



Chelmsford Young Generation Amateur Musical Society

Registered Charity 275186

[www.young-gen.co.uk](http://www.young-gen.co.uk)

Affiliated to the Charities Commission

# **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

## **for the protection of children and adults at risk.**

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Last Updated by: Alison Khattar

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### **TO BE READ BY:**

- **COMMITTEE**
- **STAGE MANAGERS**
- **DIRECTORS**
- **PARENTS**
- **PUBLIC**

## **Contents**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Version History</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Roles and Responsibilities</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Safeguarding Procedures</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Responsibilities of the Society</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Parents</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Unsupervised Contact</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Physical Contact and use of Physical Intervention and Reasonable Force</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Online Platforms</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Managing Sensitive Information</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Abuse</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Types of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation/Specific Safeguarding Issues</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Harmful Sexual Behaviour</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Online Safety</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Training</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Records, Information Sharing and Confidentiality</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Recording</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Allegations About a Member of the Society/Other Adult</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Low-Level Concerns</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Rights and Confidentiality</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Whistleblowing</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Accidents</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Disclosure and Barring</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Chaperones</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Appendix A – Relevant Legislation</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Appendix B – Emergency Duty Team (EDT)</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendix C – Chaperones Full Responsibilities</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Appendix D – What to do if a Child Discloses Abuse</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Appendix E – Types of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Appendix F – Recognising and Responding to Abuse/Neglect/Exploitation</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Appendix Fa – Concern about a Child</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Appendix Fb – Child Protection Record – Report of a Concern</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Appendix G – Body Maps</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Appendix H – Guidelines for Committee regarding Professional Distance</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Appendix J – Policy Statement</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Appendix K – The Role of the DSL and Assistants</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Appendix L – Low Level Concerns Policy</b>	<b>37</b>

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This is a working document which will be updated annually or whenever legislation changes, whichever is the sooner.

CYGAMS are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all volunteers and third parties to share this commitment. CYGAMS has a dedicated Safeguarding Team, who are appointed to ensure the safeguarding policy and procedures are adhered to.

The team consists of 1 Lead, 3 additional assistants:

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## Introduction

**The Chelmsford Young Generation Amateur Musical Society**, (referred to herein as CYGAMS or the ‘Society’) recognises its duty of care under all legislation pertaining to child welfare and safeguarding listed in Appendix A of this document. This policy has been updated in line with the revised Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) statutory guidance, along with relevant updates from the Online Safety Act 2023. CYGAMS is committed to ongoing review and training to ensure we reflect modern safeguarding expectations.

## Roles & Responsibilities

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them and to provide a safe environment in which to achieve their full potential. Please note that all CYGAMS committee members and volunteers are aware that they can make a referral directly and do not have to report via the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). However there are key people within CYGAMS who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those are shown on page 4 of this document. We are clear that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility and that all who come into contact with children have a role to play. Safeguarding Officer contact details are displayed in the HQ. Where an immediate response is required and if for any reason the DSL and one of the assistants is not immediately available, this will not delay any appropriate action being taken.

CYGAMS recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect, including via online platforms. The society is committed to a practice which protects children and adults at risk from harm. All committee members of the Society accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause harm.

The Society believes that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- We have a duty to safeguard all our members and participants, including children and adults at risk.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs, and/or sexual identity have the right, to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All members, volunteers and employees of the Society should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

The Society will ensure that:

- All children and adults at risk will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.
- The duty of care to children will always be put first.
- A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers all to share in the decision-making process.
- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism.
- Bullying and/or harassment will not be accepted or condoned.
- All adult members of the Society provide a positive role model for dealing with other people.
- Committee members and appointed personnel put necessary safeguards in place for children and adults at risk.
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour, including online.
- It will keep up to date with health and safety legislation.
- It will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
- It will undertake relevant development and training.
- It will hold a register of every child and vulnerable adult involved with the Society and will retain a contact name and number, which will be available in case of emergencies.
- It will act on information disclosed to it as necessary and appropriate, especially information that identifies children and/or adults as vulnerable.

All action is taken in accordance with the following guidance:

- Essex Safeguarding Children Board guidelines – the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Child Protection Procedures (ESCB,2022)
- Essex Effective Support
- Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex (ESCB)

## **Safeguarding Procedures**

### **Responsibilities of The Society**

Those on committee and appointed personnel are responsible for the welfare of the children and known adults at risk in our care and are expected to be vigilant to the vulnerabilities of people and children they are working with and to put appropriate safeguards in place as necessary.

At the outset of any production involving children the Society will:

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process.

- Identify at the outset the person designated responsibility for safeguarding.
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting (DBS checks).
- Ensure that children are always supervised.
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority, social services, in case it needs to report a concern.
- Ensure a low-level concerns procedure is in place, which allows any adult to raise early concerns about another adult's behaviour around children, even if it does not meet the threshold for formal intervention.
- Ensure that all volunteers, including committee members and chaperones, are encouraged to report safeguarding concerns without fear of retaliation through a whistleblowing route or by approaching any designated safeguarding lead.
- Acknowledge the potential risks posed by online platforms and social media. All adult volunteers must not initiate or accept friend/follow requests from members under 18. CYGAMS reserves the right to review group communications to ensure all contact remains appropriate and professional.
- All adult volunteers should not exchange phone numbers with cast members.

When working with identified adults at risk we will also undertake additional risk assessments and monitor risk throughout the production process.

## **Parents**

- CYGAMS believes it to be important to build a positive partnership between parents and the Society. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the Society and to share responsibility for the care of the children and may be expected to go through the same vetting procedures. All parents will be given a copy of the Society's Code of Conduct.
- All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of the Society to take children home.

## **Unsupervised Contact**

- The Society will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.
- Where possible there will always be two adults in the room working with children.
- If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimize risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area, or in a designated room with the door open.
- If it is predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, he or she will be required to obtain a DBS.

## **Physical Contact and Use of Physical Intervention and Reasonable Force**

Whilst we encourage everyone to be aware of others' personal space, we recognise that during the production process, working in a theatre environment can mean that people can come into close proximity with each other both on and off stage. If there is ever a time that an individual

feels uncomfortable, we encourage them to speak up and, if they need any support, to make the safeguarding lead aware.

