

PRESTBURY YOUTH PANTOMIME ASSOCIATION

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



Prestbury Youth Pantomime Association (PYPA) has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for children, all committee members, chaperones, volunteers, parents and legal guardians are fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in its care.

PYPA recognises the responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. This means to ensure that everyone follows procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities. For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures a child is recognised as someone under the age of 18 years.

Committee members, chaperones, volunteers and parents / guardians will work together to embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of children and young people.

This document outlines PYPA's commitment to protecting children based on the following principles:

- **The welfare of children is the primary concern**
- **All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse**
- **Child protection is everyone's responsibility**
- **Children have the right to express views on all matters which affect them, should they wish to do so**
- **Committee members, chaperones and volunteers shall work in partnership together with children and parents/guardians to promote the welfare, health and development of children.**

There are three elements to our policy:-

- **Prevention through awareness of each individual child's needs**
- **Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect**
- **Procedures for identifying and reporting cases or suspected cases, of abuse**

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of PYPA and to allow committee members, chaperones and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Prevention

We recognise that the "entertainment industry" can be a very "adult" environment and we expect that all committee members, chaperones, parents/legal guardians, volunteers and anyone else who comes into contact with children to behave in an appropriate manner at all times and remember that "The Welfare of the Child is Paramount".

PYPA will therefore:-

- Act within the Children's Act 1989 & 2004
(<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents> &
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>)

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- Act within The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014 (copy within child welfare folder)
- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel welcome and familiar with their environment and are informed of personal (toilets, dressing rooms etc.) and emergency arrangements (fire exits, meeting points etc.) and any Health and Safety Procedures (Dangerous equipment, First aid etc.)
- Inform each child whom the appropriate person or people are to speak to if they have any questions, problems or concerns.
- Ensure that all children are treated with respect and dignity and are treated as individuals and offered equality of opportunities.
- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and unnecessary physical contact with children) and involve/allow parents/chaperones wherever possible, to take responsibility for the child/children that they are responsible for (Parents must only have responsibility for their own child/ren)
- Recognising the individual needs of the child, e.g. recognising when a child may be tired and may need a break
- Ensure that children are supervised appropriately
- Ensure that all Chaperones are registered with the local authority in which they reside and have an enhanced DBS check
- Ensure that those coming into close unsupervised contact (that would form a regulated activity) with a child are DBS checked
- Ensure that all committee members and volunteers who don't necessarily have close contact with children but who are assisting in the production are aware of their conduct around children.

Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect

A child is abused or neglected when somebody inflicts harm, or fails to act to prevent harm. A child or young person up to the age of 18 years can suffer abuse or neglect and require protection.

- **Physical Abuse** - May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or guardian fabricates or induces illness in a child whom they are looking after.
- **Sexual Abuse** - Forcing or enticing a child/young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening, may involve: physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts; non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities; or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect** - Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or guardian failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

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- **Emotional Abuse** - The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional and behavioural development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age and developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, for example witnessing domestic abuse within the home or being bullied, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of child, though it may occur alone.

Legislation, Policy and Guidance

PYPA will adhere to the relevant legislation when working with children and young people under the age of 18 years as outlined in the following:

- Children Act 1989 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>)
- Children Act 2004 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942454/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_inter_agency_guidance.pdf)

Suspicion of Abuse

If you see or suspect abuse of a child, immediately make this known to the designated individual responsible for child protection – the Safeguarding Officer.

Disclosure of Abuse

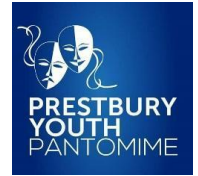
If a child tells you that, they or another child or young person is being abused:-

- Always stop and listen straight away, show that you take their allegations seriously.
- Encourage the child to talk, but do not ask leading questions, interrupt or ask the child to repeat itself.
- Never promise that you will keep what is said confidential or secret – explain that if you are told something of concern that you will need to let someone know but that you will only tell the people who need to know and can help.
- Record what you have been told accurately and as soon as possible. Use the child's own words. Make a note of the time, location, whether anyone else present and of the Child's demeanour.
- Ensure that your concerns are reported immediately to the designated Safeguarding Officer
- Do not confront the alleged abuser.

Handling Allegations

If a child makes an allegation against a member of PYPA it must be reported as a matter of urgency to the designated individual for child protection (the Safeguarding Officer) who will refer to Social Services department for Children's Services. If the allegation is against the designated person then the information should be reported to the Chairman of PYPA or directly to Social Services department for Children's Services. (This would generally be referred to the authority in which the alleged incident took place). The alleged perpetrator should not be made aware of the allegation at this point.

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Recording

In all situations, the details of allegation or reported incident must be recorded. Make accurate notes of time, dates, incident or disclosure, people involved, what was said and done and by whom, action taken to investigate, further action taken e.g. suspension of individual and if relevant: reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, name of the person reporting and to whom it was reported. The record must be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know.

DO NOT worry that you might be mistaken; you have a responsibility to pass on your concerns following a disclosure.

Never think abuse is impossible, or that an accusation about a person you know well and trust is bound to be wrong.

IT IS YOUR DUTY TO REFER CONCERNS ON, NOT TO INVESTIGATE.

Health and Safety whilst onsite at The Little Theatre (MADS)

During rehearsals and performances at The Little Theatre, Lord Street, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 6SY (run by MADS Theatre Group), PYPA (in addition to PYPA's own risk assessments) will follow MADS Theatre Group's own policies in regards to onsite health and safety at the theatre including, but not restricted to, their emergency evacuation and fire policy and their bomb threat policy. Whilst at The Little Theatre, PYPA will ensure that all Committee members, chaperones and volunteers are familiar with these policies and where fire exits and assembly points are located.

The Designated Individuals for child protection and safeguarding

Name: Emma Pickup
Position: Safeguarding Officer(s) and PYPA Chairman
Email: EP@LETEMMA.COM
Phone: 07887 442 157

Review

This Policy and these Procedures will be regularly reviewed:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children or following any changes within PYPA
- Following any issues or concerns raised about the protection of children within PYPA
- In all other circumstances, at least every three years.