

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

for Nottingham Arts Theatre

1. Introduction

I. Nottingham Arts Theatre ("the Charity") is a registered charity run for the following purpose:

A community theatre serving Nottingham and the wider area to provide opportunities for all in theatre and the arts.

II. The Charity is based at:

George Street

Nottingham

NG1 2BA

Charity Number: 1085862

III. The Charity is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. This Safeguarding Children Policy applies to **all trustees, staff, freelance practitioners, volunteers, students, chaperones and anyone working on behalf of the Charity**, whether paid or unpaid.

IV. All those working with or on behalf of the Charity are expected to **read, understand, support and comply** with this policy.

2. Purpose of the Policy

I. This policy is intended to protect children and young people (anyone under the age of 18) who participate in or attend any activity organised by the Charity, including children who may be accompanying adults.

II. The Charity believes that **no child or young person should experience abuse or harm** and recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

III. This policy provides:

- Clear principles for safeguarding practice
- Guidance on recognising and responding to concerns
- Procedures for reporting and managing safeguarding issues
- A framework for safer working practices in a youth theatre context

3. Definitions and Types of Abuse

Safeguarding refers to protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of health or development, and ensuring they grow up in safe and effective care.

Abuse may include (but is not limited to):

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Grooming (including online grooming)
- Child sexual exploitation
- Criminal exploitation
- Domestic abuse
- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Peer-on-peer abuse
- Self-harm or suicidal ideation

Abuse can occur **inside or outside** the Charity's activities and may be perpetrated by adults or other children.

4. Principles of Safeguarding

The Charity recognises that:

- **The welfare of the child is paramount**
- All children, regardless of race, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation or identity, have an equal right to protection
- Some children may be more vulnerable due to additional needs or life circumstances
- Safeguarding is **everyone's responsibility**
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and statutory agencies is essential

The Charity follows the principles set out in **Working Together to Safeguard Children**.

5. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

I. The Charity will appoint a **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** and, where possible, a **Deputy DSL**.

II. The DSL is responsible for:

- Receiving and responding to safeguarding concerns
- Making referrals to children's social care or the police where necessary
- Maintaining confidential safeguarding records
- Ensuring safeguarding training is up to date
- Acting as a point of contact for staff, volunteers, parents and external agencies

III. If a safeguarding concern involves the DSL, it must be reported to:
Mike Pearson, Trustee of the Nottingham Arts Theatre.

6. Safeguarding at Events and Activities

I. The Charity runs the following types of activities:

- Youth theatre sessions
- Youth productions
- Shows in a Week
- Mixed-age productions (e.g. pantomime, musicals)

II. Activities may include:

(A) events open to adults and children

(B) events for children accompanied by a parent or guardian

(C) events for unaccompanied children

III. Children under 16 attending open or mixed-age events must be supervised by a responsible adult unless explicitly enrolled in a supervised activity.

IV. For activities involving unaccompanied children:

- Written consent must be obtained from a parent or guardian
- Emergency contact details must be recorded
- Clear arrival and collection arrangements must be in place
- Children must only be released to authorised adults unless written confirmation has been received prior to allow the child to be released unaccompanied.

V. Young people aged 16–17 may attend unaccompanied with provided emergency contact details are obtained prior.

7. Safer Recruitment and DBS Checks

I. The Charity is committed to safer recruitment practices.

II. DBS checks will be carried out where roles involve:

- Regular contact with children
- Unsupervised or intensive contact
- Positions of trust or authority

III. The level of DBS check will reflect the nature of the role and legal requirements.

IV. All staff and volunteers will:

- Receive safeguarding information at induction
- Be provided with a code of conduct
- Be appropriately supervised

V. The Charity will take very seriously any allegation of impropriety on the part of any member of the Charity. A member of the Charity who discovers anything amiss should get in touch immediately with the following:

JESSICA ROYCE – YOUTH THEATRE CO-ORDINATOR

VI. Allegations will be appropriately reviewed and the likely risk to children and, if appropriate, will consider banning the member from future events or revoking his or her membership or both, but only in full accordance with the rules and procedures of the Charity.

8. Code of Conduct and Professional Boundaries

All adults working with children must:

- Treat children with respect and dignity
- Maintain appropriate physical and emotional boundaries
- Avoid favouritism or inappropriate relationships
- Not engage in private electronic communication with children outside agreed channels
- Follow guidance on touch, intimacy, choreography and performance direction

Any physical contact must be **appropriate, necessary and consent-based**, particularly in a theatre context.

9. Online Safety and Digital Communication

I. The Charity recognises the importance of safeguarding children online.

II. Online communication with children will:

- Take place only via approved platforms
- Be transparent and professional
- Avoid private messaging where possible
- Include another adult where appropriate

III. Consent will be obtained for:

- Photography and video recording
- Sharing images on websites or social media

10. Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

I. Anyone with a concern about a child's welfare must:

- Report it immediately to the DSL

- Record concerns accurately and promptly
- Not promise confidentiality to the child

II. The DSL will assess the concern and decide on appropriate action, which may include:

- Monitoring and early help
- Informing parents (unless unsafe to do so)
- Referral to children's social care or police

III. In an emergency, immediate contact should be made with emergency services.

11. Peer-on-Peer Abuse and Bullying

I. The Charity recognises that children can abuse other children.

II. All incidents of bullying, harassment or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to promptly.

III. Support will be offered to all children involved, and appropriate disciplinary or safeguarding action will be taken.

12. Managing Behaviour and Use of Restraint

I. Corporal punishment is never permitted.

II. Physical restraint may only be used as a **last resort** to prevent immediate harm and must be:

- Proportionate
- Necessary
- Recorded and reported to the DSL

13. Health and Safety

Risk assessments will be carried out for all activities involving children, particularly productions and workshops.

Adequate adult supervision must always be maintained.

Supervision Ratios

When working with unaccompanied children, Nottingham Arts Theatre will ensure adequate adult supervision at all times including any on-site break times. As a minimum:

- For children aged **8 to 15**, there will be **at least one DBS-checked adult for every 12 children**
- For children **under 8**, there will be **at least one DBS-checked adult for every 8 children**

Ratios may be increased where activities involve heightened risk (for example, technical rehearsals, performances, off-site activities, or children with additional needs).

14. Record Keeping and Confidentiality

Safeguarding records will:

- Be factual, accurate and timely
- Be stored securely
- Be shared only on a need-to-know basis

Data protection legislation will be followed at all times.

15. Legal Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (latest version)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

16. Review

This policy will be reviewed **in 2 years** or sooner if legislation, guidance or organisational practice changes.

Signed: J. Royce

Name: Jessica Royce

Role: Youth Group Co-Ordinator and DSL

Date: 28th December 2025

Adopted by: Mike Pearson

Role: Trustee