

Centre Stage Amateur Musical Group

Child Protection And
Safeguarding Policy

(November 2021)

Chairman: _____

Date: _____

Producer: _____

Date: _____

CENTRE STAGE AMATEUR MUSICAL GROUP
CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY, NOVEMBER 2021

POLICY STATEMENT

Centre Stage is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of its participants. Leaders/members should be fully aware of its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and everyone has free access to this policy on request or via the website. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and Centre Stage members should show respect and understanding for their own rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the code of conduct of Centre Stage. The process of implementing the policy is the responsibility of the Designated Officers who should be elected by the Centre Stage Committee.

Designated Officers for Centre Stage:

SUE ABBEY/LAUREN SMITH/KIERON LAYTON/KATHERINE ABBEY/JIM UNDERWOOD

OBJECTIVES

In order to achieve the principles of the Policy Statement Centre Stage will:

- Create an environment where young people feel secure, have their viewpoints valued, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Take all reasonable measures to ensure the risk of harm to children and vulnerable adults is minimised.
- Have elected members of Centre Stage to take the lead responsibility for dealing with child protection and safeguarding issues, providing advice and support to other members.
- Develop awareness of the need for safeguarding and member's responsibilities in identifying abuse, with particular care being taken for young people/adults with disabilities or with special needs.
- To be aware of and protect members from radicalisation and exploitation.
- Be alert to signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour.
- Be alert to family circumstances presenting challenges for a child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse.
- Ensure that all members are aware of the procedures section of this document.
- Ensure that outside agencies are involved if appropriate.
- Provide information for parents/carers outlining procedures laid down within this and other related Centre Stage policies.
- Ensure young people know there are adults at Centre Stage whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Not tolerate any inappropriate language or behaviour from any cast or audience member and any such cases will be dealt with and taken very seriously.
- Listen to children, encourage them to respect and care for others and take action to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical abuse taking place.
- Endeavour to create an open and accountable environment, permitting adults and young people to voice concerns about inappropriate behaviour and misconduct while providing strong sanctions to deter abuse or victimisation.
- Monitor Centre Stage's Facebook and Instagram sites to ensure it continues to be safe and appropriate for all ages to use and to report to a Designated Officer if any concerns arise.
- Ensure our policies and procedures apply to all members, children, young people, parents and carers regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religion.

BEHAVIOUR STATEMENT

Always:

- Treat others as you would expect them to treat you.
- Provide an example you wish others to follow.
- Ensure that another adult is present when you are in the company of young people including situations when a young person is waiting to be collected and particularly during performances when members may be changing costumes.
- Respect a person's right to privacy.
- Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes and behaviour they do not like.
- Remember someone might misinterpret your actions/comments, no matter how well intentioned.
- Recognise that caution is required, particularly in sensitive moments, such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse.
- Be aware of the possible implications of physical contact with young people.

It is essential that care is taken to minimise the possibility of abuse, misunderstanding and misinterpretation. False allegations are rare but general good practice will help prevent them. The following list includes behaviour that members working with children should never do:

Never:

- Be alone with children out of public view.
- Kiss children.
- Engage in rough or sexually provocative games.
- Invite or allow children into their home.
- Let allegations made by anyone go unacknowledged, unresolved or not acted upon.
- Show favouritism to any individual.
- Make suggestive remarks or gestures.
- Do things of a personal nature for a child that they could do for themselves.
- Allow young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Permit abusive peer activities (eg. bullying, ridiculing or initiation ceremonies).
- Jump to conclusions.
- Allow yourself to be drawn into any inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour by young people (eg. tantrums, crushes).
- Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.
- Put photos on any form of media site without parent's written consent.

If one-to- one contact is unavoidable:

- Make sure it is for as short a time as possible.
- Ensure you remain accessible to others.
- Tell someone where you are going, what you are doing and why.
- Try to move with the young person to areas where there are more people.
- Obtain permission from the young person before any physical contact is made or if you need to administer first aid.
- Try to avoid unnecessary physical contact especially if it may be misconstrued by the child or other people.
- Avoid where possible giving young people a lift alone, however short the journey. When this is unavoidable, it is advisable to get consent from the young person's parents/carers and ensure the young person sits in the back of the car. Leaders/members should be aware Centre Stage's insurance does not cover transporting other members.

