



## **Child Protection Policy / Digital Engagement Guidelines**

### **Policy Statement**

In line with overall Council policy, Tin Shed Theatre Co. aims to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults participating in the Arts and will ensure that its workshop co-ordinators and any volunteers commit to good practice which protects children from harm. In doing so it will comply with current legislation and take account of best practice (such as that outlined in the Arts Council of Wales' Children and Young People Protection Policy). In particular, the company recognises that managers, staff and volunteers all have responsibilities under the Children Act 1989.

### **Scope and Focus of this Policy**

This policy will relate to all activities undertaken by Tin Shed Theatre Co. which involve children and young people. In practice, it will relate to activities in schools, community venues, theatres, outdoor sites and in particular to weekly classes and workshops, holiday activities and any intensive weekend schools or residencies. It will also relate to any activities involving Tin Shed staff which run jointly with Councils or external partners and to school and college students on Work Placements.

We have extended this policy to include working with Children, YP and Vulnerable adults online, and use zoom as our primary engagement platform.

### **Procedures to ensure Children & Young People are protected from harm**

#### **Assault and Abuse: Awareness and understanding of the issues**

It is important that every creative facilitator must have an understanding of the issues of assault and abuse as they relate to Children and Young People, and of the need to implement measures to avoid any such instances occurring within a project or programme of work.

Also, due to the relatively informal nature of the relationship between Tutors and children, it is possible that an abused child may confide in a Tutor or "let slip" some important information regarding their welfare. Alternatively, a Tutor may become concerned for a child's welfare by aspects of his/her behaviour or other factors.

Guidance to provide for such eventualities is contained within the Council's main Child Protection document – the **"Newport Inter Agency Child Protection Procedures & Guidance Handbook"**.

The following are two short extracts from the document:

#### **From Part Two, Section 4.3, "Signs and Symptoms"**

Members of the public who express concern about a child should be advised to contact their local Social Services officer or the Police.

The first indication that a child is being abused is not necessarily the presence of a severe injury. Concerns that a child is being physically abused may be aroused by remarks made by a child, his parents or friends, from things overheard or the observation of a child's behaviour or reaction, from an awareness that a family is under stress and may need help with caring for the children or from a number of other factors.



While the situation may not seem initially to be particularly serious it is worth remembering that prompt help to a family in trouble may prevent minor abuse escalating into something more serious. Anyone who is worried that a child may be at risk should discuss their concern with a senior member of staff with knowledge of child abuse and refer the matter to the Social Services as soon as possible. Any professional becoming aware of an urgent situation involving a serious or recent assault on a child should consider informing the Police at the same time as Social Services.

### **From Part Two, Section 5, “Listening to Children”**

All professionals should be aware of the following principles:

- 1 Always ask the child about how specific incidents occurred.
- 2 Listen patiently and evaluate what is being said.
- 3 Where practical use creative techniques to allow a child to communicate.
- 4 Do not confuse listening with investigative interviews.
- 5 Never promise to keep everything you are told secret.
- 6 Always record what the child says.
- 7 Always share with child protection agencies what a child has told you.

Note: Regarding the above extracts, in all cases the Arts Tutor must notify the appropriate permanent member of staff.

### **Recruitment, Selection and Contracting Procedures**

Recruitment, Selection and Contracting Procedures will be applied to all personnel whether paid or unpaid, staff or contractor