

Safeguarding Policy Statement

Ripley Amateur Theatre Society is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. It recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. Ripley Amateur Theatre Society acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. Paid staff and volunteers will endeavour to work together to encourage the development of an ethos which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children, young people and adults.

Ripley Amateur Theatre Society recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014, the Children Act 1989 and 2004 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 (in Scotland Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003), Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

The organisation believes 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 organisation should be clear on how to respond appropriately

The organisation will ensure that:

- all children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity;
- the welfare of each child 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 organisation 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 organisation and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

The organisation has safeguarding procedures which accompany this policy. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the organisation's Equal Opportunities Policy and Health & Safety Policy.

The organisation has a dedicated Child Protection/Welfare/Safeguarding Officer, who is in charge of ensuring that the safeguarding policy and procedures are adhered to. That person's name is Loraine Crates and she can be contacted on 07449 301447.

In implementing this child protection policy Ripley Amateur Theatre Society will:

- Communicate to all workers/members their legal and moral responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation.
- Communicate to all workers/members/volunteers/members their responsibility to work to the standards that are detailed by the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership, and the need to work at all times towards maintaining high standards of practice in protection of children.
- Ensure that all workers/members understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a child or young person, or a worker's conduct towards a child/young person, to the organisation's named person for child protection.
- Ensure that the organisation's named person for child protection understands his/her responsibility to refer any child protection concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (i.e. Police and/or Children's Social Care).
- Ensure that any procedures relating to the conduct of workers/members are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner.
- Facilitate opportunities for children and young people to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues in connection with the service they are provided with and to have access to the organisation's Complaints Procedure.
- Facilitate involvement of parents or carers in the work of the organisation and to make child protection policies and procedures available to them

This policy will be regularly monitored by the Executive Committee of the organisation and will be subject to annual review.

Date agreed: 9th September 2025

Safeguarding Procedures

These procedures have been designed to ensure that the welfare and protection of any child and/or young person who accesses the services provided by Ripley Amateur Theatre Society. The procedures recognise that child protection and safeguarding can be a very difficult subject to deal with to the extent that it is sometimes easier to close your eyes to what is happening or believe that it is somebody else's problem to deal with.

Ripley Amateur Theatre Society is committed to the belief that protecting children and young people is everybody's responsibility and therefore the aim here is to provide guidelines that will enable all workers/members and volunteers to act appropriately to any concerns that arise in respect of a child/young person.

Ripley Amateur Theatre Society is fully committed to equal opportunities.

Section 2 - Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, and burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far 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 include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying) causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

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 penetrative (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images or watching sexual activities or 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

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or a carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, (including exclusion from home or abandonment) failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure adequate supervision (including the

use of inadequate caregivers) or the failure to ensure access to the appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsive to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Bullying

Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else – such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Bullying that happens online, using social networks and mobile phones, is often called cyber bullying. A child can feel like there's no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, drugs, alcohol, accommodation or gifts as a result of them performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can also occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet or mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. Child sexual exploitation is a hidden crime. Young people often trust their abuser and don't understand that they're being abused. They may depend on their abuser or be too scared to tell anyone what's happening. Children who work in entertainment may be sexually exploited in return for offers of TV, film or modelling/ photographic work and roles in professional stage productions.

Section 3 - Responsibilities of the Organisation

At the outset of any production Ripley Amateur Theatre Society will:

- undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process;
- identify at the outset the person with designated responsibility for child protection;
- engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting (if necessary, in consultation with the local authority);
- ensure that children are supervised at all times;
- know how to get in touch with the local authority social care services, in case it needs to report a concern.

Section 4 - Named Person(s) for Child Protection and Safeguarding

Ripley Amateur Theatre Society has an appointed individual who is responsible for dealing with any child protection and safeguarding concerns. In their absence, a deputy will always be available for workers/members to consult with.

The named persons for Child Protection and Safeguarding within Ripley Amateur Theatre Society are:

Named person for child protection/safeguarding: Loraine Crates

Mobile number: 07449 301447

Emergency contact no: 07449 301447

Deputy person for child protection/safeguarding:

Name of contact person: Patricia Brown

Mobile number: 07789 035901

Emergency contact no: 07789 035901

The role and responsibilities of the named persons are:

> To ensure that all staff are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they are concerned that a child/young person may be subject to abuse or neglect.

> Ensure that any concerns about a child/young person are acted on, clearly recorded, referred on where necessary and, followed up to ensure the issues are addressed.

> The Named Persons will record any reported incidents in relation to a child/young person. These will be kept in a secure place.

Section 5 – Stages to follow if you are worried about a child

Suspicion of abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of the organisation, please make this known to the person with responsibility for child protection.
- If you suspect that the person with responsibility for child protection and safeguarding is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the local authority designated officer (LADO)
- 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 name of the organisation, chaperone, venue staff etc., action will be taken to ensure the individual does not have further contact with the child until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms, filming location, TV Studio, etc. and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production.

Disclosure of abuse

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

- Remain calm and in control but do not delay in 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 Children's Social care or the Police.

- Never investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where a child makes a disclosure
- 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.

Who to tell and what to tell them?

- If you have concerns about the wellbeing of a child in your care you have a duty to report it to the organisations welfare officer who will contact the child employment manager. If you are unable to contact them you should contact Surrey County Council Children's Services.
- The telephone number is shown on the 'useful contacts' page at the back of this booklet'.
- Where you make such a referral, please advise the child employment office at the earliest opportunity. We can offer you the appropriate support and advice where required. Response to your referral Child protection investigation

Recording of information

- 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, 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.

Section 6 – Creating a Safe Organisation

Photographs and images of children

- There are risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on web sites and in other publications such as theatre programmes. Photographs can be used as a means of identifying children when they are accompanied with personal information, for example, "this is X who goes to such-and-such a school and who likes playing football". This information can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to start to 'groom' that child for abuse. Secondly the content of the photo can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. There is evidence of this adapted material finding its way on to child pornography sites.
- Ripley Amateur Theatre Society may use images of children and young people in their Programme and other material. All images will only be in relation to the show and with the written permission of parents. The organisation will assess the potential risks to the child when making decisions about the type of images they wish to use and the way they are used and the organisation will ensure that parents support the policy. Use of names of individuals in a photograph will be limited and it is sensible to avoid use of any additional information that might help locate the child. Using only images of children in suitable dress may reduce the risk of inappropriate use. Parental permission to use an image of a young person must be sought in advance.

If parents or other members of the audience are intending to photograph or video an event they will be made aware of the organisation's policy. The use of cameras or mobile phones with camera or filming capability in dressing rooms and other inappropriate environments is expressly forbidden.

E-Safety

- Most children will use mobile phones and computers. They are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. However, we know that some men, women and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings.
- Ripley Amateur Theatre Society e-safety policy explains how we try to keep children safe by not communicating with children via their phone, but with their parents.
- Cyber-bullying by children, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying.

Parents

- Ripley Amateur Theatre Society believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and the organisation. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the organisation and to share responsibility for the care of children.
- All parents will be given a copy the organisation's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. The organisation has a responsibility to ensure suitable arrangements are in place to take children home.

Unsupervised Contact

- The organisation will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.
- 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 minimise 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 criminal record disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service
- All children will be chaperoned at all times

Gifts made to the children

- Gifts of any sort, including sweets and chocolates given to the children must be made via the chaperone and with consent of the parents
- Chaperones will be mindful of any allergies/food intolerances in the group before accepting gifts for the children
- Favouritism of any child(ren) is not appropriate
- All gifts should be made to all the children rather than any specific child(ren)

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.

Managing sensitive information

- The organisation 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 organisation's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.
- The organisation 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.

Rights & Confidentiality

- If a complaint is made against a member of the organisation he or she will be made aware of their rights under the organisation's disciplinary procedures.
- 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.

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 organisation, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the organisation's accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for child protection.
- 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 counter-signed by the person with responsibility for child protection. 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.

Chaperones

- Chaperones registered with their local authority, will be appointed by the organisation for the care of children during the production process. The chaperone is acting in loco-parentis and should exercise the care which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give to a child. The maximum number of children in the chaperone's care shall not exceed 12.

- Potential chaperones will be required to obtain a chaperone registration from their local authority and to supply this registration to the organisation once the local authority has approved them as a chaperone.
- Chaperones will be made aware of the organisation's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- Chaperones may have unsupervised access to children in their care consequently a criminal record disclosure will be sought as a requirement of the local authority, before the grant approval for the chaperone
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the producer. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily the chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue.
- If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the producer and not allow the child to continue.
- Under the Dangerous Performances Act no child of compulsory school age is permitted to do anything which may endanger life or limb. This could include working on wires or heavy lifting. Chaperones should tell the producer to stop involving children in dangerous performances, and should contact the local authority.
- During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the stage door and signing them into the building.
- Children will be kept together at all times except when using separate dressing rooms.
- Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times.
- Children are not to leave the place of performance unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents.
- Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
- Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms.
- Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures in the venue, and will ensure that children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger.
- Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by the organisation.
- Chaperones should examine accident books each day. If an accident has occurred, the producer is not allowed to use that child until a medically qualified opinion has been obtained (not just the word of the parent or child).
- Chaperones should have written arrangements for children after performances. If someone different is to collect the child, a telephone call should be made to the parent to confirm the arrangements.

Children should be signed out when leaving and a record made of the person collecting.

- If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child until arrangements have been made to take the child home.

Section 7 – Disseminating/Reviewing policies and Procedures

This policy and procedure will be regularly monitored by the Executive Committee of Ripley Amateur Theatre Society and will be subject to annual review.

Any changes/amendments will be clarified and shared with staff and where significant changes appear these will be relayed to parents/carers.

Useful contacts

Child Employment office 01483 517838

Child Employment Manager 01483 518464 or 07971 664861

Surrey Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA) - 0300 470 9100

Children's Services emergency duty team (out of hours) - 01483 517898