RECOGNITION OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Child abuse and neglect is a generic term encompassing all ill treatment of children, including serious physical and sexual assaults as well as cases where the standard care does not adequately support the child's health or development. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse a child by inflicting harm, failing to prevent harm or failing to provide necessary care and supervision. Children may be abused in the family, an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or by a stranger. Abuse maybe perpetrated by an adult/s or another child/children. The four categories of abuse are, physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.

- **Physical** – may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scolding, drowning, suffocating or any form of causing physical harm to a child.
- **Emotional** – persistent emotional maltreatment such as to cause severe effects on the child's emotional development.
- **Sexual** – forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.
- **Neglect** – Failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs resulting in serious impairment of the child's health and development.

It is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused, or respond to a child wanting to talk. This practice can help clarify vague concerns and result in appropriate action. Anyone concerned about a child or vulnerable adult must share their concerns with the Designated Officer.

PROCEDURES

If you suspect or are told that a young person is being abused:

- You must always refer this to the Designated Officer, do not investigate or approach a suspected abuser yourself.
- Make an accurate record of the details as you know them on the Child Protection and Safeguarding Report Form taking care to record the timing, setting, people present, child's presentation as well as what was said.
- Use the child's own words.
- Explain to the child that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared, explain who the people are likely to be.
- Ensure the young person is given the opportunity to talk to you, or an independent person.
- Listen to the child/young person without interrupting and DO NOT directly question or ask leading questions about what you may suspect.
- Give the child time and attention, do not rush them.
- Allow the child to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- Accept at face value what the young person says.
- Do not pass judgement on what is said but try to alleviate any fears or guilt which the young person may have. Provide support.
- Reassure the child that you are glad they told you, they have not done anything wrong, what you are going to do next – do not ask the child to repeat their account of events to anyone.
- The Children's Hub is a partnership between Hartlepool/Stockton Borough Council, Cleveland Police and local NHS Trusts. Anyone can contact The Children's Hub if you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety. Email: childrenshub@hartlepool.gcsx.gov.uk or tel: 01429 284284, out of hours 01642 524552.

MONITORING AND RECORD KEEPING

- All incidents should, ideally, be written up as soon as possible, preferably within 1-4 hours of the alleged incident. Legally they must be recorded within 24 hours.
- Written notes should be attached if made separately from the attached report sheets.
- Reports should be signed, with the name printed and designation.
- Reports and records should be passed to the Designated Officer who in turn will take responsibility for the safe storage and processing of this information.
- All information gathered should be treated with strict confidentiality.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

We will ensure that any records in respect of children, young people, their parents and/or carers are kept confidential in a secure place. Information will only be shared on a need to know basis. Where the sharing of information is vital to protect a child, Centre Stage understands that the issue of confidentiality is secondary to the child's need for protection.

THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED OFFICER

- Act as a source of advice, support and expertise within the organisation and be responsible for co-ordinating action regarding referrals and liaising with relevant outside agencies in cases of abuse and allegations of abuse, regarding both young people and volunteers.
- Ensure each leader/member has access to, and is aware of, Centre Stage's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Ensure the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually.
- Be able to keep accurate, detailed and secure written records of concerns and referrals.
- Ensure parents/carers have free access to copies of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy should they wish to refer to it.

THE ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE

- To establish a robust Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, review it annually, monitor and evaluate its effectiveness and be satisfied that it is being complied with.
- To ensure a Designated Officer is allocated with the responsibility of Safeguarding.
- To ensure that there is safe and effective continuation of the role of Designated Officer.
- To follow the procedures as previously outlined in this policy.

CENTRE STAGE AMATEUR MUSICAL GROUP

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Name of Child:

DOB:

Address:

Contact No:

Cause for Concern:

Signed:

Date:

Designation: