

## **Child Protection Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

Bollington Festival Players is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of all young people who take part in its activities. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. Bollington Festival Players will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in its activities through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines outlined below. Staff, leaders and volunteers should be fully aware of the organisation's child safety guidelines. They should also show respect and understanding for the rights, safety and welfare of other staff, leaders and volunteers and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of Bollington Festival Players. The process of implementing the policy is the responsibility of the Committee. Everyone involved in the society should have access to this child protection policy statement.

### **Policy Aims**

- Provide children and young people with appropriate safety and protection while they are in the care of Bollington Festival Players.
- Create an environment where young people feel safe and secure, have their viewpoints valued, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Develop awareness in all staff and volunteers of the need for child protection and of their responsibilities in identifying abuse.
- Allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

### **Behaviour Statement**

In order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made all personnel should demonstrate exemplary behaviour by:

- Treating all young people equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Avoiding being the only adult alone with young people.
- Avoiding private or unobserved interaction with young people and encouraging open communication with no secrets.
- Ensuring that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed.
- Recognising that caution is required, particularly during sensitive moments, such as when discussing bullying, bereavement or abuse.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people, avoiding excessive rehearsal or performance schedules, and not pushing them against their will.
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol excessively in the presence of young people.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given.

### **Practices to be avoided**

The following should be avoided except in emergencies (for example, if a child sustains an injury and needs to be taken to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to collect a child at the end of a session). If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of Bollington Festival Players Child Protection Officer or the child's parent/guardian.

- Avoid spending time alone with a child.
- Avoid taking or dropping off a child before or after an activity.

**The following should never be sanctioned. You should never:**

- Discriminate against, show preferential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive, even in fun.
- Invite or allow children to your home unsupervised.
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- Condone smoking or the consumption of alcohol by young people under the legal age. You are obliged to report any sightings of this to the young person's parent/guardian.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate contact with young people.
- Do things of a personal nature for a child that they could do for themselves.
- Allow young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged (e.g. swearing, racial/sexual taunts)
- Permit abusive behaviour or activities (e.g. bullying, ridiculing or initiation ceremonies).
- Make assumptions based on rumour or hearsay.
- Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child.

### **Responding to allegations or suspicions**

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Bollington Festival Players, 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 by reporting these to the appropriate authorities.

### **If you suspect that a young person is being abused:**

- Always refer the case to the Child Protection Officer; do not investigate it yourself.
- Do not approach a suspected abuser yourself.
- Ensure that the young person is given the opportunity to talk to you or an independent person.
- Listen to the young person without interruption and do not ask leading questions about what you may suspect.
- Write down the details, as you know them, on the Child Protection Report Form.
- Accept what the young person says at face value.
- Do not pass judgement on what is said, but do try to alleviate any fears or guilt the young person may have.
- Make it clear that you can offer support but that you must pass on the information.

Please follow the reporting procedures and utilise the report form provided.

### **If you receive an allegation of child abuse by an adult:**

- Contact the Child Protection Officer. All information, however trivial it may appear, must be shared.
- Record the nature of the allegations in detail.
- Do not try to resolve the issue yourself; follow the reporting procedures and use the form provided.
- Staff or volunteers who hear an allegation of abuse against another representative of Bollington Festival Players (e.g. staff, volunteers, committee members), or indeed themselves, should report the matter immediately to the Child Protection Officer.

Bollington Festival Players will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

### **Reporting Procedures**

- All incidents should be written up within one hour. Legally they must be recorded within 24 hours.
- All relevant material should be attached to the report sheets.
- Reports and records should be passed to the Child Protection Officer who will then be accountable for the safe storage and processing of the information.
- The Child Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police.
- The parent/guardian of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; Child Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform any disciplinary investigation into such misconduct, but all available information will be used to reach a decision.

### **Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse**

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Details of any contact with the child's parents on the issue.
- Details of any consultation on the issue with anyone else.
- Whether the child has reported the incident, and if not, whether the child has been spoken to, and details of any such conversation.
- Details of the alleged abuser, if any allegations have been made.

- Name of contact who took referral of the incident at the police or social services. (Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.)

### **Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The Child Protection Officer
- The parent/guardian of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Social services/police

Seek the advice of social services on who should approach the alleged abuser (or the parents of the alleged abuser if the alleged abuser is a child). Information should be stored in a secure place with access available to designated people only, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

### **Bollington Festival Players Recruitment Policy**

Bollington Festival Players recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Pre-selection checks must include the following:

- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified with each individual.
- Child protection procedures must be explained and training needs identified before contact with children commences.
- All volunteers and staff who will be working closely with children must have a valid Criminal Record Bureau disclosure no more than 3 years old.
- Bollington Festival Players will accept CRB clearance forms procured by other organisations provided a copy is provided for inspection.
- Copies of all CRB forms must be retained for the duration of the period that the individual will be working with children.
- Where an individual who is hoping to work with Bollington Festival Players does not have a valid CRB disclosure, Bollington Festival Players will request a disclosure at the earliest opportunity.

### **Photography, Videography and Press Photography**

Photographs are used only to publicise productions and for society records of productions and therefore any such photographs involving children can only be taken once written permission has been obtained from parents/carers of the children either during membership registration (BFP Membership Form) or on a Photography Consent Form which must be retained by the society.