

## **Child Protection Policy**

### **Guidelines for Drama, Workshop and Performance Leaders (Voluntary and Paid)**

The parents of BYT members will want reassurance that their daughters and sons are safe. Borders Youth Theatre is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm. Volunteers and staff should, at all times, show respect and understanding of young people, and their safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects our principles.

No activity should be entered into that is potentially harmful to young people and good practice should be adhered to at all times.

### **Principles**

You can reduce likely situations for the abuse of participants and help protect yourself from false accusations by making sure that everyone is aware that, as a general rule, you should not:

- Spend time alone with a young person away from others

- Contact young people out with the activity or the project, where it constitutes the inappropriate use of contacts made through the group

- Take young people alone in a car on journeys, however short

- Take a young person to your home

When occasions arise where it is unavoidable that these things happen, then they should only occur with the full knowledge of your line manager, senior worker or the young person's parents.

### **Code of practice**

Staff and volunteers should never:

- Engage in inappropriate rough, physical and sexually provocative games, including horseplay

- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form

- Deter young people from making allegations through a fear of not being believed

- Allow young people or other staff and volunteers to use inappropriate language

(Obviously, there will be situations within the work undertaken during workshops and productions when the subject matter requires strong language - Leaders should prepare carefully for this.)

Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person even in fun

Do things of personal nature for young people that they can do themselves

Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts

Show favouritism to any individuals

Rely on just your own good name to protect you

Believe it could never happen to you

**Staff and volunteers should always:**

Treat everyone with respect

Respect a young person's right to personal privacy

Take seriously any allegations a young person makes, ensuring that the appropriate people alerted ( see below) that the incident is recorded

Provide access for young people to talk to others about any concerns they may have

Remember that someone might misinterpret your actions, no matter how intended

Plan activities so that at least one other member of staff or volunteer is present, or is at least within sight or hearing of the activity

Recognize that special caution is required even in sensitive moments of counseling, such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse

**What should you do if you suspect a young person is being or has been abused:**

Tell the designated person for child protection – AMANDA GLASGOW

Record any FACTS which support your suspicions, referring to the SBC Child Protection Guidelines which follow.

Sign and date your notes, storing them in a safe and secure place

**If a young person discloses to you abuse by someone else:**

Allow the participant to speak without interruption, accepting what is said

Never question the young person or attempt investigation

Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgment

Advise the young person involved that you will try to offer support but that you must pass on the information

Record any FACTS

Sign and date your notes, storing them in a safe and secure place

Contact the designated person for child protection - this is a matter of urgency  
: AMANDA GLASGOW

### **If you receive an allegation about any adult or about yourself**

Immediately inform Trustees via BYT Administrator

If it's not possible to discuss this with the person in charge then contact the designated person for child protection AMANDA GLASGOW

Record the facts, as you know them

Try to ensure that no one is placed in a position that could cause further compromise

### **Disclosure**

'Disclosure' is the relatively new term for what, in the past, has been called police checking or screening. All contracted workers and volunteers shall obtain a certificate of extended disclosure. This can be arranged at no charge for volunteers through Youth Borders.

A new scheme - Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) - was introduced in February 2011. From that time, contracted staff and volunteers should be registered via the PVG Scheme. There will be a period of 'grace' when BYT will recognize enhanced disclosure as sufficient.

BYT is registered with Disclosure Scotland and contracted staff can register with the PVG scheme through BYT.

With the advent of the Disclosure, concerns have been raised about the balance to be struck between the need for child protection and the need to allow everybody to have a place and a purpose within the community. Disclosure Scotland has established a code of practice which includes detailed guidance about disclosures. The guidelines are designed to combat unfair discrimination. This is in a context where there are millions of people with past criminal convictions, possibly involving imprisonment. Many of these people can still prove to be perfectly capable and safe staff and volunteers.

## **Appendix : Scottish Borders Council Child Protection Guidelines**

### **Child protection**

*All children have a right to be protected from harm, especially from other people and to grow up in a caring and safe environment.*

*All parents experience difficulties at times and can be helped by other family members or close friends. However, there may be times when a child can be at risk of significant harm and professional support needs to be provided.*

**All adults have a responsibility to protect children.**

*If you have any concerns or worries about any child or young person you should do something about it and speak to someone. This could be a teacher, health visitor, doctor, social worker or a police officer - anyone who you think may be able to help you.*

*You can get advice or report a concern by contacting your local Integrated Children's Services office. In an emergency out of office hours, please call the Emergency Duty Team on 01896 752111.*

### **What to do if you have concerns**

*Children rarely tell if they are being abused. However, there may be signs that make you feel concerned and these may be an indication of a child being neglected or abused. You may notice one or a combination of the following signs. The child or young person may:*

- have unexplained bruising, or bruising in an unexpected place*
- appear quiet, withdrawn, or afraid*
- be afraid to go home*
- appear constantly hungry, tired or untidy*
- be left unattended or unsupervised*
- have too much responsibility for their age*
- be acting in a sexually inappropriate way*
- be misusing drugs or alcohol*
- tell you something that sounds as if they have been hurt by someone.*

*The behaviour of an adult may cause you concern if they:*

- are acting in an aggressive, violent or sexual manner towards a child or young person*
- are misusing drink or drugs while caring for a child*
- leave their child unattended or with people who are unsuitable.*

### **Whom should I contact?**

*If you see behaviour that is of concern, or if a child or young person tells you something, you need to take them seriously, do something about it, and speak to someone. This could be a teacher, a doctor, a health visitor, a social worker, a police officer or nursery staff.*

*You can get advice or report a concern by contacting your local Integrated Children's Services office. In an emergency out of office hours, please call the Emergency Duty Team on 01896 752111.*

*You can also speak to a confidential helpline such as:*

- *The NSPCC - 0808 800 5000*
- *Childline - 0800 1111*
- *Parentline - 0808 800 2222*

### **What action will be taken?**

*When you contact a professional about your concern, unless the child is in immediate danger, they will make some immediate enquiries before taking action. They will check to see if the child is known and what information is held about the child. All information will be seriously treated and acted upon. This may be an immediate reaction or a more planned response. Following enquiries professionals may, for example:*

- *take immediate action to secure the safety of the child*
- *provide support, help or advice to the family*
- *provide a service to the child or family (for example, help with childcare) and where necessary referral to another agency may be provided*
- *conduct criminal proceedings*
- *record the concern but take no further action at this time.*

### **To ensure a child gets the best possible help**

- *give as much information as you can about the child or young person and their family or carer*
- *describe what it was that concerned you*
- *let us know if there are any other things we should be aware of, for example, immediate risks for the child or any other child.*

### **Will I need to give my name?**

*Any information about you will be treated with care. Any details, including your name, will not be revealed unless the child's safety requires it. Even if you do not give your name, enquiries can still be made into the child's welfare. However please be aware that withholding your name can make it more difficult for those looking into your concerns. Any information you give may need to be shared with other professionals to ensure appropriate action is taken.*

## ***Your information is important***

*When we suspect, witness or are told of a child that is being harmed we can react in many different ways. We may feel guilt, anger, disbelief or denial. Some of these reactions can prevent a family from getting the help they need. Many people do not help because they fear that:*

- children will be at further risk of harm*
- nothing will be done*
- the children would be taken away*
- the family may find out who reported them*
- telling may ruin relationships.*

*In reality it is best that action is taken early to stop things getting worse - and long-term abuse or neglect is more likely to cause problems for a child as he or she gets older. Even if you think an incident is a 'one-off', other professional agencies may already have concerns about the child, so your information may be important. You can get advice or report a concern by contacting your local Integrated Children's Services office. In an emergency out of office hours, please call the Emergency Duty Team on 01896 752111.*