



Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

The MPYT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy covers its full range of activities and events and covers both children and vulnerable adults. To ensure that such a policy is meaningful and workable, MPYT will continue to consult with other agencies, MPYT personnel and the Board of Trustees. The application of the policy, via the development of appropriate procedures, is carefully monitored, evaluated and reviewed. In developing its policies and procedures, MPYT refers to the Welsh Government's Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004, the All Wales Child Protection Procedures and the Guidelines for Arts Organisations provided by the Arts Council of Wales.

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Introduction

Mid Powys Youth Theatre recognises that live theatre and the entertainment industries can have a very powerful and positive influence on anyone who comes into contact with them. Not only does a performing arts environment provide opportunities for enjoyment and achievement; it also helps to develop valuable qualities such as self-esteem, leadership and teamwork. Most Vulnerable Persons participate happily and safely in arts activities. (The term “Vulnerable Persons” includes adults).

MPYT recognises that it has a duty of care to safeguard all Vulnerable Persons with whom staff, freelancers and volunteers come into contact in the course of our workshops and projects. MPYT interprets its safeguarding responsibilities as taking all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to Vulnerable Persons during MPYT organised activities are minimised.

MPYT has a legal and moral obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for Vulnerable Persons; all staff members, freelancers, external partners and contractors, chaperones, carers/ parents/legal guardians, volunteers and artistes accept their responsibilities to safeguard Vulnerable Persons from abuse, attempted abuse or neglect.

Definitions, Roles and Responsibilities

- The Artistic Director (**Designated Safeguarding Lead**) has strategic safeguarding responsibilities including managing the company’s partnerships with safeguarding authorities and local multi-agency safeguarding hubs.
- **Safeguarding Officers (SOs)** reports to the Designated Safeguarding Lead on all safeguarding matters and are the operational leads responsible for advising Responsible Persons,

and External Contractors / Partners, on all matters pertaining to safeguarding and protection in connection with activities taking place on Company premises or under Company auspices.

- **Chaperones** are responsible for the safety and welfare of the Vulnerable Persons to whom they have been assigned, and for fulfilling the conditions of their Chaperone Licence and/or the Body of Persons Approval (BOPA) certificate. Chaperones will also adhere to The Children (Performance and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014.
- **Responsible Persons** (all staff, freelancers and chaperones) are responsible for reporting any concerns to their venue's SO or Deputy SO.

Procedure

We will ensure that all MPYT trustees, staff and volunteers will:

- Develop their understanding of the signs of abuse and indicators of abuse.
- Know how to respond to a child who discloses abuse.
- Ensure that all parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members and volunteers with regard to safeguarding procedures.
- Our procedures will be reviewed annually and/or following a safeguarding incident and updated where necessary.
- All new members of staff and new volunteers will be given a copy of our safeguarding policy and good practice guidelines. All members of staff and volunteers, as part of their induction to MPYT, are required to familiarise themselves with the policy and key areas will be highlighted during their induction. Additional safeguarding training will be provided if required.

Confidentiality

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential

The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO/DSL) will only disclose any information about a child to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis.

All staff and volunteers must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep a disclosure secret.

All reporting will be made confidentially through secure digital forms.

DBS Requirements

All trustees and any employees, and contracted staff who will have direct contact with young people are required to hold a valid enhanced disclosure that has been undertaken within 3 years of the period of work and ideally will be enrolled on the Update Scheme.

Disclosures already held by an individual can be used, providing the disclosure was issued within 3 years and that the original document can be produced alongside proof of identity and address.

Staff registered with the DBS Update Service will be asked permission for MPYT to view their profile at time of contracting.

A register of DBS certificates is held within the MPYT office.

All employees of MPYT are required to hold a valid Enhanced DBS Certificate. Application for which will be made as soon as possible, but certainly before that member of staff is required to undertake any work where he/she is responsible for care of children or young people.

Selection of material for performance / projects / workshops

MPYT refers to the publication Teaching Drama: Guidance on Safeguarding Children and Child Protection for Managers and Drama Practitioners (DELLS, July 2006), in developing its policies and practice.

MPYT's policy is to decide on the suitability of texts and productions through a holistic and subjective process which draws collectively on:

- recent and relevant precedent, custom and practice
- opinions and preferences expressed by artistic directors / teams
- judgements of MPYT staff and board of trustees

In reaching a decision, the suitability of both content and language are considered in relation to the age group involved. The grounds for rejecting a text or production are likely to relate to one or more of the following criteria:

- excessive or gratuitous use of obscene language and references
- excessive or gratuitous violence or reference to violence
- the display of nudity, sexual acts or sexual violence.

Where the choice of text for performance is a matter for the young person (auditions or workshops), guidance will be provided on choosing suitable text for the situation.

Reporting, coordinating and reviewing information

In order to ensure that all child protection issues or incidents are dealt with appropriately and effectively, any matter of concern in relation to child protection which arises during or after MPYT activity should be raised immediately with the Designated Safeguarding Officer or with the artistic director in his role as the safeguarding lead.

Should the issue relate personally to the artistic director the matter is to be reported to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

If a child protection issue is raised during any MPYT activity, information relating to this issue is logged by the MPYT staff member responsible for the activity, indicating the origin and nature of the issue and recording progress in dealing with it. The majority of such issues will relate to potential concerns regarding the well-being of a young person arising from signs shown during their engagement with the activity or a personal disclosure.

A password protected folder is held on the MPYT Google-Drive account for the purpose of logging any incidents or concerns, only the DSL and DSO/DSL will have access to this folder, all information provided will be held in accordance with the GDPR policy and procedures.

Information relating to any child protection incident is provided immediately to the DSO/DSL for inclusion in the safeguarding incident log using the necessary format.

A record of all instances of concern relating to child protection matters is maintained by the DSO/DSL, together with a summary of the actions taken and any specific outcomes. It is the remit of the appropriate authority and not anyone connected with MPYT to investigate incidents that require referral on to a professional body.

The DSO/DSL will undertake a regular review of the log in order to ensure that outstanding issues are followed to resolution. Where appropriate any training implications will be raised with members of the board.

The DSO for MPYT is: [Bethan Treen](#)

Contact details: bethtreen@gmail.com

Telephone number: [07716 344 996](tel:07716344996)

The DSL and Artistic Director is: Ralph Bolland

Contact details: ralph_bolland@hotmail.com

Telephone number: 07810 350 994

Regional Safeguarding Board POWYS:

Tel: 01597 827666, Fax: 01597 827553

E-mail: people.direct@powys.gov.uk

<https://www.cysur.wales/contacts-and-useful-links/reporting-concerns-child/>

Code of Conduct for all staff, freelance artists and volunteers

The following guidelines cover all areas of MPYT activity including, but not limited to, auditions, workshops, projects, residencies and digital activity. They are offered to safeguard both staff and members.

General Principles

All personnel contracted by MPYT are expected to undertake their duties with due care, courtesy and respect for fellow employees and the young people with whom they are working. Professional and personal integrity are paramount, particularly in the context of work with young people.

All staff, volunteers and associate artists must sign the 'Essential Code of Conduct' (an appendix to this policy) - a brief one-page precis of essential compliance with regard to conduct with/amongst young participants - prior to commencement of any front-line activity.

Avoid being left alone with a child or young person – if it is unavoidable, make sure that you are within sight and hearing of others. Always keep doors to rooms open.

- Do not have any unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person. If it is unavoidable or desirable, for example if a child is distressed about something, the purpose of the contact must be made clear and it should only take place with the child's consent. Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, however well intentioned.
- Respect a young person's right to privacy.
- Do not do anything of a personal nature for a child.
- Never engage with a young person online, on social media unless a site or group has been specifically set up as a communications tool.
- Photographs and images taken during projects and performances must be processed in accordance with permissions granted on parental/guardian consent forms.

- Risk assessments must be carried out before projects.
- Emergency contact/allergies forms must be completed for each child and kept in an easily accessible and safe place.
- Staff and volunteers should never give lifts in personal cars to participants.
- If one-to-one working is required, a chaperone will be provided.
- If a young person requests/requires a private discussion, it should be held in a public place with consideration made for including an additional person in the discussion.
- It is vital that the young person understands that a conversation cannot be had 'in confidence' and that should any disclosure be made, the term 'confidential' should not be used. A clear understanding of when, with whom and how information might be shared should be stated.
- Any disclosures should be recorded officially, passed on the DSO/DSL and filed within a password-protected folder held on the MPYT Google-Drive



Responding to a safeguarding incident or concern involving a child or adult at risk

If an incident, allegation or suspicion of abuse or any other matter which calls the wellbeing of a child or adult at risk into question is disclosed, seen, heard or suspected, the person receiving the information should follow the procedure below:

- stop other activity and focus on what you are being told or seeing – responding to the incident being reported should take immediate priority
- react in a calm and considered way but show concern
- tell the child, adult at risk or third party that it is right for them to share this information
- take what the child, adult at risk or third party has said seriously and allow extra time where there is a speech or language difficulty

- keep questions to an absolute minimum necessary to gain a clear and accurate understanding of what is being said, and do not interrogate the child, adult at risk or third party
- avoid leading questions, as this might later damage evidence
- listen and do not interrupt if they are recounting significant events
- **Do not judge, criticise or offer opinion. Listen openly and with understanding.**
- offer reassurance BUT do not give assurances of confidentiality; explain you will need to pass on this information to those that need to know; and consider whether immediate action is needed to protect a child or adult at risk who may have been harmed or be at risk of harm
- think about the child or adult at risk who is the immediate concern and any others who may have been harmed or be at risk of harm, in light of what you have been told or seen.

In cases where there is an immediate risk of harm to a child or adult at risk and it is unsafe to wait until the next working day, the DSO/DSL should immediately call the regional Safeguarding Board and/ or the Police. If a DSO/DSL is not immediately available and a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm you should alert the appropriate regional Safeguarding Board listed below and/or the Police on 101 and stay with those you think are at immediate risk until they can be transferred to safe care, where practical.

When there are serious concerns about immediate risks to a child or if a child has suffered significant harm and continues to be at risk please call the police on 101 or emergency services on 999.

You should be prepared to give clear details of the concern, the child's name, date of birth, address and contact details of parents and carers. A referral in urgent circumstances can be made by telephone, but a completed Safeguarding Incident Form is required as soon as possible (even if some details need to be supplied later.) This form can be found at the end of this document.

Responding to a safeguarding incident or concern involving a member of MPYT staff, student, member, volunteer or visitor:

If anyone has a concern about the behaviour of a member of MPYT staff, trustee, student, member, volunteer or visitor, they should discuss this with the DSL or DSO/DSL as soon as possible.

There will be occasions when a student, parent or other person makes an allegation against a member of MPYT staff, a MPYT workshop participant, student, or volunteer which refers to concerns that the person has caused harm to a child or adult at risk, acted in a way that created potential serious risk to a child or adult at risk or would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in regular or close contact with a child or adult at risk in their present position or in any capacity.

Most allegations against staff, students, members or volunteers will relate to their behaviour whilst working. However, some concerns may relate to their personal life or the care of their own children. In some cases, there may have been an allegation of abuse regarding someone closely associated with them and this person may pose a risk of harm to the child(ren) of the staff member, student, trustee, member, volunteer or visitor is responsible for.

Those who are notified of such concerns will be expected to report this to a DSL/DSO/DSL as soon as possible and ideally within the same working day.

All staff, students, members, and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and know that these concerns will be taken seriously and will be dealt with sensitively and appropriately. It is not necessary for safeguarding concerns to be in writing (other than the Safeguarding Incident Report Form) for them to be acted upon.

Where it is known that a member of staff, student, visitor, volunteer is under investigation by a third party or an appropriate authority, for actions that may have occurred either as a result of their work with MPYT or in their private life and which might give cause for concern about their suitability to work with children and adults at risk, this must be reported to the Board.

Reporting – recording

Make a comprehensive record of what is said or seen, and actions taken at the earliest possible opportunity. Report this using the Safeguarding Incident Report Form within the timescales stated. The Safeguarding Incident Report Form is available at the end of this policy document.

The comprehensive and confidential record and Safeguarding Incident Report Form should include the following:

a detailed record of the incident in the child or adult at risk's own words or the words of the third party reporting it. You should note that there may be occasions when this

record may be used later in a criminal trial and therefore needs to be as full and accurate as possible

details of the nature of the incident

a description of any injury (please note that you must not remove the clothing of a child or adult at risk to inspect any injuries)

dates, times or places and any other information that may be useful such as the names and addresses of potential witnesses; and

written records including emails and letters.

The Safeguarding Incident Report Form (found at the end of this document) should be submitted to the DSO/DSL as soon as possible, preferably immediately, and certainly within 24 hours. If the concerns relate to a specific DSO/DSL, then it should be reported to the trustees.

For security and confidentiality reasons communication via email should be avoided wherever possible.

Keep all original notes as they may be needed as evidence.

The DSO/DSL will pass on any allegations to the Chair of Trustees and any organisation connected to the incident, allegation or suspicion of abuse that has been made.

Following decisions made by the DSO/DSL and/or Chair, the parents or guardians of the child(ren) or adult(s) at risk (where known / identified) may be contacted and if appropriate a referral made to the Children's or Adult Social Services and/or Regional Safeguarding Board. There may be occasions where it is inappropriate for parents to be contacted and the matter will immediately be referred to Children's or Adult Social Services and/or Regional Safeguarding Board.

<https://gov.wales/reporting-suspected-abuse-harm-or-neglect-safeguarding/>

ASSIST on 0345 602 7050.

Safeguarding Board POWYS:

Tel: 01597 827666, Fax: 01597 827553

E-mail: people.direct@powys.gov.uk.

<https://www.cysur.wales/contacts-and-useful-links/reporting-concerns-child/>

In the event of an allegation related to a member of MPYT staff the Regional Safeguarding Board will be informed within 24 hours of the allegation being known. The criteria for making a referral to Regional Safeguarding Board is that a member of MPYT staff or volunteer may have:

behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child

possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or

behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that they would pose a risk of harm to children.

Depending on the outcome of any referral and where applicable, MPYT will refer a named individual for consideration for barring and will contact the Disclosure and Barring Service.

The Regional Safeguarding Board offers a consultation service which supports those investigating an allegation or concern and provides expert advice. Every consultation with the RSB is followed up in writing to reflect the advice and guidance given. MPYT will keep a clear record of their correspondence with the Regional Safeguarding Board.

All members of MYPT staff/trustees handling cases involving allegations against members of staff, volunteers, students will recognise the need for, and must observe absolute confidentiality

Key definitions and concepts

1. Physical Abuse includes hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of illness in a child, or deliberately causes illness.
2. Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child, which can cause severe adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It can take many forms, for example it can involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, or imposing expectations that are not appropriate for a child's age. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of children, but it can also occur alone.
3. Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, or non-contact acts such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material.

4. Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development. Neglect may also occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once the child is born, it can include a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food or clothing for example, or a lack of response to a child's basic emotional needs.
5. Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.
6. Domestic Violence and Abuse: The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is 'any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.
7. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE): Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse in which a young person is manipulated, or forced, into taking part in a sexual act. This could be part of a seemingly consensual relationship or in return for attention, affection, money, drugs, alcohol or somewhere to stay.

Things to Look for and Think about – Signs of Abuse

1. Physical: Most children acquire cuts and bruises during their normal daily life, but the location of bruises can be indicators of abuse – for example, a bruise on a part of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely can be a worrying sign. Bruises which reflect hand marks, cigarette burns, multiple bruises in clusters or injuries where the explanation does not make sense, are other causes for concern, as are unexplained changes in behaviour, such as fear of parents being approached, aggressive behaviour, temper outbursts, flinching when approached, depression, reluctance to get changed (e.g. in hot weather), withdrawal behaviour.
2. Emotional Abuse can be difficult to measure, but signs can include neurotic behaviour, developmental delay, fear of making mistakes, self-harm, or a fear of their parents being approached regarding their behaviour.
3. In cases of Sexual Abuse it is usually the child's behaviour which causes people to become concerned. In all cases, children who talk about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that any

child who talks to you about this is taken seriously. Behavioural changes which can indicate sexual abuse include fear of being left alone with a specific person/group, saying they have secrets they can't tell anyone about, acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults, not allowed friends, unexplained sources of money, sexual drawing or language, nightmares, sexual knowledge which is beyond a child's age or development, eating problems, self-harm, drugs misuse.

4. Neglect can be difficult to recognise, but physical signs can include constant hunger, loss of weight or constantly underweight, inappropriate dress for the conditions, poor hygiene, constantly dirty or smelly, stealing food from others. Children may also complain of being tired all the time, and talk about being left alone or unsupervised and of having few friends.
5. Bullying is not easy to recognise as it takes a number of forms. A child may encounter bullying attacks that are physical (pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching etc.), verbal (name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing), emotional (excluding, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliation) which can result in depression, low self-esteem, shyness, isolation, threatened or attempted suicide). Signs to be aware of are unexplained cuts and bruises, torn clothes, losing money, being moody and bad tempered, anxiety, being quiet and withdrawn.
6. Domestic Violence and Abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional. Signs that may suggest children are exposed to domestic abuse:

aggressive behaviour

displaying anti-social behaviour

acting out their experiences

suffering from depression or anxiety

not achieving potential due to difficulties at home or disruption of moving to and from refuges.

7. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE):

Signs that may suggest sexual abuse:

vaginal discharge or infection

stomach pains

changes in behaviour

fear of being left with a specific person or group of people

sexual knowledge beyond their developmental level

sexual drawings or language

eating problems

self-harm

acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults.

Safeguarding incident reporting form

Guidance on note taking:

Make brief notes at the time you first become concerned/or were approached, and write these up, using the form below as soon as possible.

Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by the court

Keep a record of anything you are concerned about and the actions you take as a result.

Re. a child or vulnerable adult: injuries, inappropriate behaviour or a change in behaviour, conversations or overheard comments etc Re. another worker: attitude, behaviour

Include the date, time and place of any conversations or observations, and names of anyone else present

Be objective in your recording: include statements and observable things rather than interpretations or assumptions.

Try to record any conversations verbatim, (e.g. if a child uses slang or euphemisms record the actual words used rather than translating them into 'proper words'.

Draw a diagram to record the position of any injury

Record observed behaviour of the individual during disclosure.

Pass your written notes on to the DSO/DSL and/or artistic director, named above to be stored confidentially.

Who else, if anyone, was involved and how?

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What was said by those involved – questions, answers etc?

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Were there any obvious signs e.g. bruising, bleeding, changed behaviour?

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Was the child able to say what happened, if so, how did they describe it?

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Who has been told about it and when?

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Do the parents know?

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This policy will be reviewed by the board at least once bi-annually.

Version No.	Approved By	Approval Date	Main Changes	Review Period
1.0	Board	June 2024	New Officer Appointed	Annually
2.0	Board	August 2025	New DSO appointed	Annually

APPENDIX 1: Licensing and Exemptions/Body of Persons Approval (BOPA)

Section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 restricts persons under 16 taking part in public performances. This includes children who have attained age 16 during the academic year, i.e. are still of compulsory school age.

The law states that that any such person must be licensed if he / she takes part in any performance which :-

- takes place on licensed premises;
- for which there is a charge made for entry;
- is broadcast or may be broadcast;
- for which the child receives a fee for the performance and/or
- for which the child needs to be absent from school.

The rules for licensing contained in the Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014 are detailed. The following provides a brief summary of the way in which the law works, but it is not a substitute for understanding the law, which is complex and strict.

The person in charge of the event must apply to the child's local council for a child performance licence.

The applicant may be the Company, but in the case of events or shows taking place on Company premises which are under the control of hirers (including amateur societies), dance schools, and educational or community organisations; or for professional productions presented by visiting companies, featuring or involving children on stage, the application must be made by the hirer or visiting company responsible for the event. If the hirer or visiting company responsible for the event fails to secure a BOPA certificate or child performance licences, the Company cannot permit the Vulnerable Persons involved to be present on Company premises.

If the child is not paid or does not require any absence from school, the local authority can issue a Body of Persons Approval (BOPA) certificate which covers the show and not the child.

A BOPA is a mechanism that can be used to reduce the strict licensing requirements for project-based work the Company undertakes and in which Vulnerable Persons will participate. A BOPA certificate does not reduce chaperoning responsibilities or the obligation to adhere to the procedures set out in this Policy.

If a child is licensed or a BOPA certificate has been issued, then licensed chaperones will be required for the show or event. Government regulations state that the maximum number of children a chaperone may supervise is twelve. However, after taking into account the ages and gender of the children, the local authority (which issues the licences) may consider that the chaperone can only effectively look after a smaller number.

Performances which are non-profit making, for example, Easter and Summer Youth Projects, may be exempt from the licensing of children who are individually participating. Exemption is at the discretion of the local authority which issues a BOPA certificate.

All terms contained in the BOPA certificate will be fully complied with. In particular, the Company will adhere to the appropriate number of licensed chaperones, taking into account the age, gender and location of the Vulnerable Persons taking part in an activity or performance under a BOPA certificate. In all circumstances:

- Chaperones will be informed of all work location arrangements, provisions and procedures in respect of fire safety, emergency evacuation and first aid;
- Chaperones will ensure that accidents and incidents are reported in accordance with the Company's Accident and Incident Reporting Procedures;
- where it is a BOPA certificate or licensing regulation requirement, all

Vulnerable Persons will be chaperoned by a licensed Chaperone;

- the venue will request and obtain copies of Chaperone licenses; and
- a Chaperone will only be assigned chaperone duties and will not be assigned any other duties or responsibilities which prevent him/her from carrying out his/her Chaperone responsibilities.