

Dearne Playhouse Child Protection Policy

This document consists of two pages. This is page one.

Name of Organisation/project:	Dearne Playhouse
Date this policy comes into effect:	23/09/2024
The Dearne Community and Miners Welfare Scheme representative (usually chairperson or leader):	Mike Lawrence (Chairperson)
Name of designated person to Oversee child protection:	Julie Medlam (Theatre Manager)

The trustees of **the Dearne Playhouse** recognise that the protection and safety of children and young people, i.e., those who have not yet reached their eighteenth birthday, is everyone's responsibility. This policy, the related procedures and the Code of Good Practice which follow, establishes the roles and responsibilities of staff, in relation to the protection of children, with whom their work brings them into contact.

In relation to child protection, the approach **the Dearne Playhouse** will take is based on, and reflects, the principles of relevant legislation and guidance relating to the protection of children.

- the welfare of the child is paramount consideration.
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religious belief and sexual orientation have a right to protection from harm or abuse.

The trustees are responsible for child protection within **the Dearne Playhouse**. They have designated the **Theatre Manager** to oversee this on their behalf. This will include ensuring the implementation and monitoring of this policy.

In relation to recruitment and selection of staff, this will also include ensuring that the appropriate 'statutory' DBS checks are carried out, and references taken which refer to candidates' suitability to work/have contact with children.

It is also the responsibility of the trustees of **the Dearne Playhouse** to ensure that all staff for whom they are responsible, are aware of and understand the importance of implementing this policy and the related procedures and code of good practice.

Whilst the trustees recognise that **the Dearne Playhouse** is not a child protection agency, if children are to be truly protected it is essential that everyone working with children and young people contributes to the work of those with direct responsibility for the protection of children. The procedures that follow recognise and are consistent with that objective and have been designed to complement local Area Child Protection Committee procedures.

As a responsible body, we cannot and should not restrict our sense of duty to those children and young people we identify as our facilities and services users. Staff and volunteers, through their work, come into contact with a number of children each and every year. By being vigilant and acting where concerns exist, we can play an important part in their protection.

In operating this policy, staff and volunteers must also be aware that within the field of child protection there is no confidentiality, as would normally be expected. Concerns relating to the abuse of children and young people must be reported as outlined in the following procedures.

Guidance in the form of a Code of Good Practice has also been developed to provide staff and volunteers with ideas that not only will help to protect children, but will also help to identify any practices which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse. Staff and volunteers should familiarise themselves with this and if it is necessary to carry out practices contrary to it, only do so after discussion with, and the approval of, the trustees.

Remember, non-action is never an option, in child protection.

END OF CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

Dearne Playhouse Child Protection Procedures

Part One

This document consists of two pages. This is page one.

PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IF YOU THINK A CHILD MAY BE AT RISK OF ABUSE, IS BEING, OR HAS BEEN, ABUSED EITHER BY:

- a member of staff
- a volunteer/scheme member
- a member of their family
- any other person, including another child

The Trustees of **the Dearne Playhouse and Staff of the Dearne Playhouse** are responsible for ensuring that all staff, volunteers and members of the charity, for whom they are responsible, are aware of and understand the importance of implementing these procedures.

Even though the overwhelming majority of children which you will come into contact with through your work are likely to experience a perfectly safe and happy childhood, it is also recognised, that a percentage of the children that you come into contact with will, through the nature of their experiences, demonstrate behaviours which may be indicators of child abuse. Many factors associated with disadvantaged circumstances can also result in a child's behaviour being affected, thereby making the identification of abuse even more difficult. You are **not** expected to suddenly become expert in child protection nor are you expected to investigate child abuse. You are, however, expected to understand and comply with these procedures.

Staff/volunteers, who for any reason become concerned that a child may be at risk of abuse, is being, or has been, abused must immediately report that concern to the **Theatre Manager**.

The **Theatre Manager** will discuss your concerns with you to clarify their cause and obtain all the known relevant information. This will then be forwarded to the appropriate local Social Services Department stating that it concerns child protection.

In the absence of the **Theatre Manager** you should report the concerns directly to the local Social Services Department and then inform the **Theatre Manager** as soon as possible.

Should the concern relate to the **Theatre Manager** you should contact the Social Services Department directly.

Note: If your concerns are raised by something you become aware of while in a school, or through a school related activity, undertaken in the course of your work you must immediately inform the school's Child Protection 'Designated Teacher,' and then follow the instruction as outlined above.

END OF CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES PART ONE

Dearne Playhouse Child Protection Procedures

Part Two

This document consists of two pages. This is page one.

PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IF A CHILD TELLS YOU THAT THEY ARE BEING, OR HAVE BEEN, ABUSED:

Children will occasionally disclose abuse to an adult they have come to feel they can trust. This happens for many reasons but the important thing to remember is that if they do tell you, they are doing so in the hope that you will act to stop it happening, even if they ask you not to do anything with the information.

Children may feel as if they are betraying someone they are close to and whom they love. It is not unusual for a child to love the abuser but want the abuse to stop, especially when that person is a parent or carer. Equally, it may be someone they fear e.g. an adult whom they perceive to be able to influence decisions concerning their future. Either way, it takes great courage for a child to talk to an adult about abuse and your response can be crucial.

It is important to remember too, that it can be more difficult for some children to tell than for others. Children who have experienced prejudice and discrimination through racism may well believe that people from other ethnic groups or backgrounds don't really care about them. They may have little reason to trust those they see as authority figures and may wonder whether you will be any different.

Children with a disability will have to overcome barriers before disclosing abuse. They may well rely on the abuser for their daily care and have no knowledge of alternative sources. They may have come to believe they are of little worth and simply comply with the instructions of adults.

If a child discloses abuse to you in the course of your work it is important to react appropriately.

Do:

- Remain calm and receptive
- Listen without interrupting
- Only ask questions of clarification if you are unclear what the child is saying
- Make it clear you take them seriously
- Acknowledge their courage in telling you
- Tell them they are not responsible for the abuse
- Let them know you will do what you can to help them

Do NOT:

- Allow your shock or distaste to show
- Probe for more information/ask other questions
- Make assumptions or speculate
- Make negative comments about the abuser
- Make promises you cannot keep
- Agree to keep the information secret

It is, therefore, essential that everything possible is done to protect the children who place their trust in us. If a child tells you that they are being, or have been, abused you must:

- make an immediate record of what the child has said, using their own words
- follow the instructions for reporting to your line manager, as set out in procedure one
- Tell them that you will have to inform the Theatre Manager and that the childcare authorities will also have to be informed.

END OF CHILD PROTECTION POLICY PROCEDURES PART TWO

A separate Covid 19 risk assessment will run along side this policy.

Dearne Playhouse **Child Protection Procedures - Code of Good Practice**

This document consists of two pages. This is page one.

This Code has been developed to provide you with advice that not only will help to protect children, but will also help you and your colleagues identify any practices which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse.

Good practice will also protect the **Dearne Playhouse** through reducing the possibility of anyone using their role to gain access to children, in order to abuse.

While it is not intended that this code should restrict staff/volunteers from normal ways of working, e.g. comforting a distressed child through providing a hug, there is much they can do to avoid situations that may give rise to misinterpretation, which will also work to protect children.

If in doubt, consider how an action or activity may be perceived as opposed to how it is intended.

Wherever possible, you should be guided by the following advice.

If it is necessary to carry out practices contrary to it, you should only do so after discussion with, and the approval of, the **Theatre Manager**

Child Protection - Code of Good Practice

- avoid unobserved situations of one – to – one contact with a child. If it is unavoidable, always keep a door open and ensure you are within the hearing of other adults.
- never invite a child to your home without the knowledge and consent of the parents/carers and **the Theatre Manager**
- never offer to take a child alone in your own vehicle without the knowledge and consent of the parents/carers and **the Theatre Manager**
- if it is necessary to do things of a 'personal' nature for a child, e.g. nappy changing or toileting if they are very young or disabled, ensure these are carried out with the full knowledge of the parents/carers and **the Theatre Manager**
- develop a culture in which staff/volunteers feel comfortable enough to point out inappropriate attitudes and behaviours to each other
- don't engage in or allow any sexually provocative games involving or observed by children, whether based on talking or touching
- do not make, or allow to be made, any recordings (whether video or audio) of children without either ensuring full written permission of their parent or guardian has been granted, or without the parent or guardian present and in full agreement for such recording to be made.
- do challenge anyone engaged in recording still or moving images or sounds of a child to ensure they have such permission, otherwise ask them to stop until permission can be sought or checked.
- do not assume that someone engaged in such activity *has* permission just because they are there!
- should someone persist in recording when challenged and fails to produce adequate evidence of permission, the Scheme reserves the right to ask the person in question to leave the site without prejudice. The **Theatre Manager** should however, be informed of the incident as soon as possible in writing.
- due to the practicalities of monitoring and the potential disruption to performances, it is recommended that to all intents and purposes, unauthorised photography, video or sound recording of children not be allowed at all at the **Dearne Playhouse**.
- never make suggestive remarks or discriminatory comments to a child

- don't engage in or tolerate any bullying of a child, either by adults or other children
- don't engage in or tolerate inappropriate physical activity involving children
- never enter a room where a child may be changing their clothes or not be fully dressed, without first clearly getting their consent to enter
- respect all children, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, disability or sexual identity
- avoid 'favouritism' and singling-out 'troublemakers'
- never trivialise child abuse
- never let allegations by a child go unreported, including any made against you

END OF CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE