

Child Protection Policy

Date reviewed _____

The **Old Well Theatre** staff & volunteers are committed to a practice, which protects children from harm.

Staff and volunteers in this organization accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of issues, which cause children and young people harm.

This policy will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by –

Adopting child protection guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers.

Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers as required.

Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.

Following carefully the procedures for staff and volunteers working directly with children

Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supply & access to the Child Protection Policy

The **Old Well Theatre** has child protection procedures within its Health & Safety Policy which should also be read in conjunction with this policy.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Statement of Intent

It is the policy of **Old Well Theatre** to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from all forms of abuse including physical, emotional and sexual harm.

This organization is committed to creating a safe environment in which young people can feel comfortable and secure while engaged in any of **Old Well Theatre's** programmes, training events or workshops. Personnel should at all times show respect and understanding for individual's rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the ethos and principles of **Old Well Theatre**.

Guidelines for all **Old Well Theatre** staff and volunteers ATTITUDES

BY EXAMPLE

Staff and volunteers should endeavour to

Treat children and young people with respect and dignity.

Always listen to what a child or young person is saying.

Value each child and young person.

Provide an example, which we would wish others to follow and a positive role model for dealing with others.

Use appropriate language with children and young people and

challenge any inappropriate verbal or physical behavior used by a young person or child or an adult working with young people.
Encourage a balanced relationship based on mutual trust which empowers the children to share in the decision making process.
Recognize the unique contribution each individual can make.
Encourage and praise each child or young person
Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism.
Respect a young person's right to privacy
Bullying will not be accepted or condoned

ONE TO ONE CONTACT

Staff and volunteers should

Not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children, away from others

In the unlikely event of having to meet with an individual child or young person make every effort to keep this meeting as open as possible.

If privacy is needed, ensure that other staff are informed of the meeting and its whereabouts

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Staff and volunteers should never

Engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games, including horseplay

Do things of a personal nature for a child or a young person that they can do for themselves. If such an incident arises, for example, where a child or young person has limited mobility, **Old Well Theatre** staff should seek another PVG member of staff or leader to deal with such an incident

Allow, or engage in, inappropriate touching of any kind.

Permit abusive behavior such as bullying or taunting.

GENERAL

Staff and volunteers should

Be aware that someone might misinterpret our actions no matter how well intentioned

Never draw any conclusions about others without checking the facts

Never allow ourselves to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking situations such as tantrums or crushes

Never exaggerate or trivialize child abuse issues or make suggestive remarks or gestures about, or to a child or young person, even in fun

Be familiar with the Old Well Theatre's anti-bullying policy and operate within those procedures.

RELATIONSHIPS

Staff and volunteers

who are involved in relationships with other members of staff or volunteers should ensure that their personal relationships do not affect their role within **Old Well Theatre** or the work of **Old Well Theatre**.

SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT CHILD PROTECTION AND GOOD PRACTICE WITH, CHILDREN, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Good communication is essential in any organization. In *Old Well Theatre* every effort will be made to assure that, should individuals have concerns, they will be listened to and taken seriously.

It is the responsibility of the theatre management to ensure that information is available to, and exchanged between all those involved in this organization and its activities. Some information is confidential and should only be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis. Theatre management will ensure that everyone knows the name of the designated person responsible for Child Protection.

Children and young people

Children and young people have a right to information, especially any information that could make life better and safer for them. *Old Well Theatre* will act to ensure they have information about how, and with whom, they can share their concerns, complaints and anxieties.

When sharing information, *Old Well Theatre* personnel will be sensitive to the level of understanding and maturity, as well as to the level of responsibility, of the people with whom they are sharing.

Parents

Parents / persons with parental responsibility are ultimately responsible for their children's welfare at all times, and they should be assured that their children are involved with a credible organization.

We achieve this by ensuring that all those involved in activities within the theatre know, understand and agree to abide by the Child Protection Policy.

Staff & Volunteers

As an organization, which offers support and guidance to children and young people, it is imperative that each member of staff at the *Old Well Theatre* is aware of their responsibilities under the Child Protection legislation and has a working knowledge of procedures. Each member of staff will be required to receive access to the Child Protection Policy.

