

Open Stage Performing Arts Company Ltd

Child Protection Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect children and young people who access Open Stage's services (this also includes the children of adults who use our services) and to provide freelancers and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up based on law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014

3. Company Statement

Open Stage believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind.

Child abuse is a very complex and dangerous set of problems that includes physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation. We have a huge responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and we are committed to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989;
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues;
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and guardians is essential in promoting young people's welfare; and
- everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe. They must know how to report concerns the types of abuse outlined above, so that those concerns can be addressed quickly and appropriately.

4. Role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

Every organisation that works with children needs to have someone that takes the lead on safeguarding and child protection. Rachael Jeffery, Director of the Organisation, is the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for Open Stage Performing Arts Company Ltd, and is therefore responsible in relation to any child protection issues.

5. **Keeping Children and Young People Safe**

We seek to keep children and young people safe through our policies, procedures and practises.

We record and store information professionally and securely. Information about safeguarding and good practice is shared with children, their families, freelancers and volunteers via our noticeboard, our website and one-to-one discussions.

We actively promote an anti-bullying environment, ensuring that our policies and procedures help us to deal effectively with any bullying that does arise.

We provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, freelancers and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.

Freelancers and Volunteers:

- are recruited safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made; and
- are managed effectively through supervision, support, and training.

Child protection and safeguarding practices are adopted through policies, procedures and codes of conduct for freelancers and volunteers.

Children and Young People:

- are encouraged to build positive relationships within a safe and trusting environment; and
- are valued, listened to and respected.

We provide one-to-one well-being feedback chats regarding our sessions with children and young people throughout their time with us. Any concerns raised will be recorded, reported to the DSO and shared with the parent/guardian face-to-face, where possible, or via a telephone call. Depending on the nature of the concerns, any relevant information will be shared with the appropriate agencies.

Complaints and Whistleblowing:

If a member of staff has concerns about a child or young person's safety or welfare, or if anyone has concerns about the actions of a staff member, it should be reported to Rachael Jeffery in her capacity as DSO. She will endeavour to assist any member of staff who believes a child is at risk, as well as to address any concerns relating to child protection caused by a member of staff. Any concerns and relevant information will be recorded and shared with the appropriate agencies.

Review

It is important that effective measures are in place to ensure the safeguarding and protection of children. Our policies, procedures and practises will be reviewed regularly and changes made as required.

4. Other Relevant Information

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Open Stage documentation:

- Anti-Bribery and Extortion Policy
- Child Participant Form
- Code of Practice for Volunteers
- Complaints Procedure
- Covid-19 Return 2020 Risk Assessment
- Data Protection Policy
- Freelancer Guide
- Health and Safety Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Garden Activities Guide
- Online Classes Child Participant Form
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Privacy Notice
- Student Behaviour Policy
- Student Family Welcome Letter
- Theatre Company Code of Conduct
- Volunteers Code of Practice

5. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and kept up to date, as legislation and company circumstances change over time. Meetings will be held regularly as appropriate to discuss any issues that arise in the interim in relation to this policy.

In case of any queries or questions in relation to this policy please contact Rachael Jeffery, Director of the Organisation.

Last Updated 5th July 2023