

Introduction

St Margaret's Players (the Players) is committed to ensure all those who are associated with the Players in any way are protected from abuse of any kind. This includes both children and adults. Members, audiences and all performers and anyone associated with the Players is fully protected. This includes, but is not restricted to:

- recognising and responding to abuse.
- responding to allegations of abuse made against a child or children (Under 18 years of age) and adults
- ensuring the right people work and volunteer with children.
- preventing and responding to bullying.

Safeguarding will adhere to the principles of:

- Necessary, Proportionate, Relevant, Adequate, Accurate, Timely and Secure

St Margaret's Players has adopted this safeguarding policy and expects every adult working or helping to support it and comply with it. Consequently, this policy shall apply to all associated in any way with the Players.

Consent Forms

We shall always obtain written consent from a parent or guardian for any event which takes place with children in attendance without their responsible parent or guardian present. Consent will be obtained via:

- consent forms will include emergency contact details and will set out any specific safety needs/requirements for children.
- all consent forms will be kept secure and shall be stored in accordance with our data protection privacy policy.

Supervision

For most activities and events, our procedure for supervision of children is as follows:

- where we hold any events or activities whereby a child attends alongside the parent or guardian, parents and guardians should ensure that children are effectively supervised.
- the Players will actively encourage parents and guardians to assist at times to be agreed in the supervision of all children in association with the Players members whenever their children are participating in the event or activity.

Managing Behaviour of Children Generally

Whenever any adult engaged by us is faced with challenging or inappropriate behaviour from a child or with conflict between children:

- they must treat each child fairly and equally approach the situation in a calm and neutral manner. (For the avoidance of doubt shouting at children must be avoided).
- only ever use physical restraint or intervention in order to protect the immediate safety of a person, for example; to prevent an injury or harm, either to the child or others.
- whenever it is justified to physically restrain a child or to physically intervene, the amount of force used to be kept to the absolute minimum taking into account the risk posed.

Safeguarding children at events and activities responsibilities and planning

Typically, we may arrange the following types of events and activities which could involve children:

- Shows, performances
- Rehearsals for shows
- Academy classes
- Social events
- Theatre visits

The Allocated Safeguarding Officer/s shall hold ultimate responsibility for the safety and appropriateness of the event. They may however appoint a delegate/s for some responsibilities, although the Allocated Safeguarding Officer/s will hold ultimate responsibility for overseeing the safety for all events and activities.

All individuals under this policy must also play an active role reassuring the safety of children at all times. For certain types of events or activities, we may issue an additional code of conduct policy or some specific other requirements which is specific to that occasion. Any such additional documentation will be made available to all those concerned, (Players members, parents, guardians etc.) in advance, they should be read carefully and adhere to the code of conduct.

Managing Risks Posed by Other Children

It is important for all adults engaged by us to recognise that children can face harm from their peers.

This can commonly take the form of bullying. Bullying can be defined as any behaviour which is:

- repeated, and has the intention of hurting someone either physically or emotionally
- bullying can sometimes be motivated by prejudice based on certain groups. For example, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation

- bullying can often include physical harm, perpetrated against another child
- name-calling and threats
- cyber bullying (threats and abusive comments, made via technology)

Any instance of bullying or concern relating to possible bullying between children at any event or activities arranged by us, will usually be dealt with in the first instance as follows:

- address the issue with the child/ children who are perceived as bullying another child or children.
- all matters in relation to the prevention and management of bullying should be taken into consideration with the allocated to Safeguarding Officer

Members of the Public

We do also recognise that members of the public may take photographs when they are attending our premises, events or activities. We ask for any parents/ guardians of other members of the public take the above into consideration when taking photographs at our premises, events and activities.

Should any member of the public appear to be taking inappropriate photographs they must be asked to stop immediately. The matters must be recorded in writing and referred to the designated Safeguarding Officer/ Officers.

Venues

The location for any events or activities which are held by us should be risk assessed properly in reference to suitability and safety for children. Fire and safety procedures and precautions should be made clear to all of those involved

Photography

On some occasions we may take photographs featuring children. We recognise that photography of children carries risks such as:

- the potential for images to be reused shared or adapted in a damaging or inappropriate manner.
- the general risk of sharing images and the impact this could have on child's public image as they grow older.
- in view of these risks we will – always ask for written permission from a child's parent/ guardian before taking and sharing any image of them
- always ensure that the child and their parent guardian are probably informed how an image will be used and shared.
- always ensure that the child's identity is protected as far as possible within any publish material

- ask that parent/ guardians, children and any other person connected to them, who may wish to share any of our published images, which feature other children to refrain from doing so, unless they have the permission of all other children and their parents/guardian
- always store photographs in accordance with data protection law

First Aid

Any accident or injury concerning a child should be brought to the attention of the nearest first aider who will take appropriate action. They should, after appropriate application of first aid, formally report to an available allocated safeguarding officer.

Internal or External Safeguarding Referral

This must be raised in the first instance with an available Allocated Safeguarding Officer (or where this is not appropriate, a different senior member of the Players) so that the next appropriate steps may be agreed and actioned. We recognise that there could be circumstances where a person may need to report a matter that has taken place in a setting outside of the person's engagement with the Players.

Usually, any appropriate steps following a safeguarding referral in respect of an individual connected to the Players will include either:

- further initial enquiries
- escalation to the applicable Local Authority Children's Services department for assessment and/or the police for investigation.
- instigation of any appropriate disciplinary, formal investigation processes and suspension of any person concerned within the Players
- a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service or any other relevant regulatory bodies

Any person within the Players who has allegations made against them shall be informed properly in a formal meeting of the particulars of the allegations and the relevant next steps which shall be taken. Such a meeting should ordinarily be held by an Allocated Safeguarding Officer. On certain occasions, such a meeting may not be convened until this has been approved by any authorities involved (such as the police or the relevant Local Authority).

Any person from within the Players who has allegations made against them shall be treated fairly. All enquires, investigations and decisions taken shall be just and fair, with the safety of any child concerned at the heart of the process. Any person from within the Players who makes an allegation against another person from within the Players shall be listened to, taken seriously and shall be treated fairly and justly throughout the process of investigations and decision making.

Safeguarding Officers

The Players will appoint a Safeguarding Officer (where circumstances allow two or more). All members and those associated with the Players will be notified of the appointments.

- Act as a first point of contact providing a confidential information and advice service for all members and those associated with the players on safeguarding related concerns including child protection disclosures.
- Provide an advisory service for members and those associated with the players in dealing with student safeguarding concerns.
- Monitor and manage safeguarding referrals ensuring interventions are timely and responsive, in line with child protection legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensure child protection records relating to Players safeguarding information are accurately recorded and stored in line with statutory guidance.
- Ensure that data protection and confidentiality requirements are met, including the confidential storage of records, obtaining permission before sharing information, assessing risk and where appropriate breaking confidentiality in order to ensure the health and safety of individuals.

Disclosure and Baring Service (DBS) Checks

Government advice for groups such as St Margaret's Players is as follows:

- If your group's activities are captured, under normal circumstances we would advise that having volunteers DBS checked is a prudent safeguarding step. There is, however, no legal requirement for you to have a DBS check. Regardless of whether you choose to have volunteers DBS checked, you should ensure your group follow simple, practical precautions such as working safely in pairs, keeping records of money spent and providing shopping receipts to safeguard all involved.
- The Players Safeguarding Officer/s will be required to undertake basic DBS Checks.

This policy is approved and robustly supported by St Margaret's Players and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Approved 5th April 2023

St Margaret's Players Committee