



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures for Rackheath Youth Theatre (RYT) and Rackheath Players (RP)

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children.

Aim

The purpose of this safeguarding policy is to ensure every child is safe and protected from harm.

This means we will always work to:

- protect children from maltreatment
- prevent impairment of children's health or development
- ensure that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- take action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

This policy will give clear direction to the partners, associates, students and parents about the expected behaviour and our legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children at RYT/RP.

Introduction

We fully recognise the contribution it can make to protecting children from harm and supporting and promoting the welfare of all children. The elements of our policy are prevention, protection and support.

Our policy applies to all children, volunteers, visitors and staff.

A child is someone under the age of 18 years old.

Our Ethos

We will establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to communicate, are listened to and are safe. Children will be able to communicate freely to any member of the team if they are worried or concerned about something.

All members of the team will, either through training or induction, know how to recognise a disclosure from a child and will know how to manage this. We will not make promises to any child and we will not keep secrets. Every child will know what the adult will do with whatever they have been told.

At all times we will work in partnership and try to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers and colleagues from other agencies and organisations.

General Procedures

When a new member of the team joins, they will be informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. They will be given a copy of our organisation's safeguarding policy and told who our Designated Safeguarding Officer is. They will also be shown the recording format, given information on how to complete it and who to pass it to.

Every new member of the team will have an induction session that will include essential safeguarding information. They will be directed to safeguarding training through the Safer Programme relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child, how to record and issues of confidentiality. The induction will also remind staff and volunteers of their responsibility to safeguard all children and the remit of the role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

All staff and volunteers will be asked to read this policy yearly after it has been reviewed and updated if necessary. They will sign to say they have read and understood the policy.

All members of the team will be told where our policy is kept, they will be given a set of safeguarding procedures, they will be told who our Designated Safeguarding Officer and alternate team members are and what the recording and reporting system is.

Parents and carers will be informed of our legal duty to assist our colleagues in other agencies with Safeguarding enquiries and what happens should we have cause to make a referral to Children's Services.

Training

Every member of staff will undertake appropriate safeguarding training through the NSCP Safer Programme every three years.

We actively encourage all members of the team to keep up to date with the most recent local and national safeguarding advice and guidance. This can be accessed via **www.norfolkscb.org**

The Designated Officer should be used as a first point of contact for concerns and queries regarding any safeguarding concern in our organisation.

Safer Staff and Volunteers

All adults who come into contact with children we work with have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. There is a legal duty placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of these children are competent, confident and safe to do so.

We ensure we adhere to the principles of safer recruitment as per the guidance from Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership.

We ensure that we:

- Carefully consider the job description and person specification
- Circulate all vacancies widely
- Prepare an information pack
- Ask for a written declaration with regards to criminal convictions, spent or otherwise
- Ask for identification
- Ask for originals of any qualifications
- Conduct interviews with at least two people present
- Ask for at least two references
- We request that all members of the team gain DBS checks
- Organise a comprehensive induction period which includes familiarisation with our safeguarding policies, procedures and safeguarding training through the Safer Programme.

Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for the children we work with. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.

Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children.

We will take all possible steps to safeguard our children and to ensure that the adults in our organisation are safe to work with our children. We will always ensure that the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership's procedures are followed.

All adults who come into contact with children will be made aware of the steps that will be taken if an allegation is made. We will seek appropriate advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours of a concern or allegation being made. The LADO can be contacted via the

referral/consultation forms under 'how to raise a concern' at www.norfolkscb.org or a message left on **01603 223473** for ongoing cases.

Staff will not investigate these matters. We will seek and work with the advice that is provided. Should an allegation be made against the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Deputy, this will be reported by the staff member or volunteer raising the concern directly to the LADO.

There are sensible steps that every adult should take in their daily professional conduct with children. This can be found in the NSCP **Safer Programme Safer Working Practice** (this guidance is on the NSCP website and also included in our procedures).

Records and Confidentiality

If we are concerned about the welfare or safety of any child in our organisation we will record our concerns immediately on the agreed report form and give this to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Any information recorded will be kept in a separate named file, in a secure cabinet and not with the child's file. These files will be the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Officer and information will only be shared within the organisation on a need to know basis for the protection of the child.

Any safeguarding information will be kept in the file and will be added to. Copies of referrals will be stored in the file.

All information is confidential, however if there is a safeguarding or child protection concern about a child, then information can be shared with other agencies, namely the Police or Children's Services.

Reports of a concern to the Designated Safeguarding Officer must be made in writing and signed and dated by the person with the concern.

Roles and Responsibilities

Our Designated Safeguarding Officer will liaise with Children's Services and other agencies where necessary and make referrals to Children's Services using the procedure below.

Any concern for a child's safety or welfare will be recorded in writing and given to the Designated Safeguarding Officer who will be responsible for ensuring that all staff members and volunteers are aware of our policy and the procedure they need to follow.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will ensure that all staff, volunteers and regular/repeat visitors have received appropriate Safeguarding information during induction and have been trained by the Safer Programme.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will ensure that our safeguarding policy

is in place and is reviewed annually. The content of our policy has been written following consultation with the Safer Programme.

At all times the Designated Safeguarding Officer will ensure that safer recruitment practices are followed.

Our organisation undertakes to remedy without delay any weakness in regard to our safeguarding arrangements that are brought to their attention.

Procedures for Handling Disclosures

A child may decide to disclose information that may indicate they are suffering from abuse or neglect. A child chooses to speak to an adult because they feel that they will listen and that they can trust them. The adult needs to listen to what the child has to say and be very careful not to 'lead' the child or influence in any way what they say.

It is important that the adult remembers to:

- Stay calm
- Listen and be supportive
- Not ask any leading questions, interrogate the child, or put ideas in the child's head, or jump to conclusions
- Not stop or interrupt a child who is recalling significant events
- Never promise the child confidentiality – it must be explained that information will need to be passed on to help keep them safe
- Avoid criticising the alleged perpetrator
- Tell the child what must be done next (the safeguarding process must be followed)
- Record what was said immediately as close to what was said as possible. Also record what was happening immediately before the child disclosed. Be sure to sign and date the record in ink.
- Contact the designated person immediately
- Seek support

We are clear that the Local Authority and Police must lead any investigation in to any allegation regarding safeguarding.

If we have a concern about a child or children, we will telephone the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) on **0344 800 8021** immediately. We will be put through to a Social Worker who will take all of the relevant details. We will make sure we are prepared with full details of the child and family, plus what our concerns are, details of any support we have provided to the child/family and what we would like to happen. We will ensure we gain consent from the parent/carer unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm or undermine a criminal investigation. If we have not sought consent from the parent/carer we will inform the CADS worker of this and the reason for this.

The CADS worker will agree a way forward with us and keep us informed. They will send us a written record of our conversation within 5 working days. The outcomes could include a full referral to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for further investigation, the Police, or for work with Early Help. We will not investigate and will be led by the Local Authority and/or the Police.

We will make careful records of all conversations, in ink, including the dates and times of who we spoke to, the information shared, and the action agreed. We do not need to send a written referral.

Full details on this process can be found at www.norfolkscb.org under 'How to Raise a Concern'.

We understand if we are unhappy about a decision made by CADS or MASH we can use the Resolving Professional Disagreements policy on www.norfolkscb.org and contact the Safer Programme for more advice on this process.

We will contact CADS immediately if we have concerns, it is important we do not delay.

Working Together 2018

What is abuse and neglect?

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical abuse

A form of abuse which 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.

Emotional abuse

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 a child 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 a 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 cyber bullying), 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.

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. 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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

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, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

Defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection

Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Relevant Guidance and Legislation

- Working Together 2018
- What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused 2015
- Children Act 2004
- Children Act 1989
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families

Norfolk Threshold Guide www.norfolkscb.org

Useful Contacts

Children's Services 24 hours 0344 800 8020
Children's Advice and Duty Service.....0344 800 8021
Norfolk Police 101
In an emergency 999
Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) Team 01603 223473
Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) www.norfolkscb.org
Safer Programme 01603 228966

Named Designated Child Protection Officer

The following designated staff are in post;

Designated officer Caroline Manley

Telephone number 07788427612

Policy Review

We will always make any changes immediately to our procedures in line with Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership's guidance on **www.norfolkscb.org**

This policy will be reviewed on 1st Nov 2026