



The Oxted Players
Child Protection Policy
April 2025

THE OXTED PLAYERS recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963, the Children's Act 1989, the Protection of Children Act 1999, the Criminal Justice Court Services Act 2000 and Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014.

For the purposes of the Child Protection Procedures contained within this policy and pursuant to the performance regulations, the definition of "a child" is a young person who remains of compulsory school age until the last Friday in June of the academic year in which they are 16, the academic year running from 1 September to 31 August inclusive as well as those under 18 to whom we also have a duty of care. However, the Society also recognises the need to provide appropriate and proportionate protection to any person who has not reached adulthood (i.e. 18) and will endeavour to ensure that those falling outside the scope of performance legislation by reason of age or status are also suitably and appropriately protected in accordance with the Policy.

The Society is committed to providing a safe environment where children are able to participate in any theatre activity or youth workshops without fear of abuse or harm, giving youngsters the ability to express their views on any issues or decisions that affect them. The Society recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. The Society is committed to taking positive steps to prevent such abuse of children involved in theatre activities. It is the responsibility of all members of the Society to be aware of and adhere to the child protection policies and procedures currently in force.

The Society will appoint a Child Protection Officer or Officers whose responsibilities are outlined later in this document.

Child Protection Officer

Name: Patti Thomas-Verweij

Email: safeguarding@oxtedplayers.co.uk

Phone: 07860 938839

The Society 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.
- All members and employees of the Society should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

The Society shall endeavour to ensure that:

- All children will be treated equally and with respect.
- The welfare of each child will always be put first.
- A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built.
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned.
- All adult members of the Society 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 and safety legislation.
- It will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children.
- It will undertake relevant development and training.
- It will maintain a record of every child (and person with parental responsibility for them) presently involved with the Society with their consent, to be accessible in case of emergencies.
- All personal information we may collect relating to children will be processed and stored in accordance with our data protection policy and with the GDPR principles.
- It will apply to the appropriate Licensing Authority for performing licenses where appropriate.

The Society has child protection procedures which accompany this policy. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the Society's Health and Safety Policy.

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

This revised Child Protection Policy was approved by the Society's Committee on 1st September 2025 and comes into effect on that date.

Date of next review: 1st August 2026

Child Protection Procedures

Responsibilities of the Society

At the outset of any production or workshop 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 checks e.g. DBS clearance.
- 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

- The Society believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and the Society.
- Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the Society and to share responsibility for the care of children. All parents will be given a copy of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- All parents will be given a copy of the Photography Permission Form at auditions.
- All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals and performances. It is NOT the responsibility of the Society to take children home.

Unsupervised Contact

- The Society shall endeavour 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 may be required to obtain a DBS check.

Physical Contact

- All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.
- Adult contact with children will only occur when it is essential in relation to the production and the relevant roles being portrayed.
- A member of the production team will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact, and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

Managing Sensitive Information

- Written permission will be sought from parents for the use of photographic material featuring children for promotional and other purposes. With this permission, the Society has Safeguarding guidelines/Code of Conduct for taking, using and storing photographs of children.
- The Society's web-based materials, social media and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.
- The Society will ensure confidentiality of any sensitive information in order to protect the rights of its members.

Suspicion of Abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of the Society, please make this known to the Child Protection Officer. If you suspect that person is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the Chairman.
 - Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed as well as your response in case there is a follow up in which you are involved.
- Any allegation of abuse will be referred to the Child Protection Officer to decide if it is serious. If a serious allegation is made against any member of the Society, chaperone, venue staff etc. all parties involved will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded.

Reporting Procedure

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 question 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. If the Child Protection Officer or a chaperone is not available, speak to a member of the committee.
- 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.

Incident Recording

- In all situations, including those in which the cause for 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 and Confidentiality

- If a complaint is made against a member of the Society, he or she will be made aware of their rights under the Society'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. Anyone who has allegations made against them will be treated fairly.

Accidents

- To minimise the risk of accidents, chaperones and children will be advised of "house rules" regarding health and safety. 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, appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that parents are contacted at the earliest opportunity and the injury will be recorded in the Society's accident book.
- If a child joins a rehearsal or performance with an injury sustained elsewhere, it is the responsibility of the parent to inform the head chaperone in writing.

Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) Checks and Reporting

- If the Society believes it is in its best interests to obtain DBS disclosures for their chaperones and personnel (licensed chaperones would already hold current enhanced DBS disclosures) 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.
- The Society will have a written code of practice for the handling of disclosure information.

Chaperones

- The chaperone is a key person who protects, safeguards and supports the child. They are the point of safety a child can turn to and rely on should the need arise.

- The chaperone's only duty is to look after the children in their care and they must not undertake any other duty (e.g. they cannot be involved in any other aspects of the production, direction or be taking part in the production).
- Chaperones will be appointed by the Society for the care of the children during the production process. The chaperone is acting in loco parentis and should exercise the care which a parent would be expected to give to a child.
- The maximum number of children under one chaperone's care shall not exceed 12.
- Chaperones will be approved and registered by the Licensing Authority and provide proof of their current registration. Chaperones will always be present to supervise children during dress rehearsals and performances.
- Chaperones will be given the Society'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 and/or a committee member
- If a chaperone considers that a child is not fit to continue, the chaperone must inform the director and not allow the child to continue.
- Under the Child and Young Persons Act 1933, 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 director to cease using children in this way and should report the matter to the Committee.
- During performances, registered Chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the stage door and signing them into the building.
- Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times.
- School age children are not to leave the Theatre unsupervised by Chaperones unless in the company of their parents, guardians or appointed representatives.
- Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
- Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms unless accompanied by a Chaperone.
- Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures in the venue, and shall endeavour children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger.
- Chaperones shall endeavour that any accidents are recorded in the accident book and to and reported to the Society.
- The Head Chaperone will ensure that they have written arrangements for children after and between performances.
- Children will be signed out when leaving and a record made of the person collecting them.
- If a child has not been collected, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child until satisfactory arrangement are made to get them home.

Chairman's signature: *C Bassett*

Date: *01/11/25*

Child Protection Officer's signature:

Date: *16/11/25*

Rebecca Venley