In addition, we will ensure that:

- All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.
- Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity e.g. providing support when attempting a dance move or demonstrating a move, applying mics, applying makeup, quick changes .
- Adults will seek the consent prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

There will be times when an Adult may need to make physical contact with a child for example:

- to comfort a child or young person in distress (appropriate to their age and individual specific needs identified through a risk assessment);
- to direct a child or young person;
- or direction and setting of a production eg how to move in dance etc;
- in an emergency, to avert danger to the child or young person or others;

The term reasonable force covers a broad range of actions used by committee members that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. There are circumstances when it is appropriate for committee members to use reasonable force to safeguard children, such as guiding a child to safety or breaking up a fight. Reasonable means using no more force than is needed. Our society works in accordance with statutory and local guidance on the use of reasonable force and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context. Any use of reasonable force or physical intervention by committee members is recorded.

## **Online Platforms**

This Safeguarding Policy also applies to the use of private social media groups including Facebook and Instagram, if set up by CYGAMS, and members are also required to follow the guidelines set out in our Code of Conduct.

## **Managing Sensitive Information**

- The Society has a Privacy Notice policy for the taking, using and storage of photographs.
- Permission will be sought from the parents for the use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes.
- The Society's web-based materials and social media will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.
- The Society will ensure confidentiality, in order to protect the rights of its members, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such as criminal record disclosures.
- See our Privacy Notice for the most up-to-date information regarding how information is used by CYGAMS.

## **Abuse**

- CYGAMS is aware that there are many forms of abuse including: physical, emotional, online, sexual, racial and neglect. Those involved in safeguarding have received relevant and up-to-date training in how to identify these types of abuse.
- CYGAMS is also aware of child-on-child abuse and recognises that abuse does not always occur between an adult and a child.
- The emotional wellbeing of children is part of our safeguarding responsibilities. Any repeated or inappropriate adult behaviour that causes distress or undermines a young person's self-esteem will be addressed in line with our safeguarding procedures.
- If there are concerns about possible abuse the procedure as set out in the Society's Suspicion of Abuse Policy will be followed.

## **Types of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation/ Specific Safeguarding Issues**

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2024) defines abuse as “a form of maltreatment of a child”. It sets out that:

“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. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.”

The four main types of abuse referred to in Keeping Children Safe in Education are:

- Physical (causing physical harm to a child, including where an adult fabricates or deliberately induces illness in a child)
- Emotional (persistent emotional maltreatment such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development)
- Sexual (forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities physically or online)
- neglect (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)

All committee members are aware of the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation so we are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection. Fuller details of the types and signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation are given in Appendices E and F to this policy. Committee members are aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the Society and/or can occur between children outside school. All committee members, but especially the designated safeguarding lead and assistants consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and serious youth violence.

In addition, Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education contains important information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues. Some of these, and our approach to them, are explained here:

### Child on child abuse including sexualised behaviours

CYGAMS may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of some children, particularly those who have experienced harm and trauma. We have a duty to safeguard all children and, whilst inappropriate behaviours will be challenged and addressed, it is in the context of providing appropriate support to all children in our society where harmful behaviour has occurred. We will, at all times, take a balanced and proportionate approach to risky or harmful behaviour. Any



incidents of child on child abuse will be managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and will follow the same procedures. We will seek advice and support from other agencies as appropriate and ensure that appropriate agencies are involved when required.

Our society recognises that some children may abuse other children and that this may happen in CYGAMS or outside of it. We understand there are many factors which may lead a child to display abusive behaviours towards other children, and that these matters are sensitive and often complex. We never assume, if abuse is not being reported, that it is not occurring in our society - we are vigilant to signs of abuse and promote a culture of safety and understanding.

Child on child abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This may include bullying (including cyber bullying), on-line abuse including the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, gender-related abuse, harmful sexual behaviours, physical abuse, sexting, upskirting, initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. We understand the importance of ensuring that abusive comments and interactions are recognised as abuse and will never be tolerated or passed off as banter, just having a laugh or part of growing up. We do not tolerate any such harmful behaviour in CYGAMS and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs, challenging inappropriate behaviours when they occur – we do not normalise abuse and it is not tolerated in our setting. Our culture is very much one of kindness, compassion, hope, connection and belonging.

We understand the barriers which may prevent a child from reporting abuse and work actively to remove these. We aim to provide children with the ability to report abuse and to tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. Our society understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with child on child abuse ie that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators but we recognise that all child on child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. We will never make a child feel ashamed for reporting abuse, that they are creating a problem by doing so. It will be explained that the law is in place to protect rather than criminalise them.

#### Harmful sexual behaviour

We understand that children's sexual behaviours exist on a continuum, ranging from age-appropriate / developmental to inappropriate / problematic / abusive. We also understand that harmful sexual behaviour and child on child abuse can occur between children of any age and gender, either in person or online. We recognise that children who display harmful sexual behaviour may have experienced their own abuse and trauma, and we will support them accordingly.

Our society has a 'zero-tolerance' approach to harmful sexual behaviour of any kind, and any inappropriate behaviour is challenged and addressed. We work in accordance with all statutory guidance in relation to such behaviours and with other agencies as appropriate.

#### Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Both CCE and CSE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for the something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female, and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others. CSE is a form of abuse which can happen to boys and girls from any

background or community. It may occur over time, or be a one off occurrence. In Essex, the definition of CSE from the DfE 2017 has been adopted:

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

We recognise that a significant number of children who are victims go missing from home, care and education at some point. Our Society is alert to the signs and indicators of a child becoming at risk of, or subject to, CSE or CCE and will take appropriate action to respond to any concerns. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is the named lead in the Society on these issues and will work with other agencies as appropriate.

We are aware of and vigilant with regard to additional specific safeguarding issues, such as:

- Child abduction and community safety incidents
- Children and the court system
- Children with family members in prison
- Modern slavery and the National Referral mechanism
- Homelessness

and would follow the guidance referred to in Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

### Risk in the community

We understand that safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside a child's home or our Society. All committee members are aware of contextual safeguarding and we are therefore mindful wider environmental factors present in a child's life are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. To this end, we always consider relevant information when assessing any risk to a child and share it with other agencies where appropriate to support better understanding of a child and their family. This is to ensure our children and families receive the right help at the right time.

### Mental Health

Committee members are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. We understand that, where children have suffered abuse or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Where we have concerns this may impact on mental health, we will seek advice and work with other agencies as appropriate to support a child and ensure they receive the help they need.

We recognise that good mental health for all our cast members and volunteers is very important and we understand the part our Society plays in this. Our Society aims to develop the emotional wellbeing and resilience of all children, as well as specific support for those with additional needs. We understand that there are risk factors which increase someone's vulnerability and protective factors that can promote or strengthen resilience. The more risk factors present in an individual's life, the more protective factors or support interventions are needed to counter-balance these to promote resilience and keep children safe.

