

ST STEPHENS PLAYERS Best Practice Procedures

These procedures MUST be used for any ST STEPHENS PLAYERS (SSP) activity in which children are taking part. This document should be read in conjunction with the ST STEPHENS PLAYERS (SSP) Child Protection Policy

Why these procedures are necessary

As one of the objectives of its Child Protection Policy, SSP identified the need to:

- Create and implement a series of 'Best Practice' procedures to be adhered to during all Club activities in which children take part.

With the introduction of the Children Law Guernsey and Alderney 2008, every adult now has a legal responsibility to safeguard and protect the wellbeing of children. More information on the new Children Law can be found by visiting www.gov.gg.

Areas of Best Practice this document will address

- Member recruitment
- Selection of material and scheduling
- Auditions
- Pre production Parents' meetings
- Supervision ratios
- Children's Co-ordinator and Chaperones
 - Recruitment
 - Duties
- Rehearsals at The Community Centre
 - Drop off and pick up
 - Timings and length of rehearsals
 - Costume
- Performances and rehearsals at the Theatre
 - Drop off and pick up
 - Dressing room allocation
 - Supervision of children
 - Photographs / video
- After Show Parties

These procedures aim to be the practical application of the SSP Child Protection Policy. For further guidance on their use, Members should contact a member of SSP Committee.

The Procedures

Member recruitment

Adult Members

- 1) New SSP members should be informed that they will be required to undertake an enhanced disclosure with the Guernsey Vetting Bureau should they wish to perform the following roles in Club activities involving children:
 - a. Director
 - b. Stage Manager
 - c. Costume Co-Ordinator
 - d. Children's Co-Ordinator
 - e. Chaperone

- 2) Prospective members will be asked if they already hold a Guernsey Enhanced Disclosure and / or a current First Aid qualification. Negative responses will not affect eligibility to join SSP.
- 3) All New Members are to be made aware of the Child Protection Policy and provided with a copy of the policy upon request.

Junior Members

- 1) All prospective Junior members must have their membership application form signed by a parent or carer.
- 2) Copy of the SSP Child Protection Policy and these procedures will be provided to the parents/carers/guardians of the new members.

Selection of material and scheduling

When selecting material to be performed by SSP Members which will involve children, the SSP Committee should consider the following:

- 1) How many children and of what age?
- 2) Does the scheduling of the production co-inside with significant exam periods (eg 11 Plus exam dates, GCSE / A-Levels etc)
- 3) Is the material selected suitable for children to take part in? (see below)
- 4) Has a Children's Co-Ordinator been identified for the Production?
- 5) Do members of the proposed production team hold Guernsey Enhanced Disclosures?

Suitability of material

It is noted that sometimes character behaviour exhibited in plays contravenes the SSP Child Protection Policy (e.g. excessive swearing, sexual content). Should this be the case, a letter detailing the content of these scenes and how this will be addressed during rehearsal should be sent to parents / carers of children PRIOR to audition. In these instances, parents will be required to submit written permission for their child to audition for the production.

Auditions

The SSP Child Protection Policy should be adhered to during all auditions.

- 1) Auditions for children should be undertaken at a set time, which parents and carers are informed of prior to the audition date.
- 2) The Production's Children's Co-ordinator should be present at all auditions involving children. If the Children's Co-Ordinator is a member of the Audition Panel, a chaperone must be engaged to supervise children in waiting area.
- 3) Children must be signed in and out by a parent or carer unless permission has been granted for the child to arrive / depart alone.
- 4) Where possible, children should be auditioned in a workshop environment.
- 5) Written consent must be obtained from parents or carers if the production will contain material which is unsuitable for children (see above).
- 6) Children, parents and carers will be informed of decisions promptly after the auditions. Members of the audition panel should consider the Behaviour Statement section of the SSP Child Protection Policy when making decisions regarding children's casting.

Pre production Parents' meetings

Any production involving children will hold a Pre Production Parent's Meeting BEFORE rehearsals commence. The purpose of the Meeting is:

- To introduce parents and carers and children to the production team and SSP's Child Protection Officer.
- To outline the rehearsal schedule and commitment required from children.

- To explain SSP's Child Protection Policy.
- To outline the behaviour expected from all participants in a SSP production.
- To explain rehearsal procedures (see below).
- To obtain written consent for the child to take part in the production.
- To obtain a signed media release.
- To obtain emergency contact details and relevant medical information.

The format of this meeting will depend on the number of children involved. It will be led by SSP's Child Protection Officer and the Production's Director. Any parent or carer unable to attend the meeting will be provided with the necessary consent documents and details of the rehearsal schedule.

Parents should also be informed if they will be required to provide any specific costume elements for rehearsal and performance (e.g. jazz shoes / flesh coloured underwear).

Supervision Ratios

The following minimum adult to child ratios should be adhered to at all times:

Rehearsals:

Children Under 12 – 1:16

Children 12 to 18 – 1:30

Rehearsals at the Theatre and Performances:

Children under 10 – 1:8

Children 11 to 14 – 1:12

Children 15 to 18 – 1:15

Providing supervision should be the sole task of the individual selected. It is therefore inappropriate for the Director or a member of the cast or crew to undertake this role at the Theatre.

Children's Co-ordinator and Chaperones

It is essential that any child taking part in a SSP activity is properly supervised to ensure their safety and enjoyment. It is therefore necessary to recruit a Children's Co-Ordinator and Chaperones for all productions involving children.

