



STANDING OF THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS THEATRE COMPANY CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY

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This is a policy for Standing on the Shoulders of Giants Theatre Company Ltd's work with young people under 18 and vulnerable adults over 18.

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Introduction

Standing on the Shoulders of Giants Theatre Company Ltd believes that:

- The welfare of the young people and vulnerable adults we work with is paramount.
- All young people, 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 will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff (paid/unpaid) have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer. Staff/volunteers are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred.

The work of Standing on the Shoulders of Giants Theatre Company Ltd:

The work of Standing on the Shoulders of Giants Theatre Company Ltd runs workshops related to productions and the cultural arts. These take place in venues including but not limited to schools, theatres, community centres, museums and galleries.

Policy Statement

Standing on the Shoulders of Giants Theatre Company Ltd has a duty of care to safeguard all children and vulnerable adults involved in our projects from harm. All children and vulnerable adults have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. We will ensure the safety and protection of all children and vulnerable adults involved in our productions, projects, workshops and training through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by us. Our designated staff member for Child Protection is the Administrator.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

Policy Aims

The aim of Standing on the Shoulders of Giants Theatre Company Ltd's Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice by:

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- Ensuring that appropriate safety and protection is given for children and vulnerable adults at the venues.
- Allowing all of our staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Promoting Good Practice/Good Practice Guidelines

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment.
- Treating all young people/vulnerable adults equally.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with members.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children and vulnerable adults to share in the decision-making process.
- Keeping up to date with Standing on the Shoulders of Giants Theatre Company Ltd's Public Liability Insurance.
- Keeping up to date with Health and Safety.
- Being kept informed about legislation and policies for protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults and undertaking relevant development and training.
- Undertaking at the outset of each year's planning a risk assessment and monitoring risk throughout the year.
- Knowing how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case you have to report a concern to them.
- Identifying at the outset the people with designated protection responsibility at the venue.
- Ensuring all staff who work with children and vulnerable adults have had their Enhanced Disclosures. One-off attendance of a group by an adult without a disclosure (eg a guest speaker) is acceptable providing this person does not have sole charge of a group or individual.
- Only touching participants when necessary and in relation to the activity.
- Being an excellent role model.
- Keeping a written record in an Incident Book of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Having a maximum staff to participant ratio of 20:1.

Practices to be avoided:

The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge or the child's parents, guardian or carer. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session:

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Avoid taking or dropping off a child to an event.

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Practices never to be sanctioned:

You should never:

- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves.

You should also ensure a Standing on the Shoulders of Giants Theatre Company Ltd staff member informs the parents, guardian of carer of the child:

- If you accidentally hurt a member of the group.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a young person or vulnerable adult appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a young person or vulnerable adult misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Ensure that these concerns are put in writing in the Standing on the Shoulders of Giants Theatre Company Ltd's Incident Book.

Interview and Induction

All employees will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees should receive formal or informal induction, during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- Child protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Standing on the Shoulders of Giants Theatre Company Ltd, in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

Standing on the Shoulders of Giants Theatre Company Ltd will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation,
- A child protection investigation,
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

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The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Action if there are concerns

Concerns about poor practice:

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the our designated staff member will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the our designated staff member, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Artistic Director who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- Child Protection Officer at the venue.
- The parents, guardian or carer of the person who is alleged to have been abused.
- The person making the allegation.
- Social services/police.
- The alleged abuser (and parents, guardian or carer if the alleged abuser is a child). Advice should be sought from social services on who should approach the alleged abuser.

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Internal Enquiries and Suspension

- The Child Protection Officer at the venue and the Administrator at Standing on the Shoulders of Giants Theatre Company Ltd will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries Standing on the Shoulders of Giants Theatre Company Ltd will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, Standing on the Shoulders of Giants Theatre Company Ltd must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

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Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse:

- Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need.
- Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

Action if bullying is suspected

The same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).

Action towards the bully(ies):

- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Inform the bully's parents.
- Insist on the return of 'borrowed' items and that the bully(ies) compensate the victim.
- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour.
- Keep a written record of action taken.

Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse:

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.

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- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents, guardian or carer been contacted?
- If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

Photographs and Video Footage:

Standing on the Shoulders of Giants Theatre Company Ltd will endeavour to ensure that any photographs or video footage taken and used by the company or a third party will have the permission of the participants, parents or other responsible adults as appropriate. In all cases we will not name any children. It is the responsibility of any organisation outside of Standing on the Shoulders of Giants Theatre Company Ltd that provides photographs or video footage to the company to obtain appropriate permission.

Standing on the Shoulders of Giants Theatre Company Ltd will carry out appropriate permission procedures where photographs or video footage are taken of all current education activities.

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact social services or the police direct, or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0800 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111.