It is vital that we work in partnership with parents to support the wellbeing of our cast members. Parents should share any concerns about the wellbeing of their child with the Society, so appropriate support and interventions can be identified and implemented.

If committee members have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, they should take immediate action and in accordance with this policy speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or assistants. The Society has systems and processes in place to identify possible mental health problems and via the Designated Safeguarding Lead would escalate and refer as necessary.

#### So-called 'Honour based Abuse'

So-called 'Honour-based abuse' (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. We understand that this form of abuse often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

Our Society understands how to report concerns when they suspect or know that this type of abuse has taken place. We are aware of the additional risk factors that may be present because of the possible wider network of family or community pressure and would liaise with other agencies as appropriate.

#### Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is illegal to practice FGM in the UK, or to take girls who are British nationals or permanent residents in the UK abroad for FGM, and is a form of child abuse which can have devastating physical and psychological consequences for girls and women.

Committee members should be aware that girls at risk of FGM may not be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so the subject should be approached with sensitivity. Suspicions that a child is being prepared for FGM may include: the child talking about a special procedure or ceremony, preparations to take a holiday eg absence from the society, vaccinations. Girls are at particular risk of FGM during the summer holidays.

#### Forced marriage

A forced marriage is one entered into without the full consent of one or both parties. It is where violence, threats or other forms of coercion are used and is a crime. Our committee members understand how to report concerns where this may be an issue.

#### Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can involve a wide range of behaviours and can include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse. We understand that anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse and that it can take place inside or outside of the home.

Domestic abuse may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. Domestic abuse is not limited to physical acts of violence or threatening behaviour and can include psychological, physical, sexual, financial, controlling or coercive behaviour and emotional. Our Society recognises that exposure to domestic abuse (either by seeing, hearing or experiencing its effects) can have a serious, long term emotional and psychological impact on children. We will work with other key

partners and receive/share relevant information where there are concerns that domestic abuse may be an issue for a child or family or be placing a child at risk of harm.

#### Prevention of radicalisation

Our committee members are aware of the risks to children from extremism, radicalisation and terrorism and are alert to changes in children's behaviour and factors that may indicate concern.

#### Serious Violence

All committee members are aware of the risk factors and indicators that may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from the Society, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that a child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs. As with other safeguarding issues, we may work with other relevant agencies to share information and address concerns, to help safeguard all children.

Our society understands that children with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation in this group of children. This can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- that they may be more prone to peer group isolation than others;
- the potential to be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying- without outwardly showing any signs;
- communication difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

We consider extra pastoral support for these children and are aware of organisations such as SENDIASS, Mencap and NSPCC who offer information and support.

Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning - The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBT can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT. We will take a cautious approach when supporting a gender questioning child and will consider the broad range of their individual needs in partnership with the child's parents, clinical advice and wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying, following the DfE's guidance on Gender Questioning Children when deciding how to proceed. Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. Our committee members endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced, and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of the committee.

### **Harmful Sexual Behaviour**

- Those responsible for safeguarding have also received training on harmful sexual behaviours and are aware that this has many forms including:
  - Inappropriate or unwanted sexualised touching:
  - Sexual violence:

- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm:
  - Pressurising, forcing, or coercing someone to share nude images (known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery):
  - Sharing sexual images of a person without their consent:
  - We will inform all members of the report remove NSPCC support and information telephone number. This information will be displayed in our foyer.
  - Bullying of a sexual nature online or offline, for example sexual or sexist name-calling.
- This behaviour is not acceptable within CYGAMS and appropriate action will be taken following the procedures set out below.

## Online safety

The range of online risks could be categorised as:

content – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material, for example pornography, fake news, suicide, racist or radical and extremist views;

contact – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, for example peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes;

conduct – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes harm, for example making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying;

commerce – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams.

When new volunteers or regular visitors join our Society they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place and the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and assistants) and how to share concerns with them. We also provide information on safeguarding to any visitor to our Society, so they understand how to report a concern if they have one.

Any volunteer or visitor to the Society must refer any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or, in their absence, one of the assistants). Committee Members are also aware of their role in the local early help process. Where there is risk of immediate harm, concerns will be referred immediately by telephone to the Children and Families Hub and the Police if a crime has been committed. Less urgent concerns or requests for support will be sent to the Children and Families Hub via Essex Effective Support. The Society may also seek advice from Social Care or another appropriate agency about a concern, if we are unsure how to respond to it.

Wherever possible, the Society will always undertake to share any safeguarding concerns or an intention to refer a child to another agency with the parents or carers permission, unless to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. In an emergency it may not be possible to gain parental consent. If it is necessary for another agency to meet with a child in CYGAMS, we will always seek to inform parents or carers, unless we are advised not to by that agency. It may be necessary to seek advice from the Children and Families Hub and / or Essex Police in making decisions about when it is appropriate to share information with parents / carers.

## **Training**

In line with statutory requirements, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and assistants undertake Level 3 child protection training at least once every two years, as well as other informal and formal updates in between. All committee members including volunteers receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated and in line with advice from the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB). In addition, all committee members receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Records of any safeguarding/child protection training undertaken are kept for all committee members.

The society ensures that the Designated Safeguarding Lead and assistants also undertake training in interagency working and other matters as appropriate.

All new committee members, chaperones and volunteers, are provided with induction training which includes: provision of this policy and the Staff Code of Conduct including the whistleblowing procedures; provision and signature of the Acceptable Use of Technology agreement including communication with cast members and the use of social media; signature of a declaration regarding disqualification; notification that the Designated Safeguarding Lead is Alison Khattar; provision and discussion of Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

All committee members are reminded at least annually of the importance of recognising and acting upon reports of child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment.

## **Records, Information Sharing and Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. A member of the committee must never guarantee confidentiality to anyone about a safeguarding concern or promise to keep it a secret. In accordance with statutory requirements, where there is a child protection concern, this must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and may require further referral to and subsequent investigation by appropriate authorities.

Information on individual child protection cases may be shared by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or assistants with other relevant committee members. This will be on a need to know basis only and where it is in the child's best interests to do so.

Accurate records are essential to good child protection practice. Our Society is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our Society and when these records should be shared with other agencies. Information sharing can help to ensure that a child receives the right help at the right time and can prevent a concern from becoming more serious and difficult to address.

Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Sharing information is a key part of safeguarding work and decisions about how much information to share, with whom and when, can have a profound impact on a child's life. Whilst the Data Protection Act 2018 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing where there are real safeguarding concerns. Fears about sharing information cannot (and will not) be allowed to

stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect. Generic data flows relating to child protection are recorded in our records of processing activity and regularly reviewed; and our online privacy notices accurately reflect our use of data for child protection purposes. Relevant committee members are aware of the processing conditions which allow information to be stored and shared for safeguarding purposes, including information which is sensitive and personal. These allow practitioners to share information without consent where there is good reason to do so and to withhold data where the serious harm test under the legislation is met.

