

Holybourne Theatre

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www.holybournetheatre.co.uk

Registered Charity No 1121620

Company No: 4265713 Registered in England & Wales



Last reviewed 20th October 2023

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Holybourne Theatre recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Child (Performances) Regulations 1968, the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 (*in Scotland change to Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003*).

Holybourne Theatre recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect.

Holybourne Theatre is committed to practice which protects children from harm and recognises its responsibility to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

Under Section 37(3)(b) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 – Hampshire County Council has awarded Holybourne Theatre with Body of Persons Approval in recognition of standards and procedures in place for children performing within the Theatre.

Holybourne Theatre believes that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

The Committee members, Youth Theatre session leaders and volunteers of Holybourne Theatre believe that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- The Committee members, Youth Theatre session leaders and volunteers of Holybourne Theatre must be clear on how to respond appropriately.

Holybourne Theatre will ensure that:

- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity;
- The duty of care to children 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;



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- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned;
- All adult members of the society will provide a positive role model for dealing with other people;
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour;
- It will keep up-to-date with health & safety legislation;
- It will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children, via the Child Employment Office at Hampshire County Council
- It will hold a register of every child involved with Holybourne Theatre and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

Holybourne Theatre has child protection procedures which accompany this policy. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the society's Equal Opportunities Policy and Health & Safety Policy.

Holybourne Theatre has dedicated Child Protection Officers, who are in charge of ensuring that the child protection policy and procedures are adhered to. They are Clair Pattenden and Alan Rixon.

This policy will be regularly monitored by the Executive Committee of Holybourne Theatre and will be subject to annual review.

Holybourne Theatre CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Responsibilities of the Theatre

At the outset of any production involving children the society will:

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process;
- Identify at the outset the person with designated 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 the local authority safeguarding / child protection and child employment team);
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times;
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case it needs to report a concern.

Parents

Holybourne Theatre believes it is important that there is a partnership between parents and Holybourne Theatre:

- Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the Theatre and to share responsibility for the care of children.
- **A copy of the Theatre's Child Protection Policy and procedures is available on the theatre's website and is available upon request by parents.**
- All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of Holybourne Theatre to take children home.

Unsupervised Contact

- Holybourne Theatre will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.
- If possible there will always be two adults in the room when working with children.
- If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimise risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area or in a designated room with a door open.
- If it is predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, he or she will be required to obtain a Disclosure and Barring Service Certificate.

Physical Contact

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

Suspicion of abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of Holybourne Theatre, please make this known to the person with 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 Chairman, **John Priddle**.
- Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed as well as your response, in case there is follow-up in which you are involved.
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of the society, chaperone, venue staff etc., that individual will be suspended immediately 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.

Disclosure of abuse

If a child confides in you that abuse has taken place:

- **Remain calm and in control** but do not delay taking action.
- Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child to tell you at their own **pace** and ask questions only for clarification. **Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.**
- **Don't promise to keep it a secret.** Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the person with responsibility for child protection. Make it clear to the child that you will need to share this information with others. **Make it clear that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help.**
- Reassure the child that 'they did the right thing' in telling someone.
- **Tell the child what you are going to do next.**
- Speak **immediately** to the person with responsibility for child protection. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually social services or the police.
- As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was said, using the child's own words. Note the date, time, any names that were involved or mentioned, and who you gave the information to. **Make sure you sign and date your record.**

Recording

- In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, the details of an allegation or reported incident will be recorded, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a statutory child protection agency.
- An accurate note shall be made of the date and time of the incident or disclosure, the parties involved, what was said or done and by whom, any action taken to investigate the matter, any further action taken e.g. suspension of an individual, where relevant the reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, and the name of the persons reporting and to whom it was reported.
- The record will be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation.

Rights & Confidentiality

- If a complaint is made against a member of Holybourne Theatre, he or she will be made aware of their rights under the Theatre's disciplinary procedures.
- No matter how you may 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.
- In criminal law the Crown or other prosecuting authority has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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 the society, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the society's accident book.
- This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for child protection.
- If a child joins the production with an obvious physical injury a record of this will be made in the accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for 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.

Criminal Record Disclosures

- Holybourne Theatre believes it is in its best interests to obtain criminal record disclosures (DBS checks) for chaperones or other personnel it will inform the individual of the necessary procedures and the level of disclosure required. A Standard disclosure will apply for anyone with supervised access to children. An Enhanced disclosure will be required for anyone with unsupervised access.
- Holybourne Theatre will have a written code of practice for the handling of disclosure information.
- Holybourne Theatre will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

Managing sensitive information

- Holybourne Theatre has a policy and procedures for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images of children.
- Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes.
- Holybourne Theatre's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.
- Holybourne Theatre will ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of its members, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such as criminal record disclosures.

Appointment and Duties of Chaperones

- Chaperones will be appointed by the society for the care of children during the production process. By law the chaperone is acting in loco parentis and should exercise the care which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give to a child. The maximum number of children in the chaperone's care shall not exceed 12.
- Chaperones will be required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check every three years.
- Chaperones will be made aware of Holybourne Theatre's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the director or producer. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily the chaperone should consider not allowing the children 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 cease using children in this way and should contact the local authority.
- Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures in the venue and will ensure that children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger.

Guidelines for chaperones (for dress rehearsals and performances)

At Holybourne Theatre we follow Child Protection Guidelines issued by Hampshire County Council.

1. Chaperones are responsible for the welfare and safety of the children whilst they are in rehearsals or performances. Our main job is to know where the children are in our charge at all times.
2. Remember to wear the chaperone badge so that parents and children in your charge can easily identify you. The badges are kept in the kitchen or will be filed in the sign in/out folders.
3. During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the stage door and signing them into the building.
4. Parents must sign their children in/out at every dress rehearsal and performance. Parents must inform chaperones in advance (in writing) if someone else (another adult) is collecting their children. Never allow a child to be left in your charge unless there are two adults present or two children.
5. All children should return to their dressing rooms at the end of each show, where they will change, and wait to be signed out by parents or designated adult. Children are not to leave the theatre unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents. If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child or make arrangements to take them home.
6. Normally there will be the correct number of chaperones in the boys/girls dressing room and an additional chaperone in the foyer.
7. Once the audience start to arrive, no cast or chorus member should be seen in costume outside the dressing room, unless they have been appointed front of house duties.
8. There should be a script in each dressing room marked up to show which children are required to go up for each scene and when – use this as your reference, although some children may try to tell you differently. There is also a script in the foyer. If in doubt, please check with Director.
9. The chaperone in the foyer also knows when to expect children on and off the stage: their job is to supervise children when in foyer / back stage and to remind children not to run around / create too much noise in foyer. Ensure children are careful on steps leading up to stage – no running etc. We expect children to be silent once they leave the dressing room to go on stage.

10. Children should not leave the dressing rooms except to go on stage or to the toilet (with your permission). Do not allow more than two children out to the toilet at any one time. Again the chaperone in the foyer will supervise children using the toilets.
11. Children are not permitted to enter the adult dressing rooms.
12. Children should be encouraged to bring an activity with them to keep them occupied whilst waiting to go on stage. The use of electronic devices should be monitored closely so that if used they do not: make excessive noise; message / harass each other or between changing rooms; take photographs in changing rooms that would be considered inappropriate or cause children to become distracted from focussing on following the order of the performance and then possibly missing cues etc. During the performance all electronic devices, including mobile phones, should remain in the dressing rooms. If chaperones are concerned about issues such as this they may confiscate electronic devices during production and return to parent upon collection, advising parent about any concerns.
13. If necessary, please remind children that their behaviour in the production will be taken into account when they next audition. If there are any problems with behaviour please inform the Director / Producer, Alan Rixon or Clair Pattenden. Children are aware of the Theatre Code of Practice and what behaviour is expected of them – they are reminded of this at the start of every production.
14. If a fire alarm should sound, chaperones must take children from their dressing room to the meeting point at the gate of the car park, and once there check that all children in their care are present. Any children on stage will be taken to the meet point by the foyer chaperone.
15. If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the producer and not allow the child to continue. Chaperones should examine accident books each day. If an accident has occurred, the producer is not allowed to use that child until a medically qualified opinion has been obtained (not just the word of the parent or child).
16. A binder listing children's contact details and individual medical conditions e.g., Asthma / allergies etc. should be held by one of the chaperones in case of emergencies. This should remain confidential until required. **Please ask for this if you do not have it.** In case of emergency call the first aider – list of first aiders in Foyer.
17. All first aid incidents and actions should be recorded in the first aid book. The main First Aid kit is in the kitchen; another one is located in the adult dressing room. The First Aid/Incident book is located in the kitchen doorway.

Guidelines for chaperones (for Youth Theatre workshops and non-dress rehearsals)

At Holybourne Theatre we follow Child Protection Guidelines issued by Hampshire County Council.

1. Chaperones are responsible for the welfare and safety of the children whilst they are in rehearsals or performances. Our main job is to know where the children are in our charge at all times.
2. Remember to wear the chaperone badge so that parents and children in your charge can easily identify you. The badges are kept in the kitchen or will be filed in the sign in/out folders.
3. During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the stage door and signing them into the building.
4. Parents must inform chaperones in advance (in writing) if someone else (another adult) is collecting their children. Never allow a child to be left in your charge unless there are two adults present or two children. Children are not to leave the theatre unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents. If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child or make arrangements to take them home.
5. If a fire alarm should sound, chaperones must take children to the meeting point at the gate of the car park, and once there check that all children in their care are present.
6. Some children may have individual medical conditions eg Asthma / allergies etc - make sure you know who these children are – These children / conditions are identified in the last column of the signing in/out sheet for your information, but please make sure that when other adults/parents are referring to sign in/out sheet, the final column is folded behind to promote confidentiality for all children.
7. All first aid incidents and actions should be recorded in the first aid book. The main First Aid kit is in the kitchen; another one is located in the adult dressing room. The First Aid/Incident book is located in the kitchen doorway.