

# FROME MUSICAL THEATRE COMPANY

## SAFEGUARDING POLICY and PROCEDURES

### *Introduction:*

Frome Musical Theatre Company (FMTC) has a duty to ensure that everyone involved in its work can feel that they work in an open and safe environment where they are treated with respect and dignity. FMTC takes pride in its work with children and young people.

The aim of these Safeguarding Guidelines and Procedures is to ensure that all members, volunteers, practitioners engaged and participants in, FMTC productions and activities, are confident about their own good practice when working with children, young people and adults at risk and are aware of how to distinguish good practice in their colleagues' behaviour.

Our Safeguarding Policy should be considered alongside our Privacy Policy, our Data Management Policy and our Code of conduct, our Health and Safety Policy and Procedures and our Equal Opportunities Policy.

Any concerns about poor practice must be reported. Please phone \*\* and ask for \*\* (FMTC Designated Safeguarding Officer) or \*\* (FMTC Exec Committee Safeguarding Officer) please also email \*\* with a name and number and simply put SAFEGUARDING as the title and your contact information in the message. Please do not put any confidential information in the email. We will phone you to discuss the issue with urgency.

### *Definitions for the purposes of these guidelines:*

*Children / child:* A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

*Young person:* A young person is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday (this term takes account for teenagers who may not wish to be referred to a 'child')

*Adult at Risk of Harm: ('Adult at Risk')* Someone over the age of 18 who has needs for care and support, is experiencing or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and because of those needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or risk of it. This can include those living with dementia, learning-disabled adults, those experiencing substance dependencies, those who have mental health needs or diagnosed mental health conditions, those living with physical ill health, those living with long-term illness or chronic pain, those who are physically disabled. Your circumstances mean you are 'at risk' so an adult can be defined as an Adult at Risk temporarily (for example someone living with domestic violence).

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*Adult:* At 18 a child legally becomes an adult. Note that in some projects 25 is the cut off age when organisations consider young people to have become adults. However, this is not a legal definition.

*Good Practice:* Behaving in an appropriate manner towards all the above.

*Position of Trust:* A position of trust is any position (paid or voluntary) that requires its holder to enjoy the trust of those around them. People in a position of trust need to carefully consider their relationships with children or adults at risk.

*Who these guidelines cover:*

These guidelines apply to ALL children / young people / adults at risk, regardless as to why they are involved in the work of FMTC, including but not limited to:

- Spellbound
- Pantomime cast
- Cast taking part in any FMTC Production
- Work in schools
- Workshops
- Young People's Tech/Understage team members
- Family Friendly Workshops
- Learning Disabled Participants
- Socially Isolated Older People
- Audience

And as such, may apply on or off the FMTC and FMTT main site - The Frome Memorial Theatre. Or in rehearsal spaces - The Assembly Rooms, workshop rooms or during visits offsite.

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### Policy:

Frome Memorial Theatre Company (FMTC) believes that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All participants in our work, without exception, have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All company members (including freelance and casual company members) and volunteers involved in our work have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

What we'll do

As part of our safeguarding policy we will:

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
- value, listen to and respect children
- ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation
- adopt safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people
- provide effective management for members and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all members and volunteers know about our policies, procedures and behaviour codes and follow them confidently and competently
- ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents or concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual(s) who raise or disclose the concern
- ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored
- record and store information securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
- appoint a nominated safeguarding lead for children and young people, a deputy and a lead Executive member for safeguarding
- develop and implement an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- share information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their parents via leaflets, group work and one-to-one discussions

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- make sure that children, young people and their parents know where to go for help if they have a concern
- The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in FMTC activities]. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal or exclusion from the organisation.

*Definitions of abuse of children and young people:*

#### Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse.

As a company member or volunteer working with FMTC, you have a responsibility to be vigilant at all times when coming into contact with children, young people their families and other carers. You may observe or be a witness to any of the following during your contact with children and families:

The main types of abuse of children and young people are:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Child sexual exploitation
- Neglect
- Cultural practices
- Radicalisation of children and young people
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Self-neglect

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Good Practice Guidelines:

*All company members, freelance practitioners and volunteers are expected to work within these guidelines. Failure to do so could result in allegations of poor practice.*

- Treating all children, young people & Adults at Risk with respect and dignity.
- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Putting the welfare of all children, young people & Adults at Risk first.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust.
- Being an excellent role model.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Being aware of any access needs of any child, young person & adult at risk, whether this be due to cultural, religious, physical, emotional or other needs, prior to working with them.
- Anyone who is in a position of trust (paid or voluntary) with under 18 year olds should maintain healthy, positive and professional relationships with them. Paid or voluntary company members in positions of trust with 16 and 17 year olds must not engage in sexual relations with them while that unequal power relationship exists.
- Ensuring that, if any form of physical contact is required due to the nature of the work (e.g. costume fitting, practical drama session, dance) it should be provided openly and young people should always be consulted and their agreement gained.
- Ensuring that physical contact at any other time is avoided.
- Taking pictures or films: Unless written permission has been granted by the parent / carer of children / young people / adult at risk, you are not allowed to take pictures or film. FMTC will need to be satisfied that you have all the relevant documentation before you can take pictures or film. The Designated Safeguarding Officer can offer advice.
- Performing Licences: FMTC has a Body of Persons Licence and is committed to maintaining this. Licensed Chaperones underpin this.
- Any near misses or accidents in on or offsite working are recorded (via our Executive Producers)

Practice never to be sanctioned (Poor Practice):

- Never engage in rough or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Never share a room or a dressing room with a child
- Never allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Never make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Never reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Never allow allegations made by a child to go unrecorded or not acted upon
- Never do things of a personal nature for children or adult at risk, that they can do for themselves.

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- Never spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- Any suspicion that a child has been abused, or is at risk of being abused, by either a member of the company, a volunteer or any other adult involved in the child's life (such as a parent) should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the participant in question and any other person who may be at risk.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer will refer the allegation to Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who are qualified to assess the situation and who may involve the police.

The procedures which FMTC will follow:

#### *Internal Roles and Responsibilities*

\*\* is the Designated Safeguarding Officer, is the Deputy Safeguarding Officer and\*\* is the Safeguarding representative at Executive Level.

The role and responsibilities of the designated officer (s) are:

- To ensure that all company members, Executive Committee and volunteers are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they have safeguarding concerns about a child/ young person.
- Ensure that any concerns about a child are acted upon, clearly recorded, referred on where necessary and followed up to ensure the issues are addressed.
- The designated officer(s) will record any reported incidents in relation to children or breach of Safeguarding Policies and Procedures. Records will be kept in a secure place and its contents will be confidential.
- Ensure they have up-to-date training

In conjunction with the Safeguarding Officers, all company members must ensure that they:

- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
- Work safely and effectively with children.

Incidents that MUST be reported / recorded

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For your own protection against false allegations and / or misconstrued behaviour, if any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer and record the incident.

- If you accidentally hurt a participant.
- If a participant seems distressed in any manner.
- If a participant seems to have developed an attraction towards you.
- If a participant misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

*Action if there are concerns*

*Concerns about Good Practice (i.e. if someone is not following the Good Practice Guidelines):*

Please report to Designated Safeguarding Officer.

*Concerns about suspected abuse (i.e. if any company members or adult involved in FMTC's work is taking part in Poor Practice or abuse):*

Any suspicion that a child has been abused or is at risk of being abused should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will refer the allegation to the LADO who may involve the police or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer has a duty to inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who must be contacted within one working day in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

*Action if a Child Discloses Information*

- It is not the responsibility of anyone working for FMTC, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.
- When a child or young person discloses (says) something to you that causes concern, it is important to clearly record this information. Any concerns about a child or young person should be recorded regardless of whether or not it will be ultimately passed on to the statutory authorities.

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If a child or young person talks about possible abuse, the company member or volunteer should:

- Consider location and context of a Disclosure – it's possible that a child could disclose information at any time in any location, for example, either following or during an activity. If a child chooses to talk to you at a time when you are not immediately available, It's paramount that you let the child know you want to be able to give him or her your full attention and you realise what they would like to tell you is important. Put arrangements in place to talk to the child as soon as possible. Call another member of company members to be present, move, if appropriate to another location – never in a closed room - always in an open environment and with another member of company members.
- Remember that the child is likely to be frightened or anxious
- Reassure the child but do not promise confidentiality. They should explain that they will have to speak to someone else who can help
- Tell the child that he or she was right to tell and is not to blame
- Listen carefully and take what the child says seriously
- Recognise the inherent difficulties interpreting what is said by young children
- Try and use the same words and phrases as the child e.g. for body parts etc. rather than interpreting what they think the child means
- Don't ask leading questions
- Do not prevent a child from recalling events
- Make a full written record of what had been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible. Also make an accurate record of any questions that you ask. To help with this please see our 'Incident Report' form later on in these guidelines. Call the Designated Safeguarding Officer to report the concern and steps you have taken.
- Remember that some children may not be able to express themselves verbally. Communication differences may mean that it is hard for them to complain or be understood. Sometimes abuse of children has gone unrecognised because behavioural clues were interpreted as part of a known condition.



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#### Accidental Disclosures

Sometimes, disclosures can be made accidentally and not intentionally – be aware and vigilant. This can happen through drama games and improvisation or you may overhear something someone has said. If you have ANY cause for concern, then take immediate, necessary action.

With any disclosure the company member or volunteer should not:

- Panic
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets.
- Allow their shock or distaste to show
- Speculate or make assumptions about what has happened
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Approach the alleged abuser

To help you, remember use The Four Rs:

**Receive:** Listen to the child / take it seriously / keep an open mind

**Reassure:** “You've done the right thing” / Be honest about outcomes/ Never promise confidentiality

**React:** Stay calm, stay professional / Ask open questions/ Don't criticise / Explain Next Steps / Inform someone

**Record:** Make brief notes immediately and keep them / Record words used by the child / Record impartiality

#### **Contact Information for Reporting / Referrals and Support**

FMTC Safeguarding Team

Social Care Direct: 0345 8503503 – open 24 hours a day. For concerns about children and young people or if you are worried about an Adult at Risk.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for all allegations against people who work with children (whether paid or voluntary) 0300 123 2224

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000

The police: 999 (if a child is in immediate danger) or 0845 606 0 606

Childline: 0800 1111.

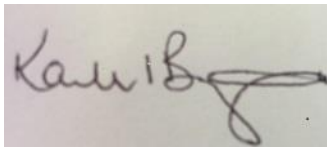
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If you are concerned a young person is at risk of radicalisation you can phone the police helpline on 101 or 0800789321

If you are worried about F.G.M ('Known' cases must be reported to police) you can call the F.G.M helpline on 0800 028 3550 for advice

Victim Support who have a specialist Young People's Service: National Line: 0800 694 9999 and select Somerset

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature appears to read 'Karen Bishop' in a cursive style.

Karen Bishop

FMTC Safeguarding Officer

07 February 2023