Other Bodies

A copy of our Child Protection Policy will be made available to any other appropriate body.

Planning, Supervision, Risk Assessment and Risk Management

OLD WELL THEATRE recognizes that supervision of children is one of the most effective ways of minimizing opportunities for children to suffer harm whilst in our care.

Planning & Supervision

Planning and preparation will be carried out for any programme of activities within the

Old Well Theatre.

Planning should ensure that all children are adequately supervised at all times, and those responsible during the activity should know where the children are and what they are doing at all times.

Any activity using potentially dangerous equipment should have constant adult supervision and dangerous behaviour by children should not be allowed.

Risk Assessment and management in relation to child protection.

The principle of risk assessment is to consider:

- The practical details of an activity.
- Things that could go wrong during the activity.
- The likelihood of things going wrong.
- Impact of these things going wrong.

Once this is done we can:

- Identify measures to reduce the risk.
- Decide what to do if things go wrong.
- Allocate roles to monitor and manage child protection.

Risk assessment forms are available from files held in the Old Well Theatre office and/or from a member of the committee

Photographic, Filming and Recording Procedures

Avoid using children's names in photographic captions. If the child is named, avoid using his or her photograph. If the photograph is used, avoid naming the child.

Only use images for the specific purpose which has been agreed with the parents/carers and child. Additional use without specific permission is not acceptable. All images of children must be stored safely and securely. Storing them in limited access files on your computer is advisable.

Only use images of children in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. Some activities – including drama – present a greater risk of potential misuse.

Always issue written expectations to professional photographers or the press who are invited to an event, making clear the organization's expectations of them in relation to child protection.

Do not allow any unauthorized persons unsupervised access to children.

Do not approve photography sessions outside the event or at a child's home.

Recruitment Procedures

The OLD WELL THEATRE has clearly defined recruitment procedures. In order to prevent unsuitable people working with children in the organization, we will ensure:

A copy of our Child Safeguarding Policy Statement will be given to all those who will be directly involved with working with children.

That all those who will hold a position of authority working with children are requested to obtain PVG membership for the protection of children within the Old Well Theatre.

That all those who will have the opportunity of lone contact with a child/children will

obtain PVG membership for the protection of children within the Old Well Theatre.

Roles that are deemed regulated work with children by the OLD WELL THEATRE TRUST and therefore requiring PVG membership through the OLD WELL THEATRE TRUST include:

Director
Choreographer
Musical director
Rehearsal assistant
Wardrobe assistant
Young UADS helper
Chaperone

This is not an exhaustive list and the Trustees & Committee of the OLD WELL THEATRE TRUST reserve the right to decide if any further role requires PVG membership.

Other Old Well Theatre Policies

Additional recommendations for Health and Safety in arts practice include:

An appropriate number of legally responsible adults are present.

There must be adequate space.

Risk assessment will be carried out.

There must be a First Aid kit available at all times.

No theatre group, youth group or group from a care setting (i.e. a group which operates in loco parentis) should be left without a legally responsible staff member present, e.g.: a PVG member for the Old Well Theatre.

Whistle--Blowing and Complaints Procedures

The OLD WELL THEATRE wishes to promote a culture in which anyone may express any concerns they may have about a colleague's behaviour in relation to child protection. In order to achieve this, everyone is encouraged to share any such concerns with a designated person without delay; concerns will be treated seriously and in the strictest confidence.

Response Procedures

Old Well Theatre recognizes the importance of having clear procedures to enable each person to handle situations where an appropriate response is needed to a child protection concern.

What is abuse?

Government guidelines in Working Together to Safeguard Children categorizes abuse as:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child,

including by fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health to a child.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment 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 insofar as they meet the needs of another person, age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, causing children frequently to feel frightened, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Sexual abuse involves 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. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development, such as failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

What to do if you suspect abuse is taking place

If you suspect a child is being abused physically, sexually or emotionally:

Try to behave normally, do not panic or appear shocked.

Do not investigate. Do not question.

