

## **DYT Safeguarding Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

Dorchester Youth Theatre is fully committed to safeguarding the well being of its participants. Staff, leaders and Volunteers should be fully aware of the organisation's Child Safety guidelines. They should also show respect and understanding for their own rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of Dorchester Youth Theatre. The process of implementing the policy is the responsibility of the staff and volunteers under the direction of the Youth Theatre Director.

All staff and volunteers are provided with a copy of Dorchester Youth Theatre's Safeguarding Policy Statement. Reference is made to this within the Membership Agreement and can be viewed by both members and parents.

### **Objectives**

In order to achieve the principles of the Policy Statement Dorchester Youth Theatre 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 staff and volunteers of the need for Safeguarding and their responsibilities in identifying abuse.
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the referral procedures at Dorchester Youth Theatre.
- Ensuring that outside agencies are involved as appropriate.
- Providing information for parents/carers outlining procedures laid down within this and other related Dorchester Youth Theatre policies.
- Ensuring young people know that there are adults at Dorchester Youth Theatre whom they can approach if they are worried.

### **BEHAVIOUR STATEMENT FOR STAFF & VOLUNTEERS**

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 young people (ideally mixed genders) including situations when a young person is waiting to be collected.
- Respect a person's right to privacy.
- Encourage young people 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.

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- Be aware of the possible implications of physical contact with young people.

### Never

- Show favoritism to any individual.
- Make suggestive remarks or gestures.
- Do anything of a personal nature for a child that they could do for themselves.
- Allow young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged (i.e. swearing, racial/sexual taunts).
- Permit abusive youth peer activities (e.g. bullying, ridiculing or initiation ceremonies).
- Jump to conclusions.
- Allow yourself to be drawn into any inappropriate attention seeking behaviour by young people (e.g. tantrums, crushes).
- Exaggerate or trivialize child abuse issues.
- Rely upon just your good name to protect you.
- Believe 'it could never happen to me', either dealing with abuse or being accused of committing abuse.

### If one-to-one contact is unavoidable

- Make sure it is for a 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 young person to areas where there are more people.
- Obtain permission from the young person 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 where possible giving young people a lift alone, however short the journey. When this is unavoidable, it is advisable to get consent from the young person's parents or guardian. You must also ensure the young person sits in the back of the car. Staff and volunteers should also take insurance cover into account when considering lifts to young people, as Dorchester Youth Theatre's 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 designated person at Dorchester Youth Theatre. Don't investigate yourself.
- Write down the details as you know them on the Safeguarding report form.
- Ensure that the young person is given the opportunity to talk to you, or an independent person.

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- Listen to the young person without interruption and do not ask questions about what you may suspect.
- Do not approach a suspected abuser yourself. Provide support to the young person.
- Accept at face value what the young person says.
- Do not pass judgment on what is said, but do try to alleviate any fears or guilt which the young person may have.
- Make it clear that you can offer support but that you must pass on the information.

Please follow the Procedures for Reporting guidelines, and utilize the contact sheet and report form provided.

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

- Contact the named Safeguarding officer. Any information, no matter how trivial it may appear, must be shared.
- Record the nature of the allegation in detail.
- Do not try to resolve the issue yourself – follow the Procedures for Reporting guidelines, and use the report form provided.
- Staff/volunteers, who hear an allegation of abuse against another member of the team, or indeed themselves, should report the matter immediately to the Youth Theatre Director. If the allegation is against the Youth Theatre Director, the Chair of the Steering Committee should be contacted.

### **MONITORING & RECORD KEEPING**

- All incidents should be written up with 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 and dated by the staff member/volunteer, with the name printed and designation.
- Reports and records should be passed to the Youth Theatre Director who in turn will take responsibility for the safe storage and processing of this information.
- All information gathered will be treated with strict confidentiality, but will need to be shared with the designated Safeguarding Officer.

### **Dorchester Youth Theatre's Child Protection and recruitment procedure**

All volunteers and staff must provide evidence of clearance by the Criminal Records Bureau at the appropriate level for the adult's involvement with Dorchester Youth Theatre.

Should the adult not have this clearance they must complete a CRB form providing the following information:

- Full name

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- Current and recent address
- Date of birth
- Documentation to confirm their identity (i.e. birth certificate or drivers licence)
- Details of any previous experience, voluntary or paid, of working with young people.
- Details of any convictions for criminal convictions against children, including spent convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Permission to contact in writing, and in person, at least one local person who has experience of their work or contact with young people who may be asked for a reference.

An informal discussion with the applicant will also be undertaken.

Volunteers and staff without a CRB check will not be permitted to serve unsupervised with the organization 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 organization and be responsible for coordinating action regarding referrals, liaising with Children's Services and other relevant agencies in cases of abuse and allegations of abuse, regarding both young people and members of staff/volunteers.
- Ensure each member of staff has access to, and is aware of, Dorchester Youth Theatre's Safeguarding Policy.
- Ensure that the Safeguarding 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 Safeguarding Policy to alert them to the fact that Dorchester Youth Theatre may need to make referrals and that children are made aware some information cannot be assured of confidentiality.

### **THE ROLE OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE**

- To sanction a robust Safeguarding Policy, review it annually, monitor and evaluate its effectiveness and be satisfied that it is being complied with.
- To ensure a designated person or persons are allocated with the responsibility for safeguarding coordination along with a nominated board member.
- To ensure necessary training takes place for the Designated Persons to carry out their role.

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- To ensure that there are safe and effective recruitment and disciplinary procedure in place
- To ensure an annual items is placed on Steering Group meeting agendas, detailing changes affecting policy and procedures, training undertaken and numbers of cases/incidents (without names or details)