Committee members receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, will make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time and location. The Designated Safeguarding Lead or assistants will decide on appropriate action and will record this accordingly, dated and signed.

## **Recording**

- In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, the details of an allegation or reported incident will be recorded, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a statutory child agency.
- An accurate note shall be made of the date and time of the incident or disclosure, the parties involved, what was said or done and by whom, any action taken to investigate the matter, any further action taken e.g. suspension of an individual, where relevant the reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, and the name of the persons reporting and to whom it was reported.
- The record will be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation.

## **Allegations About a Member of the Society/Other Adult**

All committee members, volunteers, and chaperones are expected to maintain high standards of behaviour. These expectations are outlined in the Committee Members Code of Conduct and covered during induction and annual safeguarding training.

An allegation may relate to an individual who has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm.
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

Concerns should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or assistants immediately. Where the concern meets the threshold above, the DSL will make a referral to the Essex Workforce Allegations Team via [LADO@essex.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@essex.gov.uk) within one working day, or by phone (03330 139797) if immediate action is required.

In cases where it's unclear whether the threshold has been met, the DSL will undertake preliminary fact-finding to determine the correct course of action. This is not an investigation, but a clarification to guide the response. Confidentiality will be maintained, and data protection obligations respected.

If a member of the Society is suspended or removed due to misconduct involving children, or would have been had they not resigned, a referral will be made to the DBS.

All discussions with the LADO and related actions will be documented. Substantiated allegations will result in a record that includes:

- A clear summary of the allegation
- Details of the investigation and outcome
- Actions taken
- Whether the outcome was substantiated, unsubstantiated, unfounded, or malicious
- Whether the information will be included in any future references

In borderline cases, the Society may discuss the situation informally with the LADO without naming the individual.

For all allegations other than those found to have been malicious or false, the Society will keep the information required on the file of the person accused, including a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation, how it was followed up and resolved, a note of action taken, decisions reached and whether the outcome was substantiated, unsubstantiated or unfounded, a copy to the person concerned where agreed by children's social care or the police and a declaration on whether the information will be included in any future reference, noting that substantiated allegations should be included in references, provided the information is factual.

## **Low-Level Concerns**

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the Code of Conduct, but does not meet the threshold for LADO referral. Examples include being overly familiar with children, having favourites, using inappropriate language, or spending time alone with children behind closed doors.

All low-level concerns must be reported to the DSL or the assistants. The Safeguarding Lead will:

- Speak with the person raising the concern and gather details.
- Speak with the individual concerned and any relevant witnesses.
- Record all details confidentially, including the rationale for decisions and actions taken.
- Monitor for patterns over time and escalate if necessary.

Committee members are encouraged to self-refer if they believe their behaviour could be interpreted as inappropriate. All records will be reviewed regularly to identify repeat behaviour and ensure appropriate responses, including training, disciplinary action, or referral to the LADO if necessary.

## **Rights and Confidentiality**

All individuals involved in a concern or allegation—whether child or adult—have a right to confidentiality. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis. Accused individuals have the right to a fair process and are presumed innocent unless proven otherwise. Medical and vulnerability information will only be shared to safeguard wellbeing, and always in accordance with data protection laws.



All children have the right to be listened to, to feel safe, and to express concerns about behaviour of adults or other young people without fear of dismissal or retaliation.

Any health and medical information disclosed to the Society will only be shared on a need-to-know basis and with permission where possible and appropriate, in order to safeguard the individual's health and wellbeing.

Any information about an individual's vulnerability disclosed to us will be treated with confidentiality and only shared with permission or if it is in the interests of safeguarding that individual's immediate safety and wellbeing.

## **Whistleblowing**

Whistleblowing is the act of reporting concerns in the public interest, including concerns about safeguarding failures or unsafe practices. All committee members and volunteers are reminded annually of their duty to raise such concerns. If a committee member is concerned about the actions of another adult, they should report to the DSL, assistants, Chair, or Vice-Chair.

All committee members and the wider CYGAMS community should be able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and feel confident any concern will be taken seriously by the society. Committee members are made aware of the duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of committee members in line with the Society's Code of Conduct. We have a culture of safety and of raising concerns; any concerns about safeguarding practices are reported and followed up, but committee members are aware of their obligation to challenge inaction.

If a committee member feels unable to report internally, they may contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline at 0800 028 0285 (8am–8pm, Mon–Fri) or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk). Parents or others in the wider community can contact the NSPCC general helpline at 0808 800 5000 (available 24/7) or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk), and/or The Charities Commission.

## **Accidents**

- To avoid accidents, chaperones and children will be advised of “house rules” regarding health and safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds. Adults are asked to read and abide by all appropriate and completed risk assessments.
- Children will be advised of the clothing and footwear appropriate to the activity/activities that will be undertaken.
- If a child is injured while in the care of the Society, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the Society's accident book.
- If a child is injured while in the theatre, a designated first-aider from the theatre will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the Theatre's accident book.
- Any accidents that have occurred whilst the young person was in the care of the Society shall be reported to the parents of the child.
- If a child joins the production with an obvious physical injury, a record of this will be made in the accident book. This record will be countersigned by the parent. This record can be useful if a formal allegation is made later and will also be a record that the child did not sustain the injury while participating in the production.

## **Disclosure and Barring Service**

- If the Society believes it is in the best interest to obtain criminal record disclosures (DBS) for chaperones or other personnel, it will inform the individual of the necessary procedures and the level of disclosure required:
  - The Society requires that all Chaperones hold an Enhanced DBS certificate and Chaperone Licence.
  - The Society requires that the Directors, Musical Directors, and Choreographer/Production Assistant hold an Enhanced DBS for each show.
- The Society will have a written code of practice for the handling of disclosure information.
- The Society will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

## **Chaperones**

- Chaperones will be appointed by the Society for the care of the children during the production process. By law the chaperone is acting to a child in loco parentis and should exercise the care which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give a child.
- Potential chaperones will need to complete the relevant paperwork provided by Essex City Council to become a licensed chaperone as well complete an advanced DBS.

Please see Appendix C for full responsibilities.

## **Appendix A – Relevant Legislation**

- Children And Young Persons Act 1933 and 1963 (as amended)
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Child (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Online Safety Act 2023
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)
- Protection Of Children Act 1978
- Criminal Justice And Court Services Act 2000
- Working together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- The Serious Crime Act
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Information Sharing Advice for Safeguarding Practitioners (HMG, 2018)]
- What to do if your worried a Child is being Abused (HMG, 2015)
- The Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (S.74-Serious Crime Act 2015)
- Let's Talk: Reducing the risk of suicide (ESCB 2022)
- Preventing Youth Violence and Gang Involvement (Home Office, 2015)
- Criminal Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adults, County Lines Guidance (Home Office, 2018)
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: Advice for Education Settings working with Children and Young People (March 2024)

## **Appendix B – Emergency Duty Team (EDT)**

The Chelmsford, Essex Emergency Duty Team (EDT) for out of hours urgent emergencies can be contacted on 0345 606 1212. This number is for adult social care and children's services only.

NSPCC Helpline 0800 800500 email: [helpatnspcc.org.uk](mailto:helpatnspcc.org.uk)

Childline 0800 1111

Children and Families Hub 0345 6037627

## **Appendix C – Chaperones Full Responsibilities**

- Chaperones will be made aware of the Society's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- Where Chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the Safeguarding Lead (s). If changes cannot be made satisfactorily, Safeguarding Lead (s) and/or the chaperone (s) should consider not allowing the children to continue.
- If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, they should speak to a Safeguarding Lead, who will make the decision not to allow the child to continue. If the Safeguarding Leads are not available at the time, the chaperone is able to make this decision in their place.
- Under the Dangerous Performances Act, no child of compulsory school age is permitted to do anything which may endanger life or limb.
- During performances, children will be shown how to enter the building and where to sign in and where they are allowed to go within the building.
- Chaperones will be aware of where all children are at all times.
- Chaperones will be allocated to specific dressing rooms/children and also to communal areas.
- Children are not to leave the theatre or performance/rehearsal venue unsupervised by chaperones, unless in the company of parents or with prior written agreement of parents. e.g. between matinee and evening performance.
- Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets. No adults will be alone in the toilets with a child. The chaperone will ensure that there is no adult in the toilet before the child enters and will then wait outside, before returning them to their dressing room/Green Room/stage.
- Children will not be allowed to enter adult dressing rooms.
- Chaperones should be aware of safety and first aid procedures in the venue and will be proactive to ensure children in their care do not place themselves or others in danger.
- Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported and recorded to the Society/Theatre.
- Chaperones on door-duty must ensure that all children sign in when entering the venue and out when leaving the venue and that the children reach the person that is collecting them.
- Chaperones on door-duty will ensure that only the children listed as cast members enter the venue.
- The chaperone should stay with the children until they have been collected.

## **Appendix D – What to do if a child discloses abuse (adapted from advice from NSPCC)**

It can be very hard for children and young people to reveal abuse. Often they fear there may be consequences. Some delay telling someone about abuse for a long time, while others never tell anyone, even if they want to.

Children value being believed and, as the adult they have chosen to tell, it's vital that you act on what you've been told.

Below you can find advice on what steps to take if a child tells you they've been abused and how you can help keep them safe.

### **If a child discloses abuse**

If you're in a situation where a child discloses abuse to you, there are a number of steps you can take.

- Stay calm and in control of your emotions. Listen carefully to the child. Avoid expressing your own views on the matter. A reaction of shock or disbelief could cause the child to 'shut down', retract or stop talking
- Let them know they've done the right thing. Reassurance can make a big impact to the child who may have been keeping the abuse secret
- Tell them it's not their fault. Abuse is never the child's fault and they need to know this
- Say you believe them. A child could keep abuse secret in fear they won't be believed. They've told you because they want help and trust you'll be the person to believe them and help them
- Don't investigate or talk to the alleged abuser. Avoid asking leading questions as this could be harmful to the investigation. Confronting the alleged abuser about what the child's told you could make the situation a lot worse for the child
- Explain what you'll do next. If age appropriate, explain to the child you'll need to report the abuse to someone who will be able to help. Do not promise confidentiality
- Don't delay reporting the abuse. The sooner the abuse is reported after the child discloses the better. Report as soon as possible so details are fresh in your mind and action can be taken quickly.

## **Appendix E - Types of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation**

Abuse: 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. 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 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 illtreatment 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, although it may occur alone.

Harm can include the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others, for example in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.

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 (including via the internet). 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.

## **Appendix F – Recognising and Responding to Abuse/Neglect/Exploitation**

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

### **PHYSICAL SIGNS OF ABUSE**

1. Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
2. Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
3. Injuries which have not received medical attention
4. Neglect - under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc.
5. Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
6. Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
7. Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc. which do not have an accidental explanation
8. Cuts/scratches/substance abuse
9. Frequent “accidents”
10. Frequent/repeated accidents
11. Parents not leaving the side of an injured child
12. Aggressive play/conduct problems
13. Preoccupation with own body and health
14. Unusual degree of parental hostility
15. Unusual lack of parental concern
16. Different accounts of events

### **NEGLECT**

1. Developmental delay
2. Excessive hunger
3. Inadequate clothing
4. Very poor condition – skin, hair, nails and general physical appearance
5. Poor hygiene
6. Marked drop in weight/height centiles without organic reason
7. Tired and apathetic presentation
8. Poor school attendance
9. Inability to play – due to lack of stimulation
10. Parents with mental health/drug/alcohol problems
11. Untreated illness or injury
12. Evidence of failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger
13. Other physical conditions resulting from inadequate care
14. Withdrawn



15. Food scavenging
16. Poor school achievement

#### INDICATORS OF POSSIBLE SEXUAL ABUSE

1. Any allegation made by a child concerning sexual abuse
2. Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play
3. Sexual activity through words, play or drawing
4. Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
5. Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
6. Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
7. Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia

#### EMOTIONAL SIGNS OF ABUSE

1. Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging. Also depression/aggression, extreme anxiety
2. Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
3. Obsessions or phobias
4. Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
5. Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
6. Attention-seeking behaviour
7. Persistent tiredness
8. Running away/stealing/lying

## Appendix Fa - Concern about a Child

Name and Form:
Date:
Concern raised by:
Reason for concern:
Immediate action to be taken:
Detail of follow-up with dates:

## Appendix Fb

CHILD PROTECTION RECORD – Report of a Concern
--

Date of record:			
Date of incident:			
Name of referrer:		Role of referrer:	
Child name:		School Year	
Details of concern:	<input type="checkbox"/> use body map if appropriate (with advice of Designated Lead) <input type="checkbox"/> use initials for other children / young people involved, unless there is a specific need to name them in full <input type="checkbox"/> contemporaneous notes, if taken, may be attached to this form		
Reported to:		Role of person reported to:	
Signed:			