Do not challenge the parents or the child's friends about your concerns, inform the OLD WELL THEATRE's designated person for child protection of your concerns. Record any details which support your suspicions. Sign date and keep copies of these and agree with the designated person what actions if any should be taken.

If it is not child protection but you are still concerned

Sometimes concerns about a child may not be about abuse. You may be concerned that a child or family need some help in making sure all the child's needs are met to address a particular problem. Examples of this might be where a child is suffering because of poverty, getting into trouble in the community, or has a disability and needs extra help.

Responding to a child disclosing abuse

IF YOU BELIEVE A CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER PLEASE CALL 999

If a child talks to you about abuse listen carefully and accept what is said and make sure you:

Stay calm. Offer immediate support, understanding and reassurance. Listen carefully to what is said

Explain that such matters are not the child's fault and that they should not keep it secret. Equally, find an opportune moment to explain that it is likely that the

information will need to be shared with others.

Do not promise to keep secrets.

Allow the child to continue at his/her own pace.

Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.

Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.

Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.

Make notes as soon as possible (within the hour if possible), writing down as exactly as possible using the child's own words, what was said or seen, putting the scene into context, also giving the time and location. Sign, date and keep copies of these.

You should also note any signs or symptoms of possible abuse in a child or young person along with your own suspicions and these should be recorded as accurately as possible, together with a note of when the record was made. All records must be signed and dated clearly.

If the situation requires immediate action contact the police or social services.

Inform OLD WELL THEATRE's designated person for child protection of your concerns and of the action you have taken.

REMEMBER: It is important that everyone in the organization is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not any abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies following a referral to them of concern about a child.

SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT CONCERNS WITH AGENCIES WHO NEED TO KNOW AND INVOLVING PARENTS AND CHILDREN APPROPRIATELY

PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

In any case where an allegation is made, or someone in *Old Well Theatre* has concerns, a record should be made. Details must include, as far as practical:

- Name of child or young person
- Age
- Home Address (if known)
- Date of Birth (if known)
- Name/s and Address of parent/s or person/s with parental responsibility
- Telephone numbers if available
- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns, or passing on those of somebody else? If so, record details
- What has prompted the concerns?
Include dates and times of any specific incidents
- Has the child or young person been spoken to?
If so, what was said?
- Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser?
If so, record details
- Who has this been passed on to, in order that appropriate action is taken? e.g. school, designated officer, social services etc
- Has anyone else been consulted?
If so, record details

ACTION TAKEN

REPORTING PROCEDURES

In any case where you believe a child is in immediate danger please ignore this flow chart and telephone the Police on 999

Staff / volunteer has concerns

Record & Report

Designated Person(s)
Ruth O'Hare

Is this a serious concern?

Possibly

Yes

No

Seek advice from designated officer of relevant organization or Social Services

Report & Record

Yes

No

Identify training or practice issues

Designated Officer of relevant organization / Social Services or Police

Refer back to theatre Trustees and / or committee personnel

DESIGNATED CHILD PROTECTION PERSONS

- For reasons of confidentiality the only person(s) who need to know this information are the following Designated Lead Person & current Child Protection Person/s

- 1. Ruth O'Hare (Mrs)
Young UADS helper, Trustee & Designated Lead person

Hillend Cottage
Moffat
Dumfries & Galloway
DG10 9LE

Tel:01683 221853

- The Designated Person(s) will inform the relevant outside organization of the incident.

Social Services

Duty Social Worker

Child Protection Committee Support
Woodbank
30 Edinburgh Road
Dumfries

Tel:01387 260446

Police

Call 101 (or in an emergency 999)

Crimestoppers

Call 0800 555 111

NSPCC Help line

Tel: 0800 800 500 – 24 hours, Freephone

Child Line (NI)

Tel: 0800 1111 - Freephone

RECORD-KEEPING

- All records, information and confidential notes should be kept in separate files in a locked drawer or filing cabinet.
- Only the designated Persons will have access to these files.

