



## **Urban Stage School of Performing Arts Safeguarding Policy**

### **Our Statement**

- Urban Stage School of Performing Arts is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. We recognise the responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse, discrimination and exploitation.
- Urban Stage School of Performing Arts, also known in this policy as USSofPA, provides out of school youth theatres. Activities include weekly performing arts classes, workshops, summer schools and live theatre productions. USSofPA recruits staff from the professional entertainment world or with a performing arts background. Duke of Edinburgh, Work Experience and assistant teacher placements are offered to existing or ex USSofPA students.
- The terms “child,” “children” are used to refer to anyone under the age of 18 years. The terms “young person,” “young people” are used to refer to any USSofPA participant aged 18 years or over.
- Children and young people occupy a central place within USSofPA, and all staff and volunteers will endeavour to work together to encourage the development of children, young people and adults, no matter what their ability, background, race, religion or sexual identity.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately following the correct procedure

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Helen Kay, Safeguarding Ambassador and Principal USSofPA

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## ***1. Urban Stage School of Performing Arts commitment***

- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity
- The welfare of each child will always be put first
- A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers the children to share in the decision-making process
- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned
- All adult members of USSofPA will provide a positive role model for working with other people
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour
- USSofPA will undertake any relevant training and developments when needed
- USSofPA will hold a register of every child involved with the youth theatres and will retain an emergency contact name and number and relevant medical information in case of emergencies

## ***2. USSofPA implementation of this safeguarding policy***

- Communicate to all workers/members their legal and moral responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation
- Ensure that all workers/members understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a child or young person, or a worker's conduct towards a child/young person, to the organisation's named person for child protection
- Ensure that the organisation's named person for child protection understands his/her responsibility to refer any child protection concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (i.e. Police or Social Care)
- Ensure that any procedures relating to the conduct of workers/members are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner
- Facilitate opportunities for children and young people to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues in connection with the service they are provided with and to have access to the company's Complaints Procedure
- Facilitate involvement of parents or guardians in the work of the company and to make child protection policies and procedures available to them
- This policy will be regularly monitored by USSofPA and will be subject to annual review

### ***3. USSofPA named Safeguarding Officers and Ambassadors***

#### **Safeguarding Officers**

- Swinton Branch  
Stephanie Jevons  
[steph@urbanstage.co.uk](mailto:steph@urbanstage.co.uk)  
07948 759622
- Sale Branch  
Rachael McGuinness  
[rachael@urbanstage.co.uk](mailto:rachael@urbanstage.co.uk)  
07793 730743
- Withington Branch  
Jessica Ryan  
[jess@urbanstage.co.uk](mailto:jess@urbanstage.co.uk)  
07817 406423

#### **Safeguarding Ambassador**

- Urban Stage Principal  
Helen Kay  
[info@urbanstage.co.uk](mailto:info@urbanstage.co.uk)  
07969 509159

### ***4. Recognising the signs and symptoms of Abuse***

To effectively protect children and young people against harm all staff should be familiar with the various types and key signs of abuse. The Government's *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)* details four key types of abuse:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Neglect

#### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning and burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms or deliberately induces illness in a child.

#### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether the child is aware of what is happening or not. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (for example rape or oral sex) or non – penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of,

sexual images, or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate. It may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as over-protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying) causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or a carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, (including exclusion from home or abandonment) failing to protect a child from physical harm and danger, failing to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers) or failure to ensure access to the appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsive to, a child's basic emotional need

## ***5. Hearing a disclosure***

If a child/young person says or indicates that they are being abused, or information is obtained which gives concern that a child/young person is being abused, you should follow the below guidance:

### **Receive:**

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is said and react calmly so as not to frighten the child/young person
- Make a note of what has been said as soon as possible.

### **Reassure:**

- Reassure the child/young person that they have done the right thing by telling you
- Tell the child/young person they are not to blame and that it was right to tell; "I am glad you came to me." Tell the child what you are going to do next
- It is important that you do not promise to keep it a secret as your professional responsibilities may require you to report the matter. If you make this promise

to a child/young person and then break it, you confirm to the child/young person yet again that adults are not to be trusted

**React:**

- Take what the child/young person says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child/young person who has a speech disability and/or differences in language
- Do not ask ‘leading’ questions, for example ‘what did they do next?’ (This assumes they did!), or ‘did they touch your private parts?’ Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and that of the child/young person) in any later prosecution in court.
- Explain what you have to do next and whom you have to talk to

**Record:**

- Make some brief notes at the time on any paper that comes to hand
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by a court
- Record the date, time, place, persons present and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour
- Be specific when noting the words used by the child/young person
- Use the Incident Report Form to ensure all the required information is recorded

**Remember:**

To share your concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Officer or the Designated Safeguarding Ambassador who will take the matter forward

***6. Reporting allegations, suspicions or concerns***

- It is not the responsibility of anyone working at USSofPA to decide whether or not a child/young person is being abused or might be abused. However, there is a responsibility to act on concerns to protect children and young people so that appropriate agencies can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the child/person
- If you become aware of any issue or complaint relating to the welfare or wellbeing of children and young people, then you should raise these with the Designated Safeguarding Officer or the Designated Safeguarding Ambassador who will be responsible for documenting your concern on an Incident Report Form. All concerns will be considered, and a decision reached as to whether the concern should be referred to Social Services
- All Incident Report Forms are securely stored in a restricted and protected folder on the Safeguarding Ambassador's computer. Any paper incident reports will be restricted and protected in a locked cabinet belonging to the Safeguarding Ambassador

## *7. Stages to follow if you are worried about a child*

### **Suspicion of abuse**

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of USSofPA please make this known to the person with the responsibility for child protection
- If you suspect that the person with responsibility for child protection is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the local authority designated officer
- Make a note for your own records of what you have witnessed as well as your response, in case there is a follow up in which you are involved
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of USSofPA, chaperone, venue staff etc, action will be taken to ensure the individual does not have further contact with the child until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms etc, and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production
- Every child and young person have the right to be safe. All reports or enquiries concerning the welfare or safety of a child will go straight to:
- **SWINTON BRANCH**  
The Bridge Partnership  
0161 603 4500  
Email: [worriedaboutachild@salford.gov.uk](mailto:worriedaboutachild@salford.gov.uk)  
The Bridge Partnership is available Monday to Friday from 8:30am - 4:30pm  
If you need to speak to someone outside of these times, contact the Emergency Duty Team on 0161 794 8888  
If a child is in immediate danger of being harmed or is home alone, call the police on 999
- **SALE BRANCH**  
Trafford Children's First Response  
0161 912 5125  
Trafford Children's First Response is available Monday to Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm  
If you need to speak to someone outside of these times, contact the Emergency Duty Team on 0161 912 2020  
If a child is in immediate danger of being harmed or is home alone, call the police on 999  
Email: [firstresponse@traffordgov.uk](mailto:firstresponse@traffordgov.uk)
- **WITHINGTON BRANCH**  
Manchester Safeguarding Partnership  
0161 234 5001  
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week  
Email: [mcareply@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:mcareply@manchester.gov.uk)  
[manchestersafeguardingpartnership@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:manchestersafeguardingpartnership@manchester.gov.uk)

<b>YOUR DETAILS</b>	
Your name:	
Your role:	
Date/time report completed:	
<b>CHILD'S/ YOUNG PERSON MAKING DISCLOSURE DETAILS (these details may be available internally)</b>	
Child/young person's name:	
Child/young person's address:	
Child/young person's date of birth:	
<b>INCIDENT/DISCLOSURE DETAILS</b>	
Date/time of incident or disclosure & names of other people present:	
Information regarding the nature of the allegation/ disclosure e.g. location, type of disclosure, relationship to person making disclosure, method of disclosure.	
Concise account of what was said by the victim, using their own words.	
Description of any injury's sustained	
Date passed onto USSofPA Designated Safeguarding Officer/ Ambassador	
<b>EXTERNAL AGENCIES CONTACTED</b>	
Police – Details of name of contact and advice received:	
Social Services – Details of name of contact and advice received:	
Other - Details of name of contact and advice received:	



## ***8. Responsibilities of Urban Stage School of Performing Arts***

- All USSofPA staff members have an Enhanced DBS check
- All USSofPA staff members running workshops, rehearsals have completed an online level 1 or level 2 Safeguarding training. This is to be refreshed every 2-3 years (or in the event of legislation changes- whichever comes first)
- Ensure that there are two staff members present at all rehearsals, workshops and at performance spaces
- USSofPA staff member will wear branded uniform so they are easily identified
- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout workshop/production process
- Identify at the outset the person designated the responsibility for child protection
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting, if necessary, in consultation with local authority
- Ensure that members are supervised at all times
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority social care services, in case it needs to report a concern (detailed in section 7 – Stages to follow if you are worried about a child)

## ***9. Creating a Safe Organisation***

### **Photographs**

- By consenting to allow their child/children to attend Urban Stage School of Performing Arts, consent for workshop, rehearsal and production photography and video is automatically granted and no further consent will be sought from parents/guardians. It will confirm an agreement that USSofPA are allowed to take photos of their child and use them for publicity purposes if necessary
- Parents/guardians will be asked to provide a written email to the head of the relevant USSofPA branch if they don't want their child's photograph/video to be taken
- Photographic images may be used on the USSofPA website, Facebook, Instagram or Twitter account, as well as promotional material. First names will only be provided. Children's names may be used next to images of them in programmes and cast lists. Recording or taking photographs during a

performance will be forbidden by the general public. Recordings or Photographs may be taken by a professional company on behalf of USSofPA.

### **E-Safety**

- Most children and young people will use a mobile phone and computers. If USSofPA encounters a case of cyber-bullying by children, parents of both parties will be informed. It will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying
- USSofPA will require parental permission to communicate directly with children via their phones. This communication will be via WhatsApp group set up by the branch Safeguarding Officer and monitored by safeguarding officers and ambassadors, who will also be in the chat. We will have email and phone conversations with their parents/guardians

### **Parents**

- USSofPA believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents/guardians and the youth theatres
- All parents/guardians will have access to USSofPA Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- All parents/guardians have the responsibility to collect or arrange the collection of their children after rehearsals or performances
- USSofPA has a responsibility to ensure that suitable arrangements are in place if a child does not get collected by their parent/guardian.
- All USSofPA staff will be DBS certified
- All children during the show week will be chaperoned by a licensed chaperone, who is also DBS certified.

### **Chaperones**

- Chaperones will be registered with their local authority and will be appointed by USSofPA for the care of children under the age of 16 during the production process. The chaperone is acting in loco-parentis and should exercise the care that a good parent might be reasonably expected to give to a child. The maximum number of children in their chaperone's care shall not exceed 12
- Potential chaperones will be required to obtain a chaperone registration from their local authority and to supply this registration to USSofPA once the local authority has approved
- Chaperones will be made aware of USSofPA Safeguarding policy and procedure

- Chaperones may have unsupervised access to children in their care consequently a criminal record disclosure will be sought as a requirement of the local authority, before the grant approval of the chaperone
- If the chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the Director and not allow the child to continue
- Under the Dangerous Performances Act, no child of compulsory school age is permitted to do anything which may endanger life or limb. This could include working on wires or heavy lifting. Chaperones should tell the producer to stop involving children in dangerous performances, and should contact the local authority
- During performances and theatre rehearsals, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the stage door, and signing them into the building
- Children will be kept together at all times except when using separate dressing rooms
- Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times
- Children will not be allowed to leave the place of performance unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents/guardians
- Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets
- Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms
- Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures of the venue and will ensure that children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger
- Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by USSofPA
- Chaperones should examine the accident book each day. If an accident has occurred, the director is not allowed to use that child until a medically qualified opinion has been obtained, not just the word of the parent/guardian
- Chaperones should have written arrangements for children after performances. If someone different is to collect the child, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to contact the chaperone to let them know who this will be, giving their name. The chaperones will give the parent/guardian a password which the person collecting will use before the child is handed over
- Children should be signed out when leaving and a record made of the person collecting

- If a parent/guardian has not collected the child, the chaperone must stay with the child until contact has been made with the parents/guardian and arrangements have been made

### **Physical contact**

- All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children
- Adults will only touch children when it is necessary to the particular activity
- Adults will seek the consent of the child before any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear

### **Managing sensitive information**

- Permission will be sought from the parents/guardians for the use of photographic material featuring the children for promotional purposes
- USSofPA web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use
- USSofPA ensures confidentiality to protect the rights of its members, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such as criminal record disclosures.

### **Rights and Confidentiality**

- If a complaint is made against a member of USSofPA, he or she will be made aware of their rights under the USSofPA disciplinary procedure
- No matter how you feel about the accusation, both the alleged abuser and the child who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998. Remember also that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released

### **Accidents**

- To avoid accidents, chaperones and children will be advised of “house rules” regarding health and safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds
- Children will be advised of the clothing and footwear appropriate to the work that will be undertaken
- If a child is injured while in the care of USSofPA, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in a USSofPA accident form. This form will be counter-signed by the person with the responsibility for the child protection. This record can be useful if a formal allegation is made later, and will also be a record that the child did not sustain the injury while participating in the production or rehearsal

## **Reviewing policies and Procedure**

- USSofPA will review their Safeguarding Policy and Procedure annually
- Any amendments made to the policy or procedures must be shared with staff and where significant changes appear these must be relayed to parents/guardians.