Action taken:		Advice sought:  (from whom and what was advice given)	
Concern / referral discussed with parent / carer?		If not, state reasons why – if yes, note discussion with parent	
Referral made:		If not, state reasons why – if yes, record to whom and any action agreed	
Feedback to referring DSL:			By whom
Response to / action taken with Cast Member:			By whom
Name and contact number of School:			
Name and contact details of GP:			

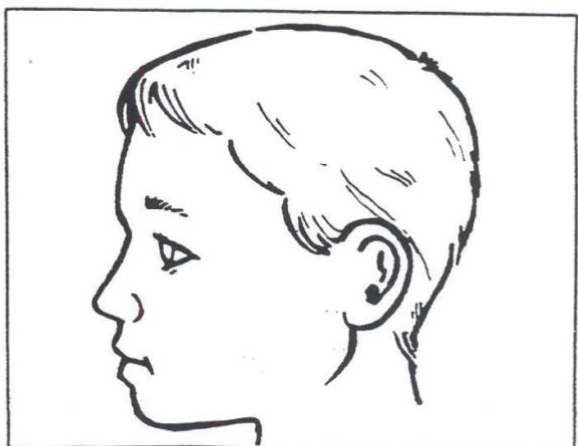
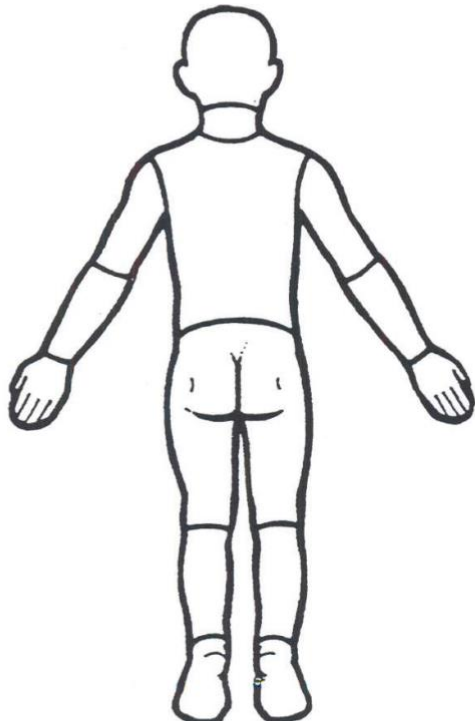
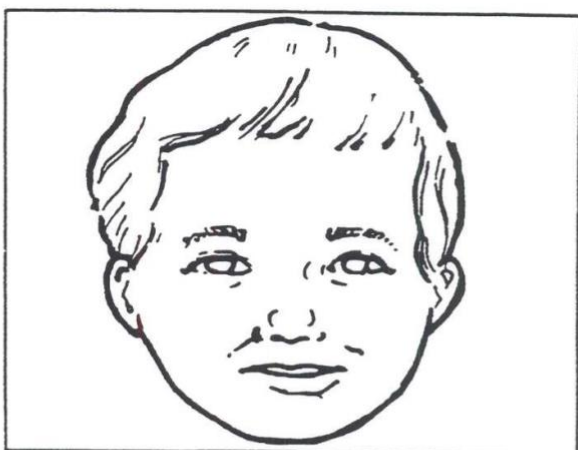
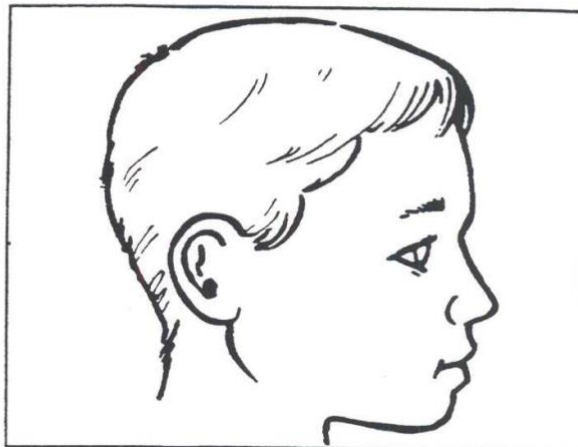
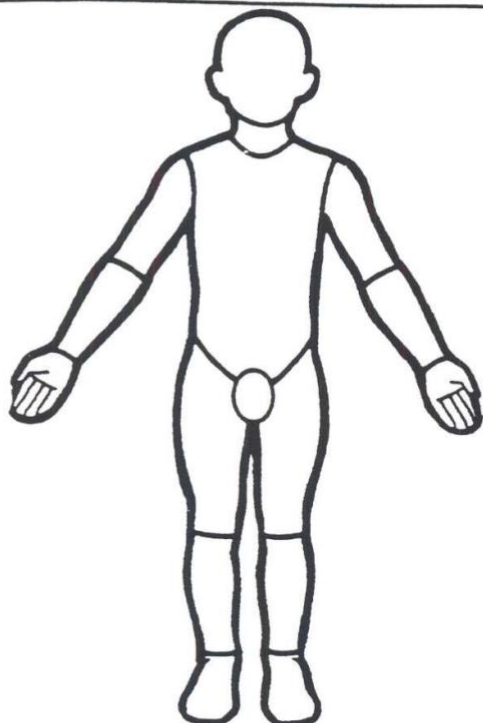


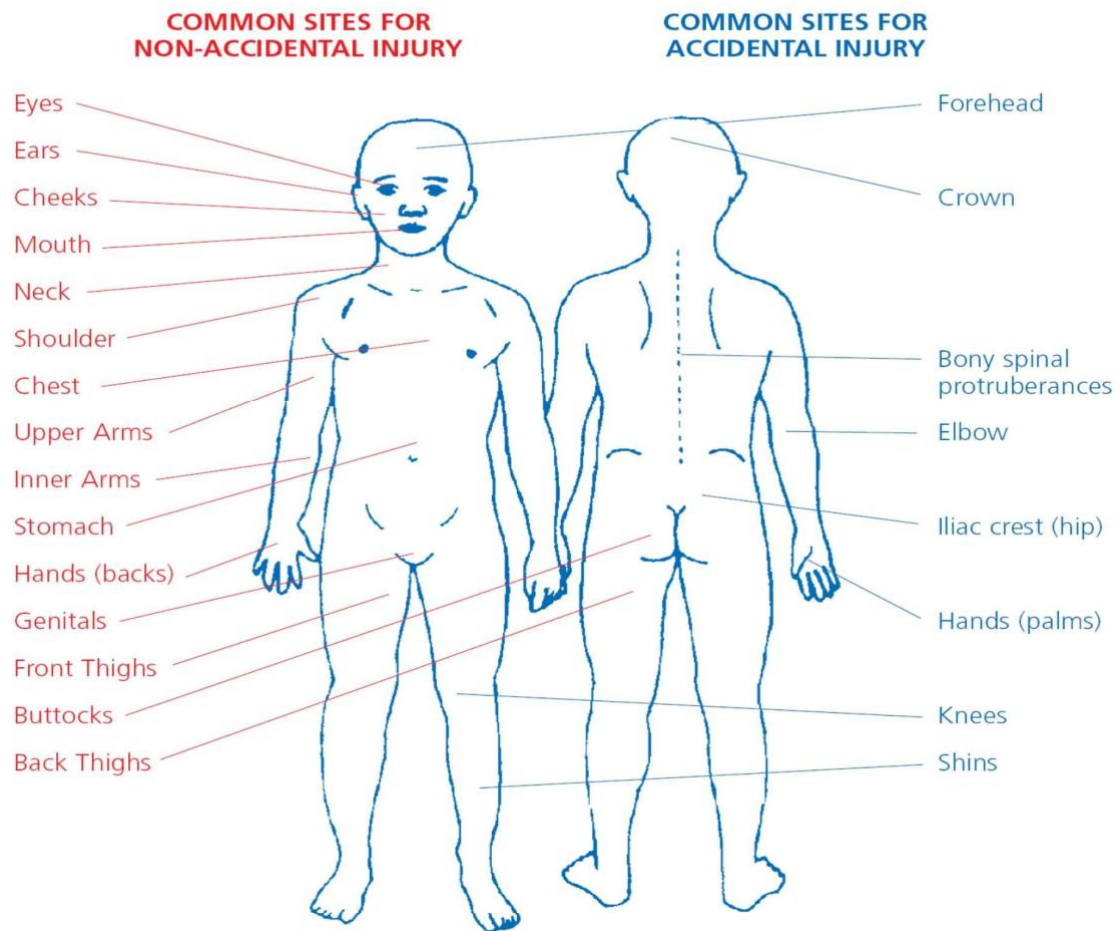
## Appendix G – Body Maps

OLDER CHILD

Body Map

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## Appendix H - Guidelines for Committee Members Regarding Professional Distance

We wish to ensure that committee members behaviour and actions do not place cast members or the committee member at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a cast member.

Professional Distance:

- Committee members should rarely need to touch cast members. In all circumstances committee members should maintain a safe and appropriate distance. If any form of manual/physical touching is required, it should be provided openly. Committee members need to ensure that their behaviour and physical contact with cast members do not inadvertently lay them open to allegations of abuse. Where circumstances mean that they are alone with a child, for example in an individual setting scene or musical direction, it is good practice to ensure that a member of the safeguarding team are within earshot or present. Where possible, a gap or barrier should be maintained between a committee member, and cast member at all times: examples of good practice include keeping a door open.
- At times, it may be necessary for a Director, Assistant Director or Choreographer to make brief physical contact with a cast member in order to demonstrate stage direction, dance positioning, or physicality relevant to a performance. In such instances, adults must always:
  - o Ask for the young person's permission before making any physical contact.
  - o Ensure that the contact is appropriate, limited, and justified by the context of direction.
  - o Avoid contact where another method of instruction (verbal or visual) would be sufficient.
- For scenes involving close physical interaction, emotional vulnerability, or suggestive content, an Intimacy Coordinator will be appointed. Their role is to ensure that cast members are fully comfortable and give clear, informed consent to the direction being given. The Intimacy Coordinator will ensure that any staging of physical contact is carefully choreographed, appropriate, and regularly checked for ongoing comfort. Cast members are always entitled to withdraw consent at any time without consequence.
- All interactions must respect the cast member's autonomy and dignity, and any concerns or discomfort should be reported to the Director, Designated Safeguarding Lead, or Intimacy Coordinator immediately.
- Committee members should be wary of inappropriate electronic communication with pupils and should avoid social interaction on social networking sites.
- If committee members think it is necessary to restrain a child from doing something they should try non-physical approaches – e.g. by talking to them, asking them not to move if they are injured or by standing in the way. If committee members have to use physical restraint, it should be the minimum necessary for their safety. If they are in imminent danger, it might be necessary to hold them by their clothing. Whatever the circumstances, physical restraint must be reasonable. Any physical intervention should be reported to the DSL and recorded on the Physical Intervention log.
- In the rare situations where a cast member is to be driven in a car by a committee member, the parents' approval will always be required in advance (unless there is an emergency).



## Appendix J – Policy Statement

For display in Young Gen Foyer

### CHELMSFORD YOUNG GEN CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

This Child Protection Policy was authorised by the Trustees on:

.....

We are committed to supporting our parents and families.

As committee members of Young Gen we are committed to the nurturing, protection and safeguarding of all, especially the young and vulnerable.

We recognise that child protection is everybody's responsibility.

We are committed to following the agreed procedures and following statutory and specialist guidelines.

We review the full policy, and its implementation annually.

If you have any concerns for a child or in relation to any child protection matter then speak to one of the following who have been approved as the Designated Safeguarding Team for this society.

Alison Khattar Jimmy Hooper Jake Burtenshaw Alex Cass

A copy of the full policy can be seen on the Young Gen Website.

Signed: .....

.....

.....

.....

Date: .....

## Appendix K – The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Assistants

### Referrals

- Refer promptly all cases of suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation to the local authority children's Social Care team and support staff making the referrals
- Refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required and support staff making the referrals
- Refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the DBS as required
- Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required

### Work with others

- Liaise with Chairman/Vice Chairman to inform them of issues, especially ongoing enquiries and police investigations, including being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult
- As required, liaise with the case manager and designated officer at the local authority for child protection concerns
- Liaise with committee members on matters of safety, safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies and act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff, including considering how safeguarding, welfare and educational outcomes are linked
- Act as a point of contact with safeguarding partners
- Liaise with mental health support teams as appropriate
- Promote supportive engagement with parents/carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances

### Knowledge, skills and training

- Receive appropriate training every year as well as refresher courses or updates of their knowledge and skills at least annually;
- Ensure each member of the committee has access to and understands the Society's safeguarding policy and procedures, especially new committee members and new volunteers
- Understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation
- Understand the importance of information sharing both within the society and with safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners
- Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with SEND, health conditions and young carers
- Keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions made including the rationale for those discussions, including where referrals were or were not made to another agency

- Act as the first point of contact for parents, committee members, external agencies in all matters relating to the Prevent duty and provide advice and support
- Recognise the additional risks children with SEND face online, eg from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support SEND children to stay safe online
- Obtain access to resources and attend relevant or refresher training courses
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all committee members
- Understand the importance of their role in providing information and support to social care and understand the lasting impact adversity and trauma can have and how to respond to this to promote educational outcomes
- Understand the difficulties children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and consider how to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication

#### Raise awareness

- Ensure the Society's safeguarding policy is known, understood and used appropriately
- Ensure the Society's safeguarding policy is reviewed annually and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, working with the trustees to achieve this
- Ensure the safeguarding policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the society in this
- Link with the ESCB to make sure committee members are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding

#### Child protection files

- Ensure that concerns, referrals and child protection files are kept up to date, confidential and stored securely. These should include a clear and comprehensive summary, details of follow up action taken, decisions reached and the outcome. Any sharing of the file is only carried out in line with information sharing advice.

#### Availability

- During rehearsal time and show week the DSL or the assistants should always be available for committee members to discuss safeguarding concerns. Outside those hours the assistants are available via telephone or via email checked at least twice weekly.

## Appendix L - Low Level Concerns Policy

### Purpose of the Policy

We understand that it is critical to have a culture where all concerns about adults are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately. This will create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the society's values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all committee members.

Behaviour which is not consistent with the standards and values of the Society needs to be addressed and can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse. We promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about adults working in or on behalf of the Society are dealt with promptly and appropriately. A low level concern can be no more than a sense of unease or a nagging doubt that an adult may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with our society code of conduct. The policy applies to all adults including committee members, chaperones and volunteers.

Committee members do not need to be able to determine whether their concern is low level or whether it meets the threshold for referral to the LADO: once staff share what they believe to be a low level concern, that determination is made by either the DSL or Assistants.

To achieve the purpose of this low level concerns policy It is essential that:

- committee members are clear in distinguishing between expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour by themselves and others
- committee members interpret the sharing of concerns as a neutral act
- the Society addresses unprofessional behaviour and supports the individual to correct it at an early stage
- the Society identifies concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, including any patterns, that may need to be followed up with the LADO
- the Society provides responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of concerns when they are raised and reflects on any weaknesses identified in its safeguarding processes.

### Procedure for reporting and recording low level concerns

All low level concerns must be shared with the DSL or Assistants within 24 hours of becoming aware of it, where the concern relates to a particular incident, although it is never too late to share a low level concern. Concerns about the DSL must be shared with a Assistants. The concern should be shared verbally with the Assistants or alternatively a written summary can be provided.

If the committee member raising the concern does not wish to be named, they can leave an anonymous written note for the DSL. However, anonymity cannot be promised to members of the committee sharing concerns and wherever possible, committee members are encouraged to consent to be named to help create a culture of openness and transparency.

Occasionally a member of the committee may find themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted or might appear compromising to others, or they may have behaved in a manner

which, on reflection, they consider falls below the standard in the code of conduct. Self-reporting in these circumstances can be positive: it is self-protective and enables a potentially difficult issue to be addressed at the earliest opportunity; it demonstrates awareness of the expected standards and how the actions could be perceived; and it contributes towards maintaining a culture where everyone aspires to the highest standards of conduct and behaviour.

Where the concern is provided verbally, the DSL will make an appropriate record of the conversation immediately following the discussion. This will include: the names and roles of the individual sharing the concern and the individual about whom the concern is being raised; and brief context and concise, accurate details of the concern and any relevant incidents. The record should be signed, timed and dated.

The DSL will take the following action according to the nature and detail of the concern shared with them:

- Speak to the person raising the concern
- Speak to any potential witnesses (unless advised not to by the LADO, where they have been contacted)
- Speak to the individual about whom the concern has been raised (unless advised not to by the LADO, where they have been contacted)
- Review the information and determine whether the behaviour is (i) entirely consistent with the committee members code of conduct and the law or (ii) constitutes a low level concern or (iii) is not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO but may merit seeking advice from the LADO on a no names basis or (iv) when considered with any other previous low level concerns, could meet the threshold of an allegation and should be referred or (v) meets the threshold of an allegation and should be referred. Where there is any doubt, the DSL will seek advice from the LADO on a no names basis.
- Make appropriate records of all conversations and their determination of the concern, as well as the rationale for the decision and any action taken.
- Speak to the person who shared the concern to provide them with feedback.
- Act with discretion when carrying out any investigations, and on a need to know basis.
- Speak to the person about whom the concern was raised to ensure that they understand the importance of maintaining a positive professional relationship, including with the person raising the concern and also to discuss any support or training they might need.
- Consider whether the low level concern raises issues of misconduct or performance and where necessary, triggering disciplinary or capability procedures.
- Consider the employment status of the individual who is the subject of the concern ie where they are a contractor or volunteer the response may need to be tailored accordingly.
- Consider whether any internal procedures need to be changed as a result of the investigation of the low level concern.

The DSL will retain all records of low level concerns, including those which are deemed to be consistent with the committee members code of conduct, in a central paper file. Where multiple low level concerns have been shared regarding the same individual these will be kept in chronological order with a timeline. These records will be kept confidential and held securely. Where the concern triggers disciplinary or grievance procedures, it will also be recorded on the relevant personnel files in the normal way, as well as if the LADO advises that the concern meets the threshold of an allegation.

The DSL will review the low level concerns file at least annually to ensure that all such concerns are being dealt with promptly and appropriately and that any potential patterns of behaviour are identified. The concerns will be retained until further guidance about retention is issued.

Low level concerns which have not met the threshold for referral to the LADO should not be included in references unless they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, for example misconduct or poor performance.

Examples of real life behaviours that came before child sexual abuse in other organisational settings

- A position of power within the committee member group was such that although committee members became increasingly concerned about crude language, they felt unable to challenge. A cast member on placement was petrified of the member of staff.
- Committee member was difficult to manage, flouting Society rules. Committee member instilled fear in other committee members or volunteers through behaviour. Committee member had concerns about the way cast members were selected to take part in a production, but parents were desperate for their children to be part of the production.
- Common knowledge amongst committee members and cast members that a committee member made inappropriate jokes.
- Committee member aligned themselves with those in power, making it difficult to challenge behaviour that may have caused concern.
- Committee members noticed another committee member had favourite cast members and that there were blurred boundaries between them, with a culture of pranks.
- Cast members felt emotionally blackmailed or were afraid of the committee member. There was a highly competitive atmosphere which led to high levels of compliance with the committee member's expectations and gratitude for what was achieved.
- Example of a context where a committee member self-referred but no further action was taken: parents were unable to collect a child from the society and asked the member of the committee to take the child home, which they did without anyone else in the car.