



The Castle Players: Child Protection Policy

Reviewed November 2017

"We, in the Castle Players, are committed to a practice which protects children from harm. All the volunteers in this organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which can cause children harm."

The Castle Players Limited ("the Castle Players") recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Child (Performances) Regulations 1968, the Protection of Children Act 1999, Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 (in Scotland change to Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003), Children Act 1989, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by the United Kingdom Government in 1991), and the safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. The Company recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect.

The Company is committed to practices which protect children from harm. All members of the Company accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm. This policy has been written in accordance with NODA guidelines.

1. A 'child' in the context of this policy refers to any person under the age of 18 years who is at any time engaged in activities associated with the Castle Players.
2. Participants must be aged 16 or above unless a parent/carer or nominated adult is also participating/present in the same production. Children under 16 may also be involved in Castle Players productions, provided that the signed consent of a parent/carer is received for this specific activity and that they are accompanied by a parent or a named adult at any given time.
3. An example letter giving parental consent is contained in Annex A.

The Castle Players believe that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- 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 and employees of the Company should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

The Company will ensure that:

- An initial meeting will take place with the director of each production and the Child Protection Team before rehearsals begin.
- A member of The Child Protection Team will be at the 1st meeting of productions.
- The Director is aware it is their responsibility to inform the Child Protection Team of, young person under the age of 18 taking part after auditions and any changes to the cast or new people joining in any role if the person is under 18.
- The Director is proactive in determining if a young person is under the age of 18.
- All children 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 the children to share in the decision-making process.
- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism.
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned.
- All adult members of the Company provide a positive role model for dealing with other people.
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
- It will keep up-to-date with health & safety legislation.
- It will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children.
- It will undertake relevant development and training.
- It will hold a register of every child involved with the Company and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

The Castle Players has child protection procedures which accompany this policy (Annex B)..

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the Company's Equal Opportunities Policy, its Health & Safety Policy, its Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Policy and its Data Protection Policy.

The Company has at least one dedicated Child Protection Officer who is also a trustee. The Child Protection Officers are in charge of ensuring that the child protection policy and procedures are adhered to and to act as a point of contact for any areas of concern.

Their names are: Angus Wheeler, Sarah Fells and Sue Byrne.

They can be contacted at: info@castleplayers.co.uk



Date 7th Nov 17

Sarah Tills.....Chair, the Castle Players



Annex A - Example Consent Letter

The Castle Players
PO Box 17
Barnard Castle
County Durham
DL12 9YS

info@castleplayers.co.uk

Dear Parent/Carer,

Thanks for your family's interest in The Castle Players.

The Castle Players is a community theatre company with an open door policy to all adult members. We do not carry out background checks on any new members and therefore, for the safety of all participants, we restrict membership to individuals aged 16 and over, unless the child is accompanied by a parent or nominated adult.

Whilst The Castle Players will do their utmost to safeguard every participant, we ask parents or carers of young people to read and agree to the following guidelines for their children's participation.

- Children or young people aged under 16 should be accompanied at all rehearsals, events and performances by a parent or nominated carer.
- Parents or carers are responsible for young people's travel to and from rehearsals and performances.
- The Castle Players are unable to take responsibility for any actions by individual members.
- The Castle Players are committed to a practice which protects children from harm and a copy of our current Child Protection Policy is attached.

Remember, if you are accompanying your child to rehearsals you are always more than welcome to join in yourself.

If you are happy for your child to remain involved, please complete the form attached and return it to the ARTISTIC DIRECTOR at the next rehearsal. Please contact me if you have any questions about any of the points in this letter.

The Castle Players has three members who are the designated Child Protection Officers and they will be in touch with you should your child / children become involved in our next production.

Thank you again

Chair, The Castle Players



**The Castle Players
Parents/Carers' Consent Form**

Name of child:

Date of Birth:

Name of parent/carer.

Parent/carer Address:
.....

Parent/carer Telephone:.....

e-mail:

I have read and agree to the guidelines for my child's participation in The Castle Players.

Signed.

(parent/carer)

Date:

My child may be accompanied at rehearsals by any of the following adults:

1

2

3

4

Please inform us of any medical conditions that we should be aware of.

The Castle Players has a data protection policy, which may be viewed on the Castle Players'website (www.thecastleplayers.co.uk)
By giving yours or your child's contact details you have consented for the Castle Players to hold your details for production purposes for the duration of the rehearsals and performance. After the performance we would like to keep in contact with you to let you know about future shows. Please tick this box if you do not wish us to keep your details on file:

Digital still and video photography will be taken during the rehearsals and production, in addition there may be voice recording (e.9. for local radio). Some of this material may be used on the Castle Players' website and in newspapers and individuals may be named. Please tick this box if you do not want your child named on the Castle Players' website or their photograph taken for newspapers, the latter may require individuals to be named. Please note by the ensemble nature of the show we cannot guarantee that their image will not be on the Castle Players' website but will ensure that no name is associated with it. In addition the Castle Players will not will not name under 18s on the radio, on Facebook or other forms of social media

Note: The information above will only be used internally for The Castle Players and will NOT be distributed to third parties.

Annex B - Child Protection Procedures

1.0 Responsibilities of the Company

At the outset of any production or event involving children the Company will:

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process.
- Identify at the outset the person with designated responsibility for child protection and provide training, if required, for these designated people and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting
- Identify nominated responsible adults for those children under 16.
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case it needs to report a concern, by ringing First Contact on Tel: 03000 267 979. .

2.0 Parents

- The Company believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents/carers and the Company. Parent/carers are encouraged to be involved in the activities of The Castle Players. All parents/carers will be given a copy of the Company's Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- All parents/carers have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of the Company to take children home.

3.0 Unsupervised Contact

- The Company will attempt to ensure that no adult without DBS clearance will have unsupervised contact with children apart from those nominated to have responsibility for the child.
- If possible there will always be two adults in the room when 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 a door open.
- If it is predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, he or she may be required to obtain a DBS clearance. Refer to DBS Policy.

4.0 Physical Contact

- 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.
- Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

5.0 Managing sensitive information

- The Company has a policy and procedures for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images of children.
- Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes.
- The Company's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.
- The Company 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.

6.0 Suspicion of abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of the Company, please make this known to the person with responsibility for child protection. If you suspect that the person with responsibility for child protection is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to a member of the Board.
- Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed as well as your response, in case there is follow-up in which you are involved.
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of, or person associated with the Company, that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the venue, rehearsal rooms etc. and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production.

7.0 Disclosure of abuse

If a child confides in you that abuse has taken place:

- Remain calm and in control but do not delay taking action.
- Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Don't promise to keep it a secret. Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the person with responsibility for child protection. Make it clear to the child that you will need to share this information with others. Make it clear that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help.

- Reassure the child that 'they did the right thing' in telling someone.
- Tell the child what you are going to do next. Speak immediately to the person with responsibility for child protection. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually social services or the police.
- As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was said, using the child's own words. Note the date, time, any names that were involved or mentioned, and who you gave the information to. Make sure you sign and date your record.

8.0 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 protection 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, and 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.

9.0 Rights & Confidentiality

- If a complaint is made against a member of the Company, he or she will be made aware of his rights.
- No matter how you may feel about the accusation, both the alleged abuser and the child who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998. Remember also that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released.
- In criminal law the Crown, or other prosecuting authority, has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

10.0 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. Children will be advised of the clothing and footwear appropriate to the work that will be undertaken.
- If a child is injured while in the care of the Company, a first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the Company's accident book. The Chair or Vice Chair of the trustees will be informed.

11.0 Criminal Record Disclosures - Refer to DBS Policy

12.0 Designated Adults (Chaperones)

- Chaperones will be made aware of the Company's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the producer or Castle Players officer.
- If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the producer.
- Under the Dangerous Performances Act, no child is permitted to do anything which may endanger life or limb. This could include working on wires or heavy lifting.
- Children are not to leave the venue unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents, or with the permission of the chaperones.
- Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by the Company.
- If a parent/carer has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child or make arrangements to take them home.

