



### Safeguarding Policy

It is the policy of the Copthorne Players that the welfare of the children and young people is paramount regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity and that everyone who may be involved in or come to see one of our productions, has a right to protection from physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Children and young people are defined as under the age of 18. We also acknowledge our responsibilities in respect of adult volunteers or visitors who might be deemed to be 'at risk' because they are 'vulnerable'. *(A Vulnerable Adult is defined in accordance with The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order 2002 as a person aged 18 or over who has a condition of the following type: (i) a substantial learning or physical disability; (ii) a physical or mental illness or mental disorder, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs; or (iii) a significant reduction in physical or mental capacity.)*

The Copthorne Players are fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults. We recognise our responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote best practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation.

The Copthorne Players acknowledge our duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. Our volunteers will endeavour to work together to encourage the development of an ethos that embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of all children, young people and adults.

The Copthorne Players Committee will therefore:

1. Ensure that all members and associates working with children understand their legal and moral obligations to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation. The Copthorne Players are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for children, volunteer staff and visitors and promoting a climate where children and adults will feel confident about sharing any concerns which they may have about their own safety or the wellbeing of others.
2. Ensure that members and associates working with children understand their responsibility to work to the standards detailed in the group's Child Protection Procedures.
3. Ensure that members and associates working with children understand their obligations to report care or protection concerns about a child/young person, or a volunteer's conduct towards a child/young person, to the group's designated person for child protection.
4. Ensure that all procedures relating to the conduct of members and associates are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner.
5. Ensure that the designated child protection person understands their responsibility to refer any child protection concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (i.e. police and/or children's social care).
6. Ensure that children and young people are enabled to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues in connection with the group's services.

7. Facilitate involvement of parents or carers in the group's productions and make child protection procedures available to them.
8. Ensure that written permission is received from parents/carers for their children to engage in activities with the Copthorne Players and that specific information is provided in relation to the specific needs of children (e.g. medical needs, allergies, special educational needs).
9. Endeavour to keep up-to-date with national developments relating to the care and protection of children and young people.
10. Take seriously any allegation or suspicion of abuse towards a child with whom the Copthorne Players are in contact and recognise that any child can be subject to abuse and that any matter arising from this will be dealt with appropriately following a clear set of procedures.
11. Ensure that members and associates who are in positions of trust in respect of children and young people are aware of the law relating to sexual activity with under 18's.

## Vulnerable children

Particular vigilance will be exercised in respect of children and young people who could be vulnerable by virtue of disability, special educational needs, homelessness, refugee/asylum seeker status, the effects of substance abuse within the family, those who are young carers and those who are 'looked after' or 'in the care' of a Local Authority. In addition we acknowledge that children who are affected by abuse or neglect may demonstrate their needs and distress through their words, actions, behaviour, demeanour or other children. We will work hard to promote a strong positive ethos through our activities and will have high expectations of the behaviour expected of all participants.

## Responsibilities within this policy

1. All members and associates in contact with children through the Copthorne Players are responsible for the operation of the Child Safeguarding Policy and they should act upon any concern no matter how small or trivial it may seem.
2. All members and associates working with children recognise the position of trust in which they have been placed.
3. In every respect, members and associates ensure that the relationships they form with children and young people are appropriate.
4. The Copthorne Players Committee ensures that volunteers working directly with children and young people have a Disclosure and Barring Service. Volunteers requiring DBS disclosures are:
  - Chaperones on specific productions in which children perform
  - Directors of productions in which children are involved (under 18)
  - The Designated and Deputy Designated persons
5. In cases where there is an allegation or suspicion of child abuse, the Designated Person(s) will take steps immediately to ensure that no child or adult is placed in a position which could cause further compromise.
6. Any allegation or suspicion of child abuse is reported to the appropriate authorities. The first port of call for advice and/or a referral to Children's Social Care is the West Sussex Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub [via their website](#), via telephone on 01403 229900 during

office hours or 033 022 26664 for emergencies out of hours. Where there is concern that a child is in immediate danger, the police should be called on 999.

7. Where urgent issues of child protection are involved, the Copthorne Players Committee have, as appropriate, the authority to suspend members and associates from being involved in a production.
8. The Copthorne Players will work with the appropriate local agencies, in particular West Sussex County Council Children's Services and the local Police, to ensure that children are safeguarded through the effective operation of the Copthorne Players' child safeguarding procedures.
9. The Copthorne Players are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice at regular intervals.

## Required actions

All volunteers working at the Copthorne Players are required to report instances of actual or suspected child abuse to the Designated Person(s) with responsibility for child protection.

The Designated Person is: Megan Birch

The Deputy Designated Person is: Jacquie Perry

When an individual concern/incident is brought to the notice of the Designated Person(s), they will seek advice from West Sussex MASH in relation to child protection issues.

All parents/carers of children involved in Copthorne Players productions will be informed of our safeguarding responsibilities and the existence of this policy. In situations where children or young people sustain injury or are otherwise affected by an accident or incident whilst they are the responsibility of the Copthorne Players, parents will be notified of this as soon as possible.

## The role of the Committee

The Copthorne Players Committee has formally adopted this policy and will review its content annually or sooner if there are any legislative changes or new good practice guidance.

The Committee will receive an annual report from the designated person(s) to monitor both the volume and progress of cases where a concern has been raised to ensure that the group is meeting its duties in respect of safeguarding.