

OFF CENTRE THEATRE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Off Centre Theatre promotes entertainment, education and involvement of the community of Monmouth and the surrounding area in theatre and related arts, by presenting stage productions, events and other activities.

1. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Off Centre Theatre:

- recognises that child protection is everyone's responsibility.
- recognises the unique and individual worth of each child.
- is committed to protecting and safeguarding children and young people.
- is committed to following statutory and specialist guidelines in working with children and young people.
- seeks to support all those affected by abuse.

Off Centre Theatre regards child protection and good working practice as a priority. In the interests of the safety and well being of all children and young people, it has developed and operates a child protection policy and practice. This protects not only children but also adults who work with them.

Off Centre Theatre recognises that abuse can be physical, sexual and emotional and will also include neglect of the young person. This Child Protection Policy requires more than non-participation in abuse but includes a duty to act where abuse is seen to be or suspected to be taking place.

As part of Off Centre Theatre's commitment to children and young people it has appointed **Elaine Andrews** as Child Protection Co-ordinator and **Lesley Wells** as Deputy Child Protection Co-ordinator. All the children and young people involved in activities within Off Centre Theatre know who they are and how they can be contacted. They will keep up to date with child protection issues.

2. CODE OF PRACTICE

Off Centre Theatre will ensure that:

- all children and young people are to be treated with respect
- any rehearsal or activity involving children, whenever possible, will have at least two adults supervising. Adults who are new to the group will only be involved in children's activities when accompanied by an established adult member of Off Centre Theatre.

- parents and guardians of children taking part in activities will be encouraged to be involved as well.
- a young person's right to privacy is respected.
- members are aware that physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted.
- members are aware that they should challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations / suspicions of abuse.
- any concerns for a child in relation to any child protection matter should be brought to the attention of one of the Child Protection Co-ordinators.
- this Policy and Procedures document is brought to an individual's attention prior to the commencement of contact with children.

3. PROCEDURE WHEN ABUSE IS SUSPECTED.

- The Child Protection Co-ordinator or the Deputy will be the first point of contact. This may be from the child themselves or another person suspecting abuse.
- All information received will be recorded in writing, signed and dated.
- The co-ordinators will assess the information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information as appropriate, taking further advice and consultations as necessary with the Executive Committee of Off Centre Theatre.
- Off Centre Theatre will consult with a statutory child protection agency such as the local social services to test any doubts or concerns as necessary.
- Off Centre Theatre will make a formal referral to the child protection agency or the police if necessary.

References

Stopcheck - a step by step guide for organisations to safeguard children – NSPCC

Safe From Harm – Home Office 1993

Guidance to Churches Manual - Churches Child Protection Advisory Service

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