 01732 835460

Kent Child Employment and Entertainment

PIA Sessions House, Maidstone, ME14 1XQ

- childemploymentandentertainment@kent.gov.uk
- 03000 414990
- www.kent.gov.uk/ice

Kent Safeguarding Children Board

Room 2.60, 2nd Floor, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, ME14 1XQ

- kscb@kent.gov.uk
- 03000 41 08 88
- **Reporting Line:** 03000 411111 social.services@kent.gov.uk
- **Out of Hours Reporting:** 03000 419191

Every Child Matters (ECM)

The ECM website holds a series of published documents that provide guidance on safeguarding, legislation, resources and *The Children Act 2004*:

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

NSPCC

The NSPCC Offers online child protection resources and a 24-hour helpline that provides counselling, information and advice to anyone concerned about a child at risk: www.nspcc.org.uk

Safeguarding Incident Report

Child's name:

Child's date of birth:

Child's full address:

Child's postcode:

Contact number:

Parent / guardian name:

Person reporting:

Position:

Date of incident:

Time of incident:

DSL informed: (date/time):

Chair informed: (date/time):

Please list all witnesses/persons spoken to about this incident and their positions: