

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

Penrith Players have adopted the following Child Protection Policy. They believe such a policy is important because:

(a) The welfare of the child or young person is paramount and they have a right to be protected from abuse and harm whilst in the care of the Theatre.

(b) All children and young people, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.

(c) All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

(d) All Penrith Players should be clear on how to respond appropriately and have a responsibility to be aware of and adhere to the Child Protection Policy and procedures.

Penrith Players recognise that through its activities, in particular the activities of junior players and adult plays involving the participation of children and young adults, the children and young adults will come into contact with other members of the Penrith Players and the audience. They recognise that the position of trust and caretaking of those children and young adults can be abused.

### **Policy statement**

Penrith Players have the duty of care to safeguard all children involved in Penrith Players or Penrith Junior Players from harm. 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. Penrith Players (and its junior section) will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in Penrith Players through adherence to the Child Protection Guidelines adopted by Penrith Players.

A child is defined a person under the age of 18 (Children Act 1989). A young person is generally considered to be a person between the age of 17 and 18.

The nominated person responsible to the Council of Management for child protection matters is the Penrith Players Child Protection Officer (see Appendix D). This person is responsible for ensuring checks are carried out with the DBS and documents retained as appropriate and is the person to whom any concerns relating to child protection issues should be reported. They are also responsible for ensuring the Policy is up to date, that it is clearly displayed or published, that those concerned are aware of the Policy and have read and understood it, that they are aware of who the Social Worker contact is (see Appendix B) and they have to hand the Social Worker contact and Police contact telephone numbers and details (see Appendix B). The person will also make sure that anyone concerned seeks guidance and advice from such people and will ensure that procedures contained within this document are followed if there is an allegation of impropriety or abuse to a child by a member of the Society.

### **Policy aims**

The aim of Penrith Players Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:-

- a) Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Penrith Players or its junior section.
- b) Allow all staff/volunteers/chaperones to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

### **Promoting Good Practice**

The NSPCC definition of Child Abuse is:-

*“Child abuse is any action by another person – adult or child – that causes significant harm to a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can just as often be about a lack of love, care and attention. We know that neglect, whatever form it takes, can be just as damaging to a child as physical abuse.”*

What does everyone understand to be abuse?

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and Penrith Players environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them.

The Director, volunteers and chaperones at Penrith Juniors, for example, will all have contact with young people and be an important link with identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

When a child enters Penrith Players having been subjected to child abuse outside of the Players environment, the Theatre and the learning process within the Theatre can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such instances, Penrith Players must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

This abuse might be physical emotional, sexual or neglect.

Physical abuse includes hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning or misuse of medications, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or guardian feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a person, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on that person's emotional development. It may involve making the child feel they are worthless or unloved or inadequate. It might involve making them feel they are afraid or in danger. It may involve exploitation or corruption.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware or consents to what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact including penetrative acts or non-penetrative acts. Sexual abuse also includes non-contact activities such as involving children to look at pornographic material or watch sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs likely to result in the severe impairment of the person's health or development. It might involve a parent or guardian failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing.

### **Good Practice Guidelines**

All personnel, whether it is directors, junior players, volunteers, chaperones or backstage staff, should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in

order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:-

- a) Act within the Children's Act 1989 and 2004.
- b) Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel welcome and familiar with their environment and are informed of personal (toilets, dressing rooms etc.) and emergency arrangements (fire exits, meeting points etc.) and any Health and Safety Procedures (Dangerous equipment, First aid etc.).
- c) Inform each child who the appropriate person or people are to speak to if they have any questions, problems or concerns.
- d) Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- e) Treating all young people/disabled adults equally, with respect and dignity and recognise some issues may be confidential.
- f) Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before any other Theatre activities.
- g) Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with the children and respect their right to privacy.
- h) Building a balanced relationship based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision making process.
- i) Making the Theatre and the activities within it fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- j) Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly as our actions might be misinterpreted even if they are well intentioned.
- k) Involving parents/guardians where possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children before and after the Theatre group, during rehearsals whilst their child is not on stage, staying with their child whilst the child is in the dressing rooms, where practicable.

- l) Being an excellent role model thus encouraging children to respect and care for others.
- m) Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism and stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
- n) Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and not pushing them against their will.
- o) Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises, to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- p) Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given and record if a child attends with a pre-existing injury, to be signed by the person responsible for the child.
- q) Requesting written parental consent if any members of Penrith Players or chaperones are required to transport young people in their cars.
- r) Ensuring no adult is ever left without another adult with a child/children.

### **Practices to be avoided**

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in Penrith Players (for example the Chairman) or the child's parent or guardian. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to the hospital, or their parent fails to arrive to pick up the child at the end of the session:-

Generally, any member of Penrith Players or chaperone should:-

1. Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
2. Avoid taking or dropping off a child to a session or a Penrith Players event.

It is the policy of Penrith Players that all children must be collected from the Theatre by their parent or guardian promptly once meetings, rehearsals and performances have finished.

### **Practices never to be sanctioned**

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

1. Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
2. Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
3. Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
4. Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
5. Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
6. Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
7. Do things of a personal nature for a child, which they can do for themselves.
8. Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

**NB** It may sometimes be necessary for volunteers and chaperones to do things of a personal nature for a child, for example helping the child to undress or dress during a costume change required at speed. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the child/ children involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's actions.

If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing or where there is a physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility of tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

### **Incidents that must be reported/recorded**

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the Penrith Players Child Protection Officer (see contact details in Appendix D), and record the incident. You should also ensure that the parents of the child are informed.

- a) If you accidentally hurt a child.
- b) If he or she seems distressed in any manner.
- c) If a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- d) If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

### **Use of photographic/filming equipment at Penrith Players events**

There is evidence that some people have used theatre events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young children in vulnerable positions. Penrith Players agree to be vigilant and report any concerns to the Penrith Players Child Protection Officer.

There is no intention to prevent Penrith Players using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, children and their parents/guardians should be made aware that this is part of the coaching programme and such films should be stored safely.

The policy of Penrith Players is that consent of the parent or guardian of the child will be sought in respect of photographs to be taken.

### **Recruitment of Volunteers and Chaperones**

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

- a) All new volunteers and chaperones who will work with a child/children or who wish to at some stage, should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- b) Consent should be obtained from a volunteer or chaperone to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This will be an Enhanced Disclosure.
- c) Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children, will be taken up for new volunteers or chaperones. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- d) Evidence of identity (passport or photo driving licence).

A link in relation to this procedure is at Appendix A.

### **Interview and Induction**

All volunteers and chaperones who will work with children or who wish to at some stage, will be required to undergo an interview carried out to an

acceptable protocol and recommendations. All volunteers and chaperones should receive formal or informal induction during which:-

- a) A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).
- b) Their qualifications should be substantiated.
- c) The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- d) They should sign up to the organisation's Child Protection Policy.
- e) Child Protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified.

### **Training**

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff, volunteers and chaperones to:-

- a) Analyse their own practice against established good practice and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them against false allegations.
- b) Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- c) Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
- d) Work safely and effectively with children.

Penrith Players requires:-

- a) Volunteers and chaperones to complete recognised awareness training on Child Protection.
- b) All Penrith Players members to receive advisory information outlining good practices and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.
- c) Relevant personnel to gain a National First Aid training award (where necessary)
- d) Attend updated training where necessary.
- e) Members to understand that they are adopting a policy requiring all existing members of Penrith Players and chaperones likely to work with children, to be familiar with the policy and agree to a DBS check.

f) Checks to be carried out again every four years or as considered appropriate. We are not told by the DBS if someone with a clear check then offends. Abusers can tend to build up a trust and then strike, so Penrith Players will carry out these checks every four years, unless a DBS check has been carried out in the meantime by another organisation, e.g. the County Council when updating chaperones.

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

It is not the responsibility of anyone working within Penrith Players in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether a child has been abused or not. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with appropriate authorities.

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

Where there is a complaint against a volunteer or chaperone there may be two types of investigation:-

- a) A criminal investigation.
- b) A child protection investigation.

### **Action if there are concerns**

#### 1. Concerns about poor practice

- a) If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Penrith Players Child Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- b) If the allegation is poor practice by the Penrith Players Child Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Chairman (contact details in Appendix D) who will decide how to deal with the allegation.

#### 2. Concerns about suspected abuse

- a) Any suspicion that a child has been abused by a volunteer, chaperone or a member of Penrith Players, should be reported to the Penrith Players Child Protection 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 a risk.

b) The Child Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the Social Services Department who may involve the Police, or go directly to the Police if out of hours.

c) The parents or the guardians of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Social Services Department.

d) If the Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Chairman.

### **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:-

a) The Penrith Players Child Protection Officer.

b) The Chairman.

c) The parents/guardians of the person who is alleged to have been abused.

d) The person making the allegation.

e) Social Services/Police.

f) The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

With regards to point f) above, Social Service advice should be sought on who should approach the alleged abuser.

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people in line with the Data Protection laws. The information will be accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure.

### **Internal Enquiries and Suspension**

1. Penrith Players Child Protection Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended from their voluntary duties pending further Police and Social Services enquiries.

2. Irrespective of any findings of Social Services or Police enquiries, the Chairman of the Penrith Players will assess the individual cases to decide whether the volunteer or chaperone can be reinstated and how that can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the Police. In such a case, the Chairman must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of improbability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

With regards to loss of membership, Penrith Players documentation will be checked to establish at what point the person's membership can be terminated.

### **Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse**

1. Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents/guardians, volunteers and chaperones may need. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture to help the healing process.

2. Consideration should be given as to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

### **Allegations of previous abuse**

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event.

Where an allegation is made, the procedures detailed above should be followed and reported to Social Services or the Police. This is because other children, either within Penrith Players or outside, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse, is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1989.

### **Dealing with disclosures of abuse or bullying in the Theatre**

1. Take all signs of bullying /abuse very seriously. Acknowledge the age of the child.

2. Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns. Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.

3. Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure that the victim is safe. Speak with the victims and the bullies separately, when it is an issue of bullying within the theatre.
4. Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else. Do not interrogate or question, other than to clarify your understanding. Do not ask children to repeat themselves over and over again.
5. Keep records of what is said, what happened, by whom and when.
6. Report any concerns to the Penrith Players Child Protection Officer or the school (wherever the bullying/abuse is occurring).
7. Never trivialise or exaggerate child abuse issues.
8. Allow the child time to speak and do not interrupt or make suggestions to them that could imply making an investigation.
9. Remain calm, no matter how difficult it is to listen to the child. Think of how hard it is for them to speak.
- 10 Remember you have been chosen because the child feels they can talk to you, therefore try to remain neutral, do not show emotion (anger, disbelief, disgust) as the child may stop talking for fear of upsetting you further.
11. Listen to the child and reassure them they have done the right thing.

### **Action towards the bullies**

1. Talk with the bullies and explain the situation and try to get the bullies to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim.
2. Inform the bully's parents/guardians.
3. Insist on the return of borrowed items and that the bully compensates the victim.
4. Impose sanctions as necessary.
5. Encourage and support the bully to change their behaviour.
6. Call meetings with the families to report on progress.
7. Inform all organisation members (as appropriate) of action taken.
8. Keep a written record of action taken.

### **Concerns outside the Theatre environment (e.g. of parent or guardian)**

1. Report your concerns to the Penrith Players Child Protection Officer, who should contact the Social Services or the Police as soon as possible.
2. If the Child Protection Officer is not available, the person being told or discovering the abuse should contact Social Services or the Police immediately.
3. Social Services and the Penrith Players Child Protection Officer will decide how to involve the parent/guardian.
4. The Child Protection Officer should also report the incident to the Penrith Players' Chairman. The Penrith Players' Chairman should ascertain whether or not the persons involved in the incident play a role in the Penrith Players and act accordingly.

### **Recording 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:-

1. The name, age and date of birth of the child.
2. The home address and telephone number of the child.
3. Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
4. The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times and any special factors and other relevant information.
5. Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
6. A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs such as behavioural changes.
7. Details of witnesses to the incident.
8. The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries have occurred.
9. Have the parents/guardians been contacted?
10. If so, what have they said?
11. Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.

12. If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?

13. Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.

14. Where possible, referral to the Police or Social Services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact that took the referral should be recorded.

Police and Social Services contact details are in Appendix B.

### **Child Register**

There will be a Register held of all children involved in the Theatre Company including Penrith Players or Penrith Junior Players, with a contact name and telephone number kept readily to hand for emergencies.

### **Health and Safety when working with children**

It is considered that:-

- a) Any group should not have more than 26 children.
- b) An appropriate number of legally responsible adults should be present. The guidance suggests 1 adult for 10 children. It is recommended a minimum of 2 volunteers are present at all times.
- c) There must be adequate space.
- d) There must be access to a telephone in the building.
- e) Any equipment use must meet Safety Standards.
- f) Risk assessment must be carried out.
- g) There must be a First Aid box which meets current Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations and a member of staff trained in First Aid. This applies to both performances and rehearsals.
- h) The volunteers and chaperones should know the evacuation procedures and should tell the group.
- i) No group shall be left without a legally responsible and trained volunteer or chaperone present.
- j) No child under 5 years of age should be left at all, unless a parent or responsible older sibling stays with the child.

k) Children and young people should have a named person to whom they may report any worries or concerns.

l) Contact names and telephone numbers for named people should be visibly displayed, for instance, on posters.

m) A system should be devised so that members of the Penrith Players and chaperones do not inadvertently find themselves in toilets alone with children.

### **Body of Persons Approval Certificate**

Penrith Players act within The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014.

When a production is organised that is to include a child or children, in most circumstances there is a legal requirement for the child/group of children to be licenced. The organisers of a group (namely Penrith Players) must apply for and obtain permission from the Local Authority in the form of a Body of Persons Approval certificate before any child can appear in their productions.

Details of Penrith Players Licence Holder can be found in Appendix D. When a Body of Persons Approval certificate is issued it will be sent to the Licence Holder.

The Licence Holder must ensure the certificate is available at the venue for inspection. The Licence Holder is responsible for ensuring the Regulations and Conditions, which have been endorsed on the licence, are complied with.

### **Chaperones**

The Cumbria County Council booklet "A Guide for Chaperones and Performance Licence Holders" will be followed by all Penrith Players volunteers and chaperones when Penrith Players puts on performances involving children. This includes children only and mixed adults/children performances. A readily accessible copy of this booklet will be available in the theatre.

The Penrith Players Licence Holder will liaise with the Director of a performance to confirm that a Chaperone is appointed to look after the welfare of a child who is taking part in entertainment which involves taking part in a performance where the public pay to have access. This does not apply to rehearsals for a performance, where only fully trained, vetted and DBS checked volunteers are required.

Chaperones are aware that children taking part in a production may require an Entertainment Licence (see below), which will be issued by the Child's Local Authority.

The Chaperone, who may be a man or a woman, is the key person who protects and supports the child and is responsible for the child's welfare. The welfare of the child overrides the needs of the Producer or Director of the company. The Chaperone will have care and control of the child and must ensure the child's well-being.

One Chaperone can look after a maximum of 12 children.

If there is more than one Chaperone looking after the children, the Chaperones should work as a team.

### **The responsibilities of the Chaperone**

The Chaperone should arrive before the children especially if the venue is not known.

The Chaperone should make themselves known to the Licence Holder.

The Chaperone should check all areas to be visited by the children for any hazards and have a basic knowledge of Health and Safety issues.

The Chaperone should check that the fire exits are clear.

The Chaperone should check what the fire alarm sounds like and if necessary arrange a Fire Drill involving the children.

The Chaperone should check the First Aid facilities and whether or not a person qualified in First Aid is present.

The Chaperone should check that the dressing rooms, toilets and other facilities are suitable. When checking dressing rooms, remember that children aged 5 years or over must only dress with other children of the same sex.

The Chaperone should liaise with any other Chaperones and work as a team.

The Chaperone should have a list of the names of the children he/she will be caring for.

The Chaperone should check the Entertainment Licence of the child and note any conditions on it.

The Chaperone should ensure there is a list of the children's home and emergency contact details which he/she can access at all times in case the parents/guardians need to be contacted.

The Chaperone should check with the Licence Holder to ascertain whether any child has medical problems or requirements.

If the Chaperone is unhappy with any of the facilities, including toilet and washing facilities, the Chaperone should voice their concerns to the Licence Holder. If the negotiations are not successful, the Chaperone must consider whether he/she is going to allow the children to take part in the event.

In those circumstances the Chaperone should contact the Local Authority as soon as possible, with details of the problem and the action taken.

As a Chaperone it is important to remember that the child is in your care and control. The child should not do anything without your knowledge and approval and any contact with them by any other person is with the knowledge and approval of the Chaperone.

The Chaperone may wish to keep a notebook to record notes of times of breaks, meals, and any other incident regarding the welfare of the child and treatment, about which they are concerned.

The Chaperone must not be side-tracked away by any other activity.

The Chaperone should not be persuaded to leave a child with other people to be dressed, made up or go through their lines, where there is little or no opportunity for the Chaperone to observe or supervise the child. It is the duty of the Chaperone to stay with the child throughout the child's time at the venue unless their parent is there and the Chaperone must accompany the child to and from the dressing room, studio, set or stage as well as remaining in the studio, on set or backstage while the child is there. The Chaperone must remain with the child during a meal or rest break or during periods of recreation.

The Chaperone must ensure that the child does not suffer the effects of extreme weather conditions.

If the Chaperone needs to take a break, someone else i.e. another approved Chaperone or the parent/guardian of the child must look after the child. It is the responsibility of the Chaperone to withdraw a child from an event if the child becomes ill or is under too much stress.

A checklist for Chaperones to consider using can be found in Appendix C (also on page 25 of the guidance booklet).

### **Licence Holder Responsibilities**

The holder of a Licence granted in respect of a performance shall keep the following records:-

- a) The Licence.
- b) The following particulars in respect of each day or night on which the child is present at the place of performance.
  - I. The date.
  - II. The time of arrival at the place of performance.
  - III. The time of departure from the place of the performance.
  - IV. The times of each period during which the child took part in a performance.
  - V. The time of each rest interval.
  - VI. The time of each meal interval.
- c) Details of any injuries or illnesses, if any, suffered by the child at the place of performance including the dates on which the injuries occurred and stating whether such injuries or illnesses prevented the child from being present at the place of performance.

If the Chaperone and the Licence Holder cannot agree about the conditions for the children, the matter should be reported to the child's Local Authority. A written record should be kept.

In the event of any injury to a child, it is the Licence Holder who is responsible for ensuring the child receives proper medical treatment and the person named in the Licence Application Form and the Local Authority are noticed as soon as possible of the injury or illness. The Chaperone will assist the Licence Holder in these circumstances and in the absence of the Licence Holder, will carry out this duty. It is quite probable that the Licence Holder may not be in attendance at all performances.

Licence Holders and Chaperones need to be aware of the Rules and Regulations relating to the times which the children can spend at the Theatre, whether for

rehearsals or performances (page 23 of the guidelines). In particular, it should be noted that if a child is under 5 years of age they should not be in the Theatre later than 10.00pm and if the child is older than 5 they should not be in the Theatre any later than 11.00pm. No child, irrespective of age, is permitted to attend a performance or rehearsal prior to 7.00am.

Furthermore, a child shall not take part in performances or rehearsals on more than 6 consecutive days. Further detailed restrictions in relation to children performing or rehearsing can be found on page 23 of the guidance booklet.

### **Other Groups or Clubs using Penrith Players facilities**

It is not the responsibility of Penrith Players to provide Chaperones or Licence Holders for Groups or Clubs who use the facilities (whether hired or free of charge).

Any visiting Group or Club that has children performing in their productions must ensure that any legal requirements regarding children performing are adhered to whilst utilising the facilities of Penrith Players.

If the Penrith Players Licence Holder is made aware of any abuse of the legal requirements then they will raise this with the Director of the visiting group or club. If the Director of the visiting group or club refuses to adhere to the legal requirements then the Licence Holder will inform the County Council Child Employment Team (see appendix B).

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Applying for an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check**

An individual cannot request an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check to be done on themselves. It is the responsibility of the “employer” to instigate the process.

Penrith Players Child Protection Officer will apply for an enhanced DBS check. Guidelines can be found at:-

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/dbs-check-requests-guidance-for-employers>

Volunteers and Chaperones will have to complete part of the application form. Guidance for completing this can be found on the following government web site:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-application-forms-guide-for-applicants/dbs-application-form-guide-for-applicants>

It is the responsibility of the Theatre to ensure they see the returned form for each of the people they have asked to make a disclosure application and to act in accordance with the DBS Guidelines on the information therein.

### **Disclosure and Barring Service**

It is likely that the Enhanced DBS disclosure will be required for anyone who is regularly caring for/training /supervising or being in sole charge of those aged under 18 or vulnerable adults.

Standard disclosure includes details of spent and unspent convictions as well as cautions, reprimands and warnings. It will also indicate if a person is barred from working with children.

Enhanced Disclosure will include non-conviction information from local Police records, which a Chief Police Officer thinks may be relevant in connection with the matter in question.

Please note the existence of the Disclosure Service should not be regarded as a substitute for any pre-appointment checks, for example taking up references and enquiring into a person’s previous employment history.

The Penrith Players have adopted the DBS Policy Statements on:-

- a) Recruitment of ex-offenders.
- b) Secure storage, handling and disposal of disclosure information.

These include the following obligations:-

### **1. A fair use of disclosure information**

Penrith Players will observe guidance issued and supported by the Criminal Records Bureau on the use of disclosure information and, in particular, recipients of disclosure information shall not unfairly discriminate against the subject of the disclosure information, on the basis of conviction or other details revealed.

The policy of Penrith Players on the recruitment of ex-offenders as volunteers and chaperones is:-

- a) If the applicant has been convicted of an offence involving a child or a vulnerable adult, or an offence involving dishonesty, where they will be responsible for money in a voluntary capacity, then the ex-offender will not be given a volunteer or chaperone position.
- b) Save as above, any other ex-offenders will be considered on their merits, taking into account the offence they have committed, their age at the time, how long ago the offence was committed and any other factors which the Penrith Players consider are relevant.

Any application form the Penrith Players require to be completed must state that:-

- I. A disclosure will be requested in the event of successful applications so that the applicants are aware of the situation.
- II. Contain a statement to the effect that a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position.
- III. Discuss any matters revealed in the disclosure information with the person seeking the voluntary position before withdrawing any offer.
- IV. Make every subject of a disclosure aware of the existence of this Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.
- V. In order to assist people in making appropriate use of the disclosure information reaching decisions, make available guidance in relation to the

employment and fair treatment of ex-offenders and to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

## **2. Handling of Disclosure Information**

Recipients of disclosure information:-

- a) Must ensure the disclosure information is not passed to persons not authorised to receive it.
- b) Must ensure that the disclosure and the information they contain are available only to those who need to have access in the course of their duties.
- c) Must securely store disclosures and the information they contain.
- d) Should retain neither the disclosure nor a record of disclosure information contained within them for longer than is required for the particular purpose. In general, this should be no later than 6 months after the date on which the person was recruited or other relevant decisions have been taken or after the date on which any dispute about the accuracy of the disclosure information has been resolved.

The Penrith Players written Security Policy covering the correct handling and safe keeping of disclosure information is:-

I) All disclosure information documentation will be kept exclusively by the Penrith Players Child Protection Officer. After that person has completed the necessary forms and has received the disclosure record, they will ensure that the disclosure documentation is destroyed in accordance with the above timescales. When the documents are destroyed, that person will ensure the information remains confidential, for instance by shredding it.

II) They will ensure that no other person has sight of the disclosure records and the disclosure records are kept in a locked cabinet. The person will only discuss the disclosure information with other members of Penrith Players or chaperones as is absolutely necessary relating to, in particular, matters involving children or vulnerable adults. Penrith Players acknowledge that they will need to co-operate with any request from the Bureau to undertake assurance checks as to the proper use and safekeeping of disclosure information and they are under an obligation to

report to the Bureau any suspected malpractice in relation to this Code of Practice.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Cumbria Constabulary**

Police Headquarters, Carleton Hall, Penrith, Cumbria, CA10 2AU

Emergency phone 999    Non-emergency phone 101

<https://www.cumbria.police.uk/Contact-us/Contact-us.aspx>

### **Cumbria County Council, Cumbria Social Services**

Cumbria Safeguarding Hub 0333 240 1727

### **Child Employment Team /Chaperones / Licence Holders**

Children's Services, Blencathra House, Tangier Street, Whitehaven, CA28 7UW

01946 505553

Email:        yvette.jackson@cumbria.gov.uk

                  laura.brown@cumbria.gov.uk

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Chaperone Checklist**

Familiarise yourself with the venue's layout

Identify all hazard areas

Locate all fire exits

Ask to hear sound of fire alarm

Arrange fire drill (with alarm) for children

Locate first aid facilities

Inspect dressing rooms (separate for 5 years and over)

Locate and inspect toilets

Locate and inspect rest rooms

Locate and inspect school room

Check on meal arrangements

Check total number of children

Check total number of chaperones

Acquire list of children's names

Check each child's Performance Licence

Ensure you have emergency home contacts for each child

Where relevant, ensure you have details of each child's medical problems and/or medication

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Penrith Players Chairman**

Roger A. Bird

Bird213@btinternet.com

### **Penrith Players Child Protection Officer**

David H. Ross

davidaffinity@btinternet.com

### **Penrith Players Licence Holder**

David H. Ross

davidaffinity@btinternet.com

# **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

## **PENRITH PLAYERS**

Ratified by .....

Signature .....

Position .....

Date .....