



Safeguarding Policy – Children

POLICY STATEMENT

Ripon Theatre Festival recognises that all children and young people have a right to protection from abuse. Ripon Theatre Festival takes its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people seriously. We will:

- Respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and provide parents and children with the opportunity to voice their concerns
- Have a system for dealing with concerns about possible abuse,
- Maintain good links with statutory child care authorities.

THE POLICY

Ripon Theatre Festival recognises that many children and young people today are the victims of neglect, and physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Accordingly, Ripon Theatre Festival has adopted the policy contained in this document (hereafter "the policy"). The policy sets out agreed guidelines relating to responding to allegations of abuse, including those made against members and volunteers.

Ripon Theatre Festival recognises the need to build constructive links with the statutory services. These guidelines have been prepared in accordance with the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures. They will be kept under review and be supported by appropriate training where necessary.

“Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility”. ([Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018](#)) Everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe. This policy applies to all members and volunteers who act on behalf of Ripon Theatre Festival and who come directly into contact with children and young people.

Every individual has a responsibility to inform the Safeguarding Lead or their Deputy of concerns relating to safeguarding children. The Safeguarding Lead must decide if the concerns should be communicated to Children and Families Service or the Police.

DEFINITIONS

Child/Young Person

In this policy a child or young person is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

Abuse

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Controlling or Coercive Behaviour

Also known as coercive control, the use of control and coercion in relationships is a form of domestic abuse and, since December 2015, a criminal offence.

Controlling and coercive behaviour is outlined in Government guidance issued under section 77 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 as part of the Government's non-statutory definition of domestic violence and abuse. It is described as:

- Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour; and
- Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim

Coercive control is a form of abuse that involves multiple behaviours and tactics which reinforce each other and are used to isolate, manipulate and regulate the victim. This pattern of abuse creates high levels of anxiety and fear. This has a significant impact on children and young people, both directly, as victims in their own right, and indirectly due to the impact the abuse has on the non-abusive parent. Children may also be forced to participate in controlling or coercive behaviour towards the parent who is being abused.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. Domestic abuse is not limited to physical acts of violence or threatening behaviour, and can include emotional, psychological, controlling or coercive behaviour, sexual and/or economic abuse. Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and adolescent to parent violence. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

Domestic abuse continues to be a prevalent risk factor identified through children social care assessments for children in need. Domestic abuse has a significant impact on children and young people. Children may experience domestic abuse directly, as victims in their own right, or indirectly due to the impact the abuse has on others such as the non-abusive parent.

Emotional Abuse

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 a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar 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 feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Extremism

Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.

Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist.

Neglect

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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- a) provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- b) protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- c) ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- d) ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Physical Abuse

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

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 or not the child is aware of what is

happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

TRAINING AND AWARENESS

Ripon Theatre Festival will provide all members and volunteers with adequate safeguarding training in order to carry out their role and responsibilities under this policy. Individuals within the organisation need to be alert to the potential abuse of children both within their families and also from other sources, including abuse by members and volunteers.

RESPONDING TO A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

All members of Ripon Theatre Festival should respond to any suspected or actual abuse of a child in accordance with these procedures.

It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parents/carers about any concerns; however, you must not discuss your concerns with parents/carers in where:

- a) this would delay the sharing relevant information with an appropriate person or authority which would increase the risk of harm to the child or young person
- b) asking for consent may increase the risk of harm to the child, young person, you or anyone else.

What to do if children talk to you about abuse or neglect

It is recognised that a child may seek share information about abuse or neglect with staff and volunteers, or talk spontaneously to individuals or in groups. In these situations:

You must:

- Listen carefully to the child.
- Give the child time and attention
- Allow the child to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events
- Make an accurate record of the information you have been given, taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child's presentation as well as what was said. Recordings must be kept secure and in accordance with organisation policies and procedures
- Use the child's own words where possible
- Explain that you cannot promise to keep information secret and you may need to speak to others about the information they have shared
- Reassure the child that:
 - you are glad they have told you
 - they have not done anything wrong
 - what you are going to do next
- Where appropriate, explain that you need to get help to keep the child(ren) safe

- Treat all children and young people with respect
- Ensure that, whenever possible, there is more than one adult present with children and young people, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- Make children or young people comfortable and caring enough to point out any safeguarding concerns
- Recognise that caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- Operate within Ripon Theatre Festival principles and behaviour policy, specific procedures and any other guidance as applicable and required
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse

You must not:

- DO NOT directly question the child
- Children should not be required to provide multiple accounts of events within Ripon Theatre Festival
- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or young people
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour/ make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people
- Reach conclusions about others without checking facts
- Either exaggerate or trivialise safeguarding issues
- Show favouritism to any individual

What you should do if you suspect abuse

You may become concerned about a child for a number of reasons, this may include but is not limited to the child or young person:

- Speaking to you about something which is concerning them
- Telling you about a concern for a friend or other child(ren)
- Avoiding speaking to you
- They are clearly upset
- Displaying a change in behaviour
- Being disengaged or are having trouble concentrating
- Changing their friendship groups and associates
- Having new marks, bruises or scars, or are trying to conceal them

You may also identify concerns:

- Because of your observations, or
- Changes in performance of the child or young person
- A concern has been raised to you by a colleague, parent or third party

It is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused or respond to a child wanting to talk to you. This practice can help clarify concerns and result in appropriate action.

If you are concerned about a child, you must share your concerns. Initially you should talk to the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy. You should make a note of your concerns and any actions agreed following your discussion with the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy.

The Safeguarding Lead is: Katie Scott

Tel: 07799 528937

The Deputy Safeguarding Lead is: Tina Salden

Tel: 07788 934735

If neither is available, contact any Festival Team Member.

Informing parents

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 sets out the requirements for how organisations obtained, use and share information.

Ripon Theatre Festival will be transparent and accountable in relation to their use of data for collecting, storing, and sharing information.

Information to be shared with another agency will usually require explicit consent except where there are concerns for the welfare or safety of the child. In these circumstances the need for consent changes where it is believed that a child has or is likely to suffer:

- Significant harm and/or;
- Has developmental and welfare needs which are likely only to be met through provision of family support services (with agreement of the child's parent).

For cases not reaching this threshold, it is good practice to be open and honest at the outset with the parents/carers about concerns, and the need for a referral. All reasonable efforts should be made to inform parents/carers prior to discussing concerns with Children and Families Service; however, this should not be delayed if concerns cannot be discussed with the parents.

Where the child expresses a wish for his or her parents not to be informed, their views should be taken seriously and a judgement made based on the child's age and understanding, as to whether the child's wishes should be followed (see <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/legal-definition-child-rights-law/gillick-competency-fraser-guidelines/>).

There may be some circumstances where it is not appropriate to seek consent, either because the individual cannot give consent, it is not reasonable to obtain consent, or where seeking consent would put a child or young person's safety or well-being at risk.

Where a decision to share information without consent is made, the Safeguarding Lead will be informed and a written record of what has been shared should be kept along with the reason why consent was not obtained. The record will include the time/date and how it was obtained.

Consultation with the Children and Families Service

The North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership [Framework for decision-making: Right help, at the right time by the right person](#) should be used to help identify if a concern should be referred to the Children and Families Service.

Where concerns are to be raised with the Children and Families Service, the Safeguarding Lead, they will contact the Customer Resolution Centre to discuss the concerns with the Children and Families Service. Please see *Making a Referral to the Children and Families Service*.

You may also wish to consult with the Children and Families Service before making a referral. Consultation is not the same as making a referral You should contact the [Professionals' Consultation Line](#) where:

- You have been unable to contact the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy and you believe the child is at risk of harm
- You remain unsure after internal consultation as to whether safeguarding concerns exist
- When there is disagreement as to whether safeguarding concerns exist, or
- When the concerns relate to any member of the organising committee.

The Professionals' Consultation Line can be contacted on 01609 535070.

Making a Referral to the Children and Families Service

In order to make a referral to Children and Families Service, the Customer Resolution Centre should be contacted in the first instance. This will usually be undertaken by the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy but should not be delayed if they are not available. The Customer Contact Centre can be contacted by the following methods:

During Office Hours

By Phone: 01609 780780

Email: children&families@northyorks.gov.uk

Outside Office Hours

Emergency Duty Team (for evenings, weekends and bank holidays): 01609 780780

For more information visit:

- <https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/about-us/worried-about-a-child/>

Contacting North Yorkshire County Council

When contacting the North Yorkshire County Council Customer Resolution Centre the staff should:

- Clearly identify themselves, their agency/relationship with the child(ren) and family,
- Give details of where they can be contacted.
- Provide as much relevant family information as possible and, clearly stating the name of the child, the parents/carers and any other children known to be in the household, the dates of birth and addresses and any previous addresses known
- Provide details of any special needs or communication needs of either the child or any family member
- State why they feel the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.
- Share their knowledge and involvement of the child(ren) and family
- Share their knowledge of any other agency involved
- Indicate the child's, parent's/carers' knowledge of the referral and their expectations
- Ensure they record within their agency files the concerns and action taken

Confirmation of Referral

Where a referral has been made to the Children and Families Service, a written confirmation of the referral must be completed and submitted within 24 hours. This will normally be completed by the Safeguarding Lead.

Where a safeguarding concern has been raised, the referral will be passed to the North Yorkshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Team (MAST). Where possible, the MAST request that you use the “Universal Referral Form Referral Form”, and that you include all relevant information to ensure that the referral can be progressed as effectively as possible.

Contact Details

Safeguarding Lead: Katie Scott

- Telephone: 07799 528937
- Email: katie@ripontheatrefestival.org

Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Tina Salden

- Telephone: 07788 934735
- Email: tina@ripontheatrefestival.org

North Yorkshire County Council Customer Referral Centre

- Telephone: 01609 780780
- Email: children&families@northyorks.gov.uk

North Yorkshire Police

- Telephone (emergencies): 999
- Telephone (non-emergencies): 101

Implementation Checklist

1. A safeguarding policy states the organisation's commitment to safeguard children		
		(Tick)
The organisation has a safeguarding policy	The policy is written in a clear and easily understood format for members, volunteers, children and parents.	
	The policy is publicised, promoted and distributed to relevant audiences.	
	The policy is approved and endorsed by the relevant management body (e.g., trustees, chief executive or senior management board).	
	The policy is mandatory for members and volunteers.	
	The policy is reviewed no longer than every three years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation or guidance, whichever is sooner.	
2. Safeguarding procedures - what to do if there are concerns about a child's welfare.		
There are clear procedures which provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take if there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare.	The safeguarding procedures are available to all (including children and young people and their parents) and actively promoted on joining the organisation. Consideration is given to language, difference ways of communicating and ease of use.	
	Procedures are consistent with <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (2018)</i> and with the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Safeguarding Procedures (https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/procedures-practice-guidance-and-one-minute-guides/)	
	There is a safeguarding lead with a defined role and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding which is appropriate to the level at which s/he operates.	
	There is a process for recording incidents, concerns and referrals and storing these securely in compliance with relevant legislation.	
	There is a process for dealing with complaints by parents and young people about unacceptable behaviour towards children.	
	There is guidance on information sharing which clearly states the welfare of children is the most important consideration.	
3. Prevention - Safe recruitment of members and volunteers		
There are rigorous policies and procedures for recruiting staff and volunteers who have contact with children.	All those who have significant contact with children are subject to safeguarding checks as required by legislation and guidance and these are properly recorded.	
	There are well publicised ways in which members, volunteers, children and young people can raise concerns about unacceptable behaviour by anyone within the organisation. These include external contacts.	
	An assessment of risk of any activities and the environment in which they take place is made prior to commencement and action taken to minimise risk.	
	A safeguarding plan is in place for transporting children or for taking them away on trips.	
	Operating standards are set out to ensure children are adequately supervised at all times.	

4. Codes of practice and behaviour		
There are well –publicised codes of behaviour for which all members and volunteers comply.	The organisation provides guidance on expected standards of behaviour by adults towards children and young people.	
	There is guidance on expected behaviour by children towards other children.	
	There are processes for dealing with behaviour that is not acceptable.	
	All disciplinary measures/ sanctions are non-violent and do not involve humiliating children and young people.	
	Members promote a culture that ensures children are listened to and respected as individuals.	
	The consequences of breaching the codes of behaviour are clear and linked to disciplinary and grievance procedures.	
5. Equality and Inclusion		
The safeguarding policy makes it clear that all children have equal rights to protection.	The safeguarding procedures, guidance and training help members and volunteers to recognise the additional vulnerability of some children and the extra barriers they face to getting help, because of their race, gender, age, religion, ability, sexual orientation, social background and culture.	
	Codes of conduct/ behaviour make it clear that discriminatory, offensive and violent behaviour is unacceptable and that complaints will be acted on.	
6. Communication		
Information about the organisation’s commitment to safeguard children and young people is openly displayed and available to all.	Children and young people are actively involved in the development of procedures or protocols, recruitment, planning of services and evaluation of activities.	
	Information relating to support in relation to child abuse for children, young people and parents is made available .	
	Information is provided in a format and language that can be easily understood by all service users.	
	Everyone in the organisation knows who the Safeguarding Lead is and how to contact them.	
	Contact details for the Children and Families Service, Police and emergency medical help and child help lines are readily available.	
7. Education and Training		
Education and training is provided to all staff in commensurate with their role and duties	There is an induction process for all members and volunteers that includes familiarisation with the safeguarding/child protection policy and procedures.	
	All members and volunteers are provided with opportunities to learn about how to recognise and respond to concerns about child abuse.	
	A staff development programme is in place.	
	Members and volunteers with special responsibilities in relation to safeguarding have training to enable them to develop the necessary skills and knowledge and have regular opportunities to update their knowledge and understanding.	

	Training and written guidance on safe recruitment is provided for those responsible for recruiting and selecting members and volunteers.	
	The organisation maintains a record of training provided and this is reviewed as part of supervision and appraisal.	
8. Advice and Support		
Information is made available to all and is readily accessible. Staff are supported through appropriate supervision.	The Safeguarding Lead and their deputy have access to specialist advice, training support and information.	
	Children and young people are provided with information on where to go for help and advice in relation to abuse, harassment and bullying, or significant difficulties at home.	
	National and local safeguarding contacts are identified for further information and support.	
	There are arrangements for providing regular supervision and support to members and volunteers and particularly during and following an incident or allegation of abuse or a complaint.	
9. Evaluation		
Plans are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the safeguarding measures.	Arrangements are in place to monitor and evaluate the safeguarding procedures and the safe recruitment procedures.	
	The resources essential for implementing the evaluation plan are made available.	
	Policies are reviewed at stated intervals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least every three years, or • Sooner if there is a change in legislation and/or statutory guidance which changes the requirements of the policy 	
	Processes are in place to consult children and young people and parents as part of the review of safeguarding.	
	All incidents, allegations of abuse and complaints are recorded and monitored.	

Policy Name	Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures
Version	1
Date of issue	October 2024
Next Review	October 2025
Member Responsible	Katie Scott
Date adopted	10.10.24