DISCLOSURE

- Never guarantee absolute confidentiality, as Child Protection will always have precedence over any other issues.
- Listen to the child, rather than question him or her directly. Offer him / her reassurance without making promises, and take what the child says seriously.
- Allow the child to speak without interruption, Accept what is said – it is not your role to investigate or question. Do not overreact.
- Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgement
- Advise that you will try to offer support, but that you must pass the information on. Explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell.
- Record the discussion accurately, as soon as possible after the event, Use the child's words or explanations – do not translate into your own words, in case you have misconstrued what the child was trying to say.
- Contact one of the *Old Well Theatre* Designated Persons for advice / guidance. The Designated Person may then discuss the concern / suspicion with the relevant organization, and, if appropriate, make a direct referral.
- If the Designated Person is not available, or it is inappropriate to approach them, the volunteer / member of staff with the concern should make direct contact with the relevant organization themselves
- Record any discussions or actions taken within 24 hours.

FOLLOWING THE PROCEDURES FOR STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

Old Well Theatre ensures the highest priority is given to issues relating to child protection.

From August 2015 each new member of staff working directly with children will be required to undergo appropriate checks as part of our policy

PROVIDING EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT FOR STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

Each new member of staff or volunteer working directly with children and any other person who requests it will be made familiar with the availability of *Old Well Theatre's* policies and procedures including the Child Protection Policy and Code of Behaviour

Information Sharing

Privacy and confidentiality should be respected where possible but if doing this leaves a child at risk of harm then the child's safety has to come first.

Remember:

Legally, it is fine to share information if someone is worried about the safety of a child.

Not everyone needs to know when a concern or worry is raised. This respects the child's, family's and/or staff's rights to privacy. So only people who need to know should be told about it. Otherwise there might be gossip and rumours or other people may be genuinely concerned.

It is fine to say that a concern has been raised and it is being dealt with following the theatre's procedures.

Confidentiality Policy, and Retention and Storage of documentation

As a general rule, all personal information that is acquired or held in the course of working with children and young people should be treated as confidential and stored securely. Particular care should be taken with sensitive information.

Consideration should also be given to the Data Protection Act 1998 which requires that information is obtained and processed fairly and lawfully; that it is accurate, relevant and not held for longer than is necessary; and kept securely.

The OLD WELL THEATRE aims to uphold these requirements.

Handling and Safekeeping of Disclosure Information

As an organization using the Disclosure Scotland service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, the OLD WELL THEATRE complies fully with the Disclosure Scotland Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure Information.

As a matter of good practice:

Disclosure information will never be kept in an applicant's personnel file and is only passed to those who are authorized to receive it.

We recognize that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

We do not keep disclosure information for any longer than is absolutely necessary.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our attendants so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our theatre, classes and workshops. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a telling organization. This means that anyone who knows bullying is happening is expected to tell staff.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

<i>Emotional:</i>	being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
<i>Physical:</i>	pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
<i>Racist:</i>	racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
<i>Sexual:</i>	unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
<i>Homophobic:</i>	because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
<i>Verbal:</i>	name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
<i>Cyber:</i>	All areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse Mobile threats by text messaging & calls Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities

Objectives of this Policy

All teachers, volunteers, younger members and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
All teachers and volunteers should know what the theatre policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
All younger members and parents should know what the theatre policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
As a theatre we take bullying seriously. Younger members and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
Bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Is unwilling to go to the sessions
- Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Feels ill before their sessions
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Is frightened to say what's wrong

Gives improbable excuses for any of the above

Or, in more extreme cases, if a child:

Starts stammering

Cried themselves to sleep or has nightmares

Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable

Is bullying other children or siblings

Stops eating

Attempts or threatens suicide, or runs away

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated

Procedures

Report bullying incidents to staff

In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff

In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem

If necessary and appropriate the police will be consulted

The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly

An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour

Outcomes

The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologize.

In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered

If possible, the pupils will be reconciled

After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

If the Old Well Theatre decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation they should follow the procedure outlined below:

Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.

If this fails, other consequences may take place.

In some cases the parent/carers of the bully or bullied participant can be asked to attend sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate.

All involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and the outcome of the process.

In the case of adults reported to be bullying anyone aged under 18

The designated child protection person or the theatre committee should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate.

In more serious cases, referrals may be made to the police or to Social Services.