

An Tobar & Mull Theatre Child Protection Policy Updates 2021

Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

Participation in the arts is an extremely and enriching and rewarding experience for children and young people developing their creative skills, encouraging self-expression, promoting open communication and heightening self – esteem. Every child has the right to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

Mull Theatre provides a variety of opportunities for children to engage in and are centred in the three following areas; Join in activities, Performance and Participation activities and Enterprise Activities.

An Tobar & Mull Theatre is committed to providing a safe and secure environment in which children and young people are able to enjoy their experience in the arts. We are dedicated to ensuring that everyone involved in any of these activities feel safe, comfortable and respected. The policy applies to all employees, freelancers and anyone who assists in An Tobar & Mull Theatre’s work with children and vulnerable adults.

The following should underpin all interaction with children and vulnerable adults.

- . The best interests of the child are of primary consideration
- . All children are treated fairly with dignity and respect
- . All children have the right to express their views
- . All children have the right to protection from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation

2. Scottish Legislation

This policy is in compliance with the Children (Scotland) Act 1995

- . Each child has the right to be treated as an individual
- . Each child can form and express a view on matters affecting themselves
- . Parents should normally be responsible for the upbringing of their children
- . Each child has the right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect or exploitation

For the purposes of this policy anyone under the age of 18 years should be considered as a child

3. Definition of Abuse

Abuse is usually categorised into four types as outlined below. It may be repetitive or an isolated case. The majority of abuse is committed by people who have a close, trusting relationship with the child. Abuse by strangers only accounts for only a small percentage of cases

- . Physical Abuse
- . Sexual Abuse
- . Emotional Abuse
- . Neglect

In addition, children and vulnerable adults can also find themselves in abusive situations caused by drugs, alcohol misuse, bullying, domestic violence and verbal abuse.

4. Signs and Indicators of Abuse

Being aware is essential. Some signs will not always be clear and decisions of what action to take can be difficult, but the following is a list of things to look for that may indicate something is wrong

- . Sudden withdrawal from others
- . Suspicious bruises with unsatisfactory explanations
- . Extreme anger or sadness
- . Fear of strangers
- . Aggressive behaviour
- . Attention seeking behaviour
- . Lack of self esteem
- . Inappropriate sexual behaviour for their age
- . Self-harm
- . Depression

These indicators do not conclusively mean that a child is being abused. However, we know that children who have been abused may sometimes react in some or all of these ways.

5. Designated Child Protection Officer

The role of the DCPO is to provide advice and support to staff on all child and vulnerable adult protection matters and to liaise with the appropriate statutory organisations to ensure the safety of

the child or the vulnerable adult. However, it is not the role of the DCPO or any other member of staff to carry out an investigation.

DCPO at An Tobar & Mull Theatre is KAREN RAY (karen@comar.co.uk)

The DCPO should

- . Maintain good relations with individuals
- . Keep up to date with developments in child protection
- . Provide basic training to all staff
- . Report immediately any disclosure or suspicion of abuse or risk of abuse
- . Be responsible for the secure storage of recorded information

If for any reason the DCPO is not available, and you feel a child is in immediate danger please dial 999. If you are concerned about a child or vulnerable adult, discuss your observations with the DCPO. Trust your intuition and do not keep things to yourself. Remember it is not your role to determine whether or not abuse has taken place, but it is your responsibility to follow through on any concern.

6. Handling Disclosure of abuse

- . Do not attempt to investigate
- . Never promise confidentiality
- . Listen
- . Do not ask closed or leading questions
- . Do not be judgmental
- . Reassure
- . Record all
- . Report to DCPO

7. Creative Learning activities

Staff working in this area will be supervised by Head of Creative Learning – Andi Stevens who should promote open channels of communication and make it clear to all staff that they should feel free to contact them at any time if concern arises. All staff and freelancers should be aware of the Child Protection Policy and should have the opportunity to feedback on any experiences.

8. Allegations against a member of staff or volunteer

It is often not easy for people to accept that child abuse can occur within their own organisation. Good practice in both recruitment and supervision should reduce the risk. However, the possibility of an allegation being made against a member of staff cannot be eliminated and must never be ignored. If a child tells you that a member of staff has caused them harm, this should be treated in the same way as any other disclosure. Remember the most important consideration is always the wellbeing and the best interest of the child.

9. Safer Recruitment

An Tobar & Mull Theatre will take all reasonable steps to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and vulnerable adults, through the safe recruitment processes.

10.Support and Supervision

It is vital that all staff working with children and vulnerable adults have adequate support, supervision and training. All staff will receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy as part of their induction. The Policy will be reviewed on a three yearly basis or when there are relevant changes in legislation.

11.General code of Conduct and Good Practice for staff

All staff who work for An Tobar & Mull Theatre in any capacity and who come into contact with children or vulnerable adults are required to adhere to the following code of conduct and good practice

- . Treat all children with respect
- . Be a good role model
- . Respect a child's right to privacy
- . Actively encourage children to be involved in any decisions that affect them
- . Encourage an ethos which embraces difference and diversity
- . Encourage children to say when they are being asked to do things which create fear
- . Ensure wherever possible there is more than one adult present during all activities with children
- . Develop skills which will enable you to listen sensitively and carefully
- . Report immediately any suspicion that a child could be at risk
- . Carry out any appropriate Health and Safety risk assessments for activities involving children
- . Written Parental / Guardian consent should be obtained for specific activities
- . Seek to build effective and equal partnerships with parents/carers

You should not:

- . Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children**
- . Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues**
- . Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts**
- . Permit abusive youth peer activities**
- . Show favouritism to any individual**
- . Make suggestive or derogatory remarks in front of children**
- . Display images of sexual, violent or abusive nature in areas where children might see them**
- . You must not permit any photography or video of any children. Company productions and official photography will be arranged prior to events with the Head of Creative Learning.**
- . Do not friend or follow any young person you are working with on social media.**
- . Do not give out personal contact details**
- . Do not allow a young person to visit your home**
- . Do not accept someone's personal assurances that an individual is safe to work directly with children**
- . Do not rely on your good name to protect you**
- . Do not believe that child abuse does not take place in your local community.**

12. General code of conduct for members

An Tobar & Mull Theatre is committed to providing a high quality and fun theatre experience for all participants. It is our hope that all members enjoy participating and feel that they are in a safe, supportive and inclusive environment. At An Tobar & Mull Theatre we expect all its staff and participants to treat others with dignity and respect and will not tolerate any bullying or discrimination at any time

All Creative Learning members are expected to;

- . Attend all workshops and rehearsals**
- . Participate in a positive and constructive way**
- . Provide us with information as regards and health and safety issues or medical conditions**
- . Treat the buildings with respect**

- . **Treat other members and staff with respect**
- . **Never put yourself or any other member in a dangerous position.**

13.Guidelines for parents/guardians

An Tobar & Mull Theatre recognizes its duty to take all reasonable steps to ensure the protection and safety of children and vulnerable adults in our care and we give you our assurance that this will happen. We would appreciate your help in the smooth running of this and helping us to comply with all child protection guidelines. All children under the age of 14 years are required to be accompanied by an adult at events unless otherwise stated.

Andi Stevens

Head of Creative Learning