

# Child Protection Policy

## Terminology

In this document “*child*” refers to a person up to and including the age of 18. There is no standard definition of “*vulnerable adult*” in law, but St Stephens Players (“SSP”) has adopted the following definition in line with the Arts Council of England:

*“Vulnerable adults are people who are or may be in need of community care services because of mental disability or other disability, age or illness, and who are, or who may be, unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.”*

Where the word “child” is used read child / vulnerable adult.

## Policy Statement

SSP is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children and vulnerable adults. Directors, Stage Managers, Members and parents should be fully aware of SSP’s Child Protection Policy. They should also show respect and understanding for their own rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects on the principles of SSP. The process of implementing the Policy is the responsibility of SSP’s Child Protection Office, who has yet to be designated. SSP acknowledges that the safeguarding of children is the legal obligation of all adults.

All members, children and parents will be made aware of the Policy and provided with a copy of SSP Child Protection Policy statement.

## Objectives

In order to achieve the principles of the Policy Statement SSP will:

- Create an environment where young people feel secure, have their viewpoints valued and are encouraged to talk and are listened to;
- Continue to develop awareness in all Members of the need to safeguard children and their responsibilities in identifying abuse, with particular care being taken for children with disabilities;
- Ensuring that all Members are aware of the referral procedures at SSP;
- Ensuring that outside agencies are involved as appropriate;
- Providing information for parents / carers outlining procedures laid down within this and other related SSP policies;
- Ensure children know there are adults in SSP whom they can approach if they are worried;
- Create and implement a series of “Best Practice” procedures to be adhered to during all SSP activities in which children taken part.

## Abuse Definition

Abuse recognises four main forms:

- **Physical Abuse** – where adults physically hurt or injure children by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, biting or by giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison. In an arts situation physical abuse might occur when the nature and intensity of training disregard the capacity of a child’s immature growing body;

- **Sexual Abuse** – where adults, both male and female, who use children to meet their own sexual needs, abuse girls and boys. Abuse is defined as such irrespective of whether a child has reached the appropriate age of sexual consent. Showing children pornographic material is also a form of sexual abuse. In music, drama and other arts disciplines such as dance, which can involve frequent physical contact with children, situations where sexual abuse might go unnoticed could be created. It is important to recognise the power of a workshop leader or director over young persons, which can, if misused, lead to abusive situations developing;
- **Emotional Abuse** – where there is a persistent lack of love and affection, where a child may be constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the child very nervous and withdrawn. Emotional abuse in the arts might include situations where children are subject to unrealistic pressure by a parent or director, or bullied in order to consistently perform to high expectations;
- **Neglect** – where adults fail to meet a child's basic needs like food or warm clothing. Children might also be constantly left alone or unsupervised. Adults may also fail to, or refuse to give children love and affection and this could be seen to be emotional neglect. Neglect in an arts situation could include a teacher or coach not ensuring children are working in a safeguarding environment or properly supervised during a performance.

### Indicators of Abuse

Indications that a child is being abused include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries;
- An injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent;
- The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him / her;
- Someone else – a child or adult, expresses concern about the welfare of another child;
- Unexplained changes in behaviour over time, eg becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper;
- Inappropriate sexual awareness;
- Engages in sexually explicit behaviour in games;
- Is distrustful of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship will normally be expected;
- Has difficulty in making friends;
- Is prevented from socialising with other children;
- Displays variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite;
- Loses weight for an apparent reason;
- Becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt.

This list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is of course not proof that abuse is actually taking place. It is stressed, however, that it is not the

responsibility of the SPP or its members to actively investigate or prove that abuse is taking place, but it is their responsibility to act upon any concerns.

## **Behaviour Statement**

Always:

- Treat others as you would expect them to treat you;
- Provide an example you wish others to follow;
- Ensure that another adult is present when you are in the company of children or vulnerable adults (ideally mixed gender) including situations when children are waiting to be collected;
- Respect a person's right to privacy;
- Encourage children and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes and behaviour they do not like;
- Remember someone might misinterpret your actions and your comments, no matter how well intentioned;
- Recognise that caution is required, particularly in sensitive moments, such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement, grief or abuse;
- Be aware of the possible implications of physical contact with children or vulnerable adults.

Never:

- Show favouritism to any individual;
- Make suggestive remarks or gestures;
- Do things of a personal nature for a child that they could do for themselves;
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged (ie swearing, racial / sexual / homophobic / taunts);
- Permit abusive child peer activities (eg bullying, ridiculing or initiation ceremonies);
- Jump to conclusions;
- Allow yourself to be drawn into any inappropriate attention seeking behaviour by young people (eg tantrums, crushes);
- Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues;
- Rely upon just your good name to protect you;
- Believe "it could never happen to me", both dealing with abuse or being accused of committing abuse;
- Do not engage children on personal social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter. Instead direct them to SSP Facebook page or the SSP website. Children under the age of 13 should not be accepted as "friends" online as this breaks the terms and conditions of use for most social networking sites;

- Post photos or videos of children taking part in SSP activities to any social networking site without written parental consent.

If one-to-one contact is unavoidable:

- Make sure it is for as short a time as possible;
- Ensure you remain accessible to others;
- Tell someone where you are going, what you are doing and why;
- Try to move with the child to areas where there are more people;
- Obtain permission from the child before any physical contact is made, for instance, if you need to administer first aid;
- Try to avoid unnecessary physical contact especially if it may be misconstrued by the child or other people;
- Avoid giving children a lift alone, however short the journey. When this is unavoidable, it is advisable to get consent from the child's parents or guardian. You must also ensure the child sits in the back of the car. Members should also take insurance cover into account when considering giving lifts to children, as SSP insurance does not cover this.

## Procedures

If you suspect or are told that a young person is being abused:

- You **must** always refer to the delegated person within SSP. DO NOT investigate yourself;
- Write down the details as you know them on the Child Protection Report Form;
- Ensure that the child is given the opportunity to talk to you or an independent person;
- Listen to the child without interruption and do not ask questions about what you may suspect;
- Do not approach a suspected abuser yourself. Provide support to the child;
- Accept at face value what the child says;
- Do not pass judgment on what is said but do try to alleviate any fears or guilt which the child may have;
- Do not promise to keep what they tell you a secret. Make it clear that you can offer support but that you **must** pass on the information;
- Please follow the Procedures for Reporting guidelines and utilise the contact sheet and report form provided.

If you receive an allegation of child abuse by an adult:

- Contact SSP Child Protection Officer. Any information, no matter how trivial it may appear must be shared;
- Record the nature of the allegation in detail on the Child Protection Report Form;

- Do not try to resolve the issue yourself – follow the Procedures for Reporting guideline and use the report form provided.

Members who hear an allegation of abuse against another member of the team, or indeed themselves, should report the matter immediately to the SSP Child Protection Officer. If the allegation is against the SSP Child Protection Officer, another senior figure within SSP should be contacted.

Further procedures regarding children and SSP activities can be found in the document entitled “SSP Best Practice Procedures” and should be read in conjunction with this Policy.

### **Monitoring and Record Keeping**

- All incidents should, ideally, be written up within the hour. They must be recorded within 24 hours;
- Written notes should be attached if made separately from the attached report sheets;
- Reports should be signed by the Member, with the name printed and designation;
- Reports and records should be passed to SSP Child Protection Officer who in turn will take responsibility for the safe storage and processing of this information;
- All information gathered should be treated with strict confidentiality.

### **Recruitment**

Anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and it is important that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

- Consent should be obtained from applications for an enhanced disclosure, facilitated by Guernsey Vetting Bureau for anyone who will be working directly with children (ie director, stage manager, children’s co-ordinator, chaperones, costume team);
- Candidates should confirm their identity through official documents, producing originals or documents certified by an independent professional;
- The SSP Committee should have effective measures in place to ensure the confidentiality of information received in relation to applicants;
- All prospective SSP Members must be vouched for by a current adult member. In vouching for a prospective member, SSP Members are indicating that they believe there is no reason that the proposed members should not have contact with children.

Members without a Guernsey Enhanced Disclosure will not be permitted to supervise or lead activities involving children with the organisation until the process has been completed.

### **The Role of the Designated Persons**

To be effective in this role they must:

- Act as a source of advice, support and expertise within the organisation and be responsible for co-ordinating action regarding referrals, liaising with Social Services and other relevant agencies in cases of abuse and allegations of abuse, regarding both children and members of staff / volunteers;
- Ensure each member has access to, and is aware of, SSP Child Protection Policy;

- Ensure the Child Protection Policy is reviewed annually;
- Be able to keep accurate, detailed and secure written records of concerns and referrals;
- Ensure parents / carers see copies of the Child Protection Policy to alert them to the fact that SSP may need to make referrals.

# Procedures for Reporting

Member / Participant / Parent



Please keep these numbers somewhere accessible at all times:

## **Child Protection Officer for SSP:**

Name: St Stephens Committee  
Telephone: List attached

If the above named person is unavailable please contact:

Name: [Lesley Perchard] – Chairman  
Telephone:

## **Services for Children and Young People:**

### **Assessment and Intervention Team (Social Workers)**

Telephone: 01481 723182

Address: Swissville  
Rohais  
St Peter Port

### **Duty Officer (Social Worker outside office hours):**

Telephone: 01481 725241

### **Guernsey Police**

Telephone: 01481 725111

Address: Police Headquarters  
Hospital Lane  
St Peter Port

### **NSPCC**

Telephone: 0800 8005000

**IN CASES OF IMMEDIATE DANGER TO A CHILD'S SAFETY CALL THE  
GUERNSEY POLICE ON 999**