



POLICY #6

FAIR CASTING POLICY

Newcastle Musical Theatre Company (hereafter referred to as NMTC) is committed to a practice which protects children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm.

NMTC recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. All members accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of issues which cause children, young people and vulnerable adults harm.

For the purpose of this policy, a child/children is/are defined as anyone under the age of 16 or under the statutory school leaving age.

With reference to additional information regarding the safeguarding of young people over the age of 16 (of statutory school leaving age) and vulnerable adults please see Appendix 1.

NMTC believes that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount,
- All children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and 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 NMTC should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

NMTC will ensure that:

- All children are treated equally with dignity and respect,
- The welfare of each child is always put first,
- A balanced relationship based on mutual trust is built which empowers children to share in the decision-making process,
- Enthusiastic and constructive criticism is given rather than negative criticism,
- Bullying (whether physical or cyber) is not accepted or condoned,
- All adult members of the Company provide a positive role model for dealing with other people,
- Action is taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour,
- It keeps up to date with health and safety legislation,
- It keeps informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children,
- It undertakes relevant development and training,



- It holds a register of every child involved within the Company and retains a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

The Company has a dedicated Safeguarding Officer who is in charge of ensuring that the Safeguarding Policy and procedures are adhered to. That person's name is Lucinda (Cindy) Redhead and she can be contacted on 07751836023.

The Company Chairman is Pat Smith.

This Safeguarding Policy sits alongside The Ex Offender's Policy (Appendix 2) and is closely linked to the NMTC Social Media Policy.

Please note Appendix 1 of this Safeguarding Policy in relation to Safeguarding Young People and Vulnerable Adults.

This Safeguarding Policy will be regularly monitored by the Board of Directors of the Company and will be subject to annual review.

Safeguarding Procedures

Responsibilities of the Company

At the outset of any production involving children the Company will:

- undertake a risk assessment and monitor the risk throughout the production process,
- identify at the outset the designated person responsible for safeguarding,
- engage in the effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting,
- ensure that children are supervised at all times,
- know how to get in touch with the police, local authority safeguarding team and local authority social services department, in case it needs to report a concern.

Parents and carers

- The Company believes it to be important that there is a true partnership between parents, carers and the Company. Parents and carers are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the Company and to share the responsibility for the care of children.
- All parents and carers will be given a copy of the Company's Safeguarding Policy.
- All parents and carers have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of the Company to take children home.

Unsupervised contact

- The Company will ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.



- As far as possible there will be one or two chaperones present at each pre show rehearsal depending on the number of children rehearsing
- 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 certificate.

Physical Contact

- All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.
- Adults will only touch children when absolutely necessary in relation to a particular activity.
- Adults 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

- Permission will be sought from the parents and carers for the use of photographic material featuring children for promotional and archival purpose.
- The Company's web based materials will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.
- The Company will ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of its members, in accordance with Policy No 1 PRIVACY POLICY, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such as a criminal record.

Suspicion of abuse

- If you see any abuse of a child while in the care of the Company, please make this known to the person with responsibility for safeguarding, Cindy Redhead. If this person is unavailable or you suspect that the person with responsibility for safeguarding is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the Chairman, Pat Smith.
- Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed as well as your response, in case there is follow up in which you are involved.
- If a serious allegation is made against a member of the Company, chaperone, venue staff etc, that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal room etc. and will not have any unsupervised contact with other children in the production.

Disclosure of abuse

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 questions 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 responsible for child safeguarding. Make it clear to the child that you will need to share the information with others. Make it clear that you will only tell 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 safeguarding. It is that person’s responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually the local safeguarding team, social services or the police.
- As soon as possible after disclosing the 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.

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 safeguarding 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 eg 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 more about the incident or allegation.

Rights and Confidentiality

- If a complaint is made against a member of the Company he or she will be made aware of their rights under the Company’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.
- In criminal law the Crown or other prosecuting authority has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Accidents

- To avoid accidents, chaperones and children will be advised of “house rules” regarding health and safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds. 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 Company, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the appropriate accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person responsible for safeguarding.
- If a child joins the production with an obvious injury a record of this will be made in the accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for safeguarding. This record can be useful if a formal allegation is made later, and will also be a record that the child did not sustain the injury while participating in the production.



DBS Certificates

- If the Company believes it is in the best interests to obtain DBS certificates for personnel it will inform the individual of the necessary procedures and the level of DBS required. A Standard DBS will apply for anyone with supervised access to children. An Enhanced DBS will be required for anyone with unsupervised access.
- The Company will have a written code of practice for the handling of disclosure information.
- The Company will ensure that the information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

Chaperones

- Chaperones will be appointed by the Company for the care of the children during the production process. By law the chaperone is acting *in loco parentis* and should exercise the care which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give a child. The maximum number of children in the chaperone's care at the Theatre Royal shall not exceed 12.
- Chaperones will also be present during all pre show rehearsals.
- Potential chaperones will be asked to produce a valid Chaperone's licence.
- Chaperones will be made aware of the Company's Safeguarding Policy and procedures.
- When chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the director. If the changes cannot be made satisfactorily the chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue.
- If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the director and not allow the child to continue.
- Under the Dangerous Performances Act no child of compulsory school age is permitted to do anything that 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 contact the local authority.
- During rehearsals and performances chaperones will be aware of where children are at all times.
- Children are not to leave the rehearsal venue or theatre unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents or carers.
- Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
- Chaperones should be aware of safety arrangements and first aid procedures in the venue and will ensure that children in their care do not place themselves in any danger.
- Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by the Company.
- Chaperones should examine the appropriate venue's accident book each day. If an accident has occurred, the director will not be allowed to use that child until a medically qualified opinion has been obtained (not just the word of the parent or child).
- Chaperones should have written arrangements for children after rehearsals or performances. If someone different is to collect their child, a telephone call should be made to the parent or carer to confirm the arrangements.
- Children should be signed out when leaving and a record made of the person collecting.



- If a parent or carer has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with the child until they are collected by a named person.

Policy written: October 2008,

Revised: May 2016, December 2016, February 2017, February 2018, February 2019

Next Review Date – January 2022

Useful Numbers

Children's Social Care:

(Initial Response Service)

0191 277 2500

(Emergency Duty Team)

0191 278 7878

(CAF Team)

0191 211 5805

Local Authority Designated Officer

LADO – 0191 211 6730

(Allegations against staff/adults who work with children)

Police

(Emergency) 999 (Non Emergency) 101

NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 5000



APPENDIX 1

Safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults

For the purpose of this appendix a young person is someone aged 16 (of statutory school leaving age) or over.

A vulnerable adult is someone who is aged 16 or over who is or may be in need of additional support due to learning disabilities, a physical disability, mental health issues.

It should be noted that disability or age alone does not signify that a young person or adult is vulnerable and in need of additional support.

Newcastle Musical Theatre Company (NMTC) understands and acknowledges that young people over the age of 16 (of statutory school leaving age) and vulnerable adults do not legally require a chaperone. In certain circumstances, however, and in consultation with parents, the young person and adult themselves it may be deemed appropriate to assign a named mentor or “stage buddy” from within the Company/ the Board of Directors to that person.

The mentor/“stage buddy” may provide support in terms of answering queries, modelling appropriate behaviour for the young person or adult during rehearsal periods and show week.

APPENDIX 2

The Recruitment of Ex Offenders – Policy Statement

As an organisation assessing applicants’ suitability of positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Order 1975) using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Newcastle Musical Theatre Company (hereafter known as NMTC) complies fully with the Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. NMTC undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

NMTC can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions NMTC are legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Order 1975) (as amended)) and where appropriate Police Act Regulations (as amended), NMTC can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected.



NMTC is committed to the fair treatment of its members, potential members, regardless of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

This written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders, is made available to all DBS applicants at the outset of the recruitment.

NMTC actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcomes applications/membership from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. NMTC selects all members based on a singing audition and annually appoints a Director and Musical Director following expressions of interest, based on presentations to the Board of Directors and suitability for that particular production.

An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position, eg Director, MD, Board Member.

NMTC ensures that all those in NMTC who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. NMTC also ensures that they have received appropriate guidance and training in relevant legislation relating to the recruitment of ex-offenders, eg; the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

At interview or in a separate discussion, NMTC ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to the withdrawal of an offer of recruitment.

NMTC makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to the DBS aware of the existence of the Code of Practice and makes a copy available on request.

NMTC undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing an offer of recruitment.

March 2017

Date of Next Review – January 2022