Children's Co-Ordinator - The Children's Co-Ordinator will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of children's participation in a SSP activity. Their duties and responsibilities will be as follows:

- Undertake a Guernsey Enhanced Disclosure PRIOR to beginning work on any production as Children's Co-Ordinator.
- Meet with the production Director and SSP Child Protection Officer before to auditions to discuss the child protection requirements.
- Attend auditions make sure that children are properly supervised and audition practices are in line with SSP's Child Protection Policy.
- Advise on casting where appropriate.
- Assist in the organisation and attend the Pre Production Parents' Meeting.
- Ensure that all the necessary signed consent documentation is received prior to rehearsals commencing.
- Hold all emergency contact details and relevant medical information and bring it with you to every rehearsal involving children. When the production moves into Theatre this information will be passed to the Stage Manager.
- Attend every rehearsal where children will be present. If you are unable to attend a rehearsal, you should make arrangements for a chaperone to attend.
- Sign all children in and out of every rehearsal.
- Remain at the rehearsal venue until all the children have been collected.
- Keep parents or carers up to date with any schedule changes.

- Recruit and schedule chaperones for all rehearsals and performances at the Theatre.
- Attend or arrange for a chaperone to attend any media call (e.g. photo shoot, radio interview) which involves children if necessary.
- Report any problems to the Child Protection Officer.
- Report any Child Protection concerns to the Child Protection Officer.

Chaperones - Chaperones are essential in ensuring that children are properly supervised and safe during rehearsals and performances at the Theatre. Their duties and responsibilities are as follows:

- Undertake a Guernsey Enhanced Disclosure PRIOR to beginning work as a chaperone.
- Attending at least two rehearsals prior to moving to the theatre in order to see the production and meet the children.
- Arriving at the Theatre 15 minutes before the children and not leaving until all the children have been collected.
- Signing all children in and out.
- Ensure that correct dressing room procedures are adhered to (see below).
- Report any problems to Children's Co-ordinator.
- Report any Child Protection concerns to the Child Protection Officer.

SSP recognises that the roles of Children's Co-ordinator and Chaperone can be onerous and time consuming but also how necessary it is for all round safety of participants and is very grateful to all involved. .

Rehearsals and Production Considerations

- 1) Children must be dropped off no more than 15 minutes prior to the start of a rehearsal. They must be collected no later than 10 minutes after a rehearsal has finished.
- 2) Parents should be advised of all rehearsal times in advance and schedules should be stuck to as closely as possible.
- 3) Timings and length of rehearsals should take into consideration the age of the children involved.
- 4) Costumes should be well fitting and suitable for the age of the child. Children should not be asked to wear anything that would be considered indecent without parental and child consent.
- 5) Children required to try on costumes during the course of rehearsals should be provided with a suitable screened off area.

Performances and rehearsals at the Theatre

- 1) Children must be dropped off at the Stage Door no more than one hour before the rehearsal / performance commences unless they have been asked to arrive earlier by the Director.
- 2) Children should be **collected** from the theatre promptly at the end of rehearsals and performances.
- 3) Children may not stay at the Theatre in between matinee and evening performances unless there is a Chaperone or responsible adult willing to take responsibility for them.
- 4) No cameras or camera phones may be used in any backstage area. Photos may be taken in the area of the corridor but only if all surrounding doors are closed and the performance is not taking place i.e flash photography would interfere with it.

Dressing Room Allocation

When allocating Dressing Rooms the following should be considered:

- Children should be separated into the following groups
 - Under 10s (mixed)
 - 10 to 14s (single sex)
 - 15 to 18s (single sex)
- Children and adults cannot share dressing rooms
- Age groups and sexes can be segregated in the same room if absolutely necessary through screening off separate areas.
- Supervising adult to child ratios should be adhered to in all dressing rooms.

Back Stage Access

- No one other than members of the cast and crew should be in the back stage area.
- Members of the audience who wish to visit the cast back stage after a performance will not be admitted to any backstage area where children are changing.
- Children's dressing room access is strictly limited to the Children's Co-ordinator and Chaperones and same sex principle characters if absolutely necessary.
- No parents are permitted backstage unless they are working as Children's Co-ordinator or Chaperones on the production.

After Show Parties

SSP acknowledges that After Show Parties are an important part of the production and encourages all participating members to attend. When planning an after show party for productions involving children the following should be considered:

- 1) Children must be supervised by adults in the same ratios as rehearsals at the Hall. Any adult undertaking a supervisory role should remain sober and ensure that children are collected by a parent or carer.
- 2) No adult member of the Club should provide alcohol to anyone aged under 18 in a public or private party venue.
- 3) Productions involving a large number of children should consider either a separate after show party for children or a lunchtime/afternoon timeframe. Activities and timings should be suitable for the ages of the children involved.
- 4) Club Members hosting official SSP after show parties at their homes are responsible for ensuring that children attending are properly supervised and that alcohol is not provided to anyone aged under 18.
- 5) Written parental consent must be given for any child attending an after show party.
- 6) If a production involves a small group of children in a largely adult cast, a parent or carer of the child should be invited to attend the party in order to supervise their child.
- 7) Any official SSP After Show Party should adhere to the SSP Child Protection Policy.

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