



The Paper Birds Theatre Company

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Date created: 2018

Staff responsible: Kylie Perry

Trustee responsible: Becky Dawson

Date of this review: July 2024

Date of next review: July 2025

This policy applies to both core staff and freelance workers of The Paper Birds Theatre Company who have access to, or work with, children and young people whilst conducting The Paper Birds' activity.

For the purpose of this policy, children and young people are characterised as people under the age of 18 years old.

The Paper Birds Theatre Company, hereafter referred to as 'the Company', is a charitable organisation that engages children and young people through a variety of arts engagement opportunities. These encounters are often, but not limited to;

- One-off Workshops or series of Workshops programmed and managed by schools, colleges, theatres, arts centres or other cultural and community venues. The Company in these instances is a visiting artist and participants sit under the duty of care of the host venue or partner.
- A project or production managed by the Company where participants are publicly recruited and are under the duty of care of the Company.

The Company's Designated Safeguarding Lead is:

Kylie Perry, Co-Director

Email: kylie@thepaperbirds.com

Phone: 07855 098063

In Kylie's absence, the company's Deputy Safeguarding Lead is:

Georgie Coles, Participation Manager

Email: georgie@thepaperbirds.com

Phone: 07403 917202

There will also be an appointed Project Safeguarding Lead working on the ground at each project managed by the Company. The member of staff responsible and their contact details



will be clearly stated to all project staff members and participants at the outset of the project.

Child Protection Policy

The Company recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Child (Performances) Regulations 1968, the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

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 practice which protects children from harm. All members of the company accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

The Company 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 Company should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

The Company will ensure that:

- 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 in any project recruited and managed by the Company, and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies. All data stored by the Company is done so in line with our [GDPR Policy](#).

Child Protection Procedures

Responsibilities of The Paper Birds

- The Company will annually review and update the current Schools & Communities Workshop Risk Assessment in line with current health and safety and safeguarding guidance.

At the outset of any project involving children, the company will:

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process.
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times.
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case it needs to report a concern.

Unsupervised Contact

- The Company 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.

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 Company writes a bespoke Media Consent Policy for each project it manages involving children and young people. These include detailed procedures for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images of children. An example of a recent project Media Consent Policy can be found [here](#).
- Permission will be sought from the parents or carers either directly by the Company, or on behalf of the Company via a project partner organisation, 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 staff and participants, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such as disclosure certificates.

Suspicion of abuse

- If a member of staff sees or suspects abuse of a child while in the care of the Company, they will make this known to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If it is suspected that the Designated Safeguarding Lead is the source of the problem, staff will report concerns to another senior member of the Company.
- Staff will keep notes of any incident witnessed for use in any follow-up investigation.
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of the Company, that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the project and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children until a resolution to the allegation has been sought.

Disclosure of abuse

If a child confides in a member of staff that abuse has taken place either within the care of the Company or outside of the care of the Company, staff are instructed to:



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remain calm and in control but do not delay taking action. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't promise to keep it a secret. Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the person with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. 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. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reassure the child that 'they did the right thing' in telling someone. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tell the child what you are going to do next. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speak immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually social services or the police. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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. |

Types of Abuse - Glossary

Below are descriptions of various forms of abuse. This glossary is listed here to support and educate both core and freelance staff at The Paper Birds when working with children and vulnerable adults. Please adhere to the relevant protocol listed above if you suspect that any person you are working with is subject to any of the forms of abuse listed below:

Online Abuse

Online abuse encompasses any form of mistreatment that takes place over the internet, whether through social media, online gaming, or mobile phones. Children and young people may encounter cyberbullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or emotional abuse online.

Children may face online abuse from individuals they know as well as strangers. This type of abuse can be linked to abuse in the physical world, such as bullying or grooming, or it may occur solely in an online environment, like coercing children into engaging in sexual activities via the internet.



The persistent nature of online abuse can make children feel trapped, as abusers can reach them at any time and even intrude into private spaces like their bedrooms. Additionally, images and videos can be stored and shared widely.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is coerced or forced to participate in sexual activities. This abuse does not always involve physical contact and can take place online. Sometimes, children may not recognize the abuse or realize it is wrong.

There are two main types of child sexual abuse: contact and non-contact abuse.

Contact abuse involves physical contact, such as penetration.

Non-contact abuse includes activities where the abuser does not physically touch the child, such as grooming, exploitation, convincing children to engage in sexual acts online, or exposing themselves.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse refers to intentionally inflicting harm or injury on a child. It includes actions such as hitting, shaking, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating, kicking, hair pulling, striking with objects, throwing, or making a child ill.

- Signs that may indicate physical abuse include:
- Any bruising on a pre-walking baby
- Multiple bruises on various body parts
- Bruises of different colours, suggesting repeated injuries
- Fingertip bruises on the chest, back, arms, or legs
- Burns of various shapes or sizes
- Injuries that lack an adequate explanation

Neglect

Neglect is the consistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs, likely leading to serious harm to their health or development. Neglect can start during pregnancy due to maternal substance abuse. After birth, it may involve a caregiver's failure to:

- Provide proper food, clothing, shelter, or a safe environment (including abandonment or exclusion from home)
- Protect the child from physical or emotional harm or danger
- Ensure appropriate supervision, even if using inadequate caregivers
- Access necessary medical care or treatment
- Attend to the child's emotional needs



Signs that may suggest neglect include:

- Living in unsanitary, unsafe, or dangerous conditions
- Caregivers neglecting the child's health or developmental needs
- Children who consistently appear underweight or small for their age
- Children who frequently seem tired or lacking in energy
- Children suffering from recurrent injuries due to inadequate supervision

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse involves the ongoing mistreatment or neglect of a child's emotional well-being, sometimes referred to as psychological abuse. It can cause serious harm to a child's emotional development and health.

Emotional abuse might involve deliberately frightening or humiliating a child, isolating them, or ignoring their needs.

Children who face emotional abuse often endure other types of abuse or neglect simultaneously, though this is not always the case.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation occurs when children or young people under 18 are manipulated or forced into sexual activities in exchange for something they desire or need, such as:

- Food
- Accommodation
- Drugs
- Alcohol
- Cigarettes
- Affection
- Gifts
- Money

“Child sexual exploitation may also occur via technology without the child realizing it, such as being encouraged to share sexual images online or via mobile phones without immediate gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child wield power over them due to age, gender, intellect, physical strength, or other resources. Coercion, intimidation, and violence are common, and the child's lack of choice often results from social, economic, or emotional vulnerability.” (DCSF, August 2009).



Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation involves the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical purposes, sometimes referred to as female circumcision, cutting, or sunna.

Though cultural, social, or religious justifications are sometimes provided, FGM is considered child abuse, is dangerous, and is a criminal offense.

FGM has no medical benefits, does not enhance fertility, and does not make childbirth safer. It aims to control female sexuality and can cause severe and lasting harm to both physical and emotional health.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse encompasses any form of controlling, bullying, threatening, or violent behaviour between individuals in a relationship. It goes beyond physical violence to include emotional, sexual, financial, and psychological abuse.

Domestic abuse can occur within any relationship and may continue even after the relationship has ended. Both men and women can be victims or perpetrators.

Repeated exposure to domestic abuse can also be considered a form of child abuse. Furthermore, teenagers can experience domestic abuse in their own relationships. Such abuse can have serious and lasting effects on children and young people.

The UK Government defines domestic abuse as:

“Any incident or pattern of controlling, coercive, or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between individuals aged 16 or older who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.”

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 eg. 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. Any records will be disposed of responsibly after the investigation has been closed.

Rights & Confidentiality

- If a complaint is made against a member of the Company, they will be made aware of their rights under the Company's disciplinary procedures.
- 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. 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.

Accidents

- To avoid accidents, 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, the injury will be recorded in the Company's accident book. This record will be countersigned by the person with responsibility for child protection.
- If a child joins the project with an obvious physical injury a record of this will be made in the accident book. This record will be countersigned 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 project.

Safe Recruitment

Safe recruitment means taking steps to ensure only individuals who are suitable for working with young people, whilst keeping them safe from harm and risks, are appointed. The following process will be adopted and applied consistently when appointing a new facilitator or staff member. All facilitator roles with the Company are freelance roles rather than employed salaried roles.

Job Advertising

When any form of advertising is used to recruit facilitators, the following information will be reflected:



- aims of the organisation and where appropriate, the particular programme involved
- a detailed role description including the qualities, qualifications and standards required in the successful candidate, and details of the checking procedures to be carried out
- the organisation is an equal opportunities employer, operating within child safeguarding standards
- a job or role description, including roles and responsibilities
- a person specification which clearly states qualifications and experience required
- a self-disclosure form (see Recruitment of Candidates with a Criminal Record Guidance)

All applicants will submit a CV and a cover letter outlining how and why they are suitable for the role.

References

Contact details of two written references (not relatives) are required, one of which should be a previous employer. References will only be taken up when the position is offered to the applicant and will be requested via email and confirmed by telephone. A reference provided by phone only will not be accepted. References will be sought directly from the referee. References or testimonials provided by the candidate will never be accepted.

Where necessary, referees will be contacted by telephone or e-mail in order to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. A detailed written note will be kept of such exchanges.

Where necessary, previous employers who have not been named as referees will be contacted in order to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. A detailed written note will be kept of such exchanges.

Referees will always be asked specific questions about:

- The candidate's suitability for working with children, young people or adults at risk.
- Any disciplinary warnings, including time-expired warnings, that relate to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk
- The candidate's suitability for this post.

All appointments are subject to satisfactory references prior to the provisional start date.



Disclosures

All facilitators or staff with significant access to, or responsibility for, children, young people or adults at risk, will be required to complete an enhanced level DBS check. All advertised roles make clear that the candidate will be subject to a DBS check. The applicant has a responsibility to disclose any previous convictions, in line with the relevant legislation.

Interview & Audition process

Short-listing of candidates will be against the person specification for the post and carried out by a minimum of two fully trained staff members.

Interviews and workshop auditions will be carried out by a minimum of two fully trained staff members and will always be conducted face-to-face.

All candidates will be asked the same questions. Questions will relate to the person specification to explore experience and suitability for the role. The interview will be used to:

- Explore the candidate's suitability to work with young people.
- Explore their attitude and their motivations for applying for the role.
- Explore any gaps in work history.
- Check the candidate's identity.

Appointment

All facilitator roles with the Company are subject to a DBS check. Appointed applicants will be informed that the appointment is subject to satisfactory DBS certificate and two references. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar a person from working with the Company, but this will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of any offences.

All facilitators undergo an induction and training programme, which will cover the organisation's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Safeguarding Parameters

Whilst this policy outlines the responsibilities of The Paper Birds in safeguarding and the processes that should be followed by anyone working for or representing the company, it is the individual's responsibility to follow through any safeguarding concerns with the support



of the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Should you not be able to contact the safeguarding lead or any of the senior management team it is still your responsibility to follow up the concern, contacting the local authority where appropriate.