



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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All organisations that make provision for children and young people must ensure that

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All persons within the organisation have a responsibility to report concerns to the Safeguarding Officer

Our Safeguarding Policy Statement

- St Alban's Players has a duty of care to safeguard all children from harm
- All children have a right to protection. The needs of disabled children and those particularly vulnerable must be taken into account
- St Alban's Players will ensure the safety and protection of all children through adherence to the Safeguarding guidelines, adopted within this statement
- A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The children Act 2004)

Policy Aims

The aim of St Alban's Players Safeguarding Policy is to promote good practice by

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in their care
- Allow all members to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues

Promoting Good Practice

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take. Some individuals will seek voluntary work and hobbies with young people in order to harm them. Any suspicions of poor practice should be reported, following the guidelines within this document.

Good Practice Guidelines

All members should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour, in order to protect others and themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good Practice Means:

- Working, whenever possible, in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication
- Treating all young people equally with respect and dignity
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust
- Making drama and performing fun, enjoyable and promoting fairness
- Keeping up to date with relevant DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks where persons are working specifically with children, eg workshops
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible, eg encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the changing areas. Where groups are to be supervised in the changing areas, encourage parents/chaperones work in pairs
- Encouraging only nominated carers/chaperones are present in the children's changing areas
- Ensuring children are not present in adult changing areas
- Being an excellent role model
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognising the developmental needs and capability of young people
- Securing parental consent in writing to act 'in loco parentis' in case the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given
- Although unlikely, requesting parental consent if members are required to transport young people in their vehicles

Practices To Be Avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where situations are unavoidable, eg the child sustains an injury during rehearsal or performance and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to collect a child at the end of a session, it should be with the full knowledge and consent of a member of the committee, or the child's parent.

Otherwise Avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children, away from others
- Taking or dropping off a child alone to a rehearsal or performance

Practices Never To Be Sanctioned

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- Allow allegations made by a child to be unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable person which they can do for themselves
- Invite or allow children to your home unsupervised

NB – It may sometimes be necessary for members to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of a parent/carer. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with them about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

Incidents That Must Be Reported/Recorded

If any of the following occur you should report it immediately to a committee member or the Safeguarding Officer and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed

- If you accidentally hurt a child
- If they seem distressed in any manner
- If a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have said or done

Use Of Photographic/Recording Equipment At A Rehearsal or Performance

There is evidence that some people have used children's performances as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or recorded footage of them in vulnerable positions. The organisation should be vigilant and any concerns reported to the Safeguarding Officer.

Responding To Allegations Or Suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone within St Alban's Players to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. St Alban's Players will assure all members/carers that it will fully support anyone, who in good faith, reports concerns of child abuse within the organisation.

Concerns About Poor Practice

- If the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Safeguarding Officer in company with the Chairperson, or other committee member if more appropriate, will address the matter accordingly
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Safeguarding Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be referred to the committee who will decide how to deal with the matter

Concerns About Suspected Abuse

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by anyone within St Alban's Players should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer. They will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question, and any other child who may be at risk
- The Safeguarding Officer will refer the allegation to Children and Young People's Services and/or the police
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible, following advice from Children and Young People's Services
- If the Safeguarding Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the appropriate authority in their absence

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to

designated people, in line with data protection laws, eg that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure.

Suspension Of Membership

- The Safeguarding Officer along with the committee, will make an immediate decision about whether any member who has behaved inappropriately or been accused of inappropriate conduct, should be temporarily excluded from the organisation, pending further enquiries
- Irrespective of the findings of Children and Young People's Services or the police, the Safeguarding Officer and committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member should be reinstated. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Safeguarding Officer and committee must reach a decision based upon the available information, and whether the organisation can manage the risk that person may pose to its members. The welfare of young people, as well as the general membership, should remain paramount throughout.

Dated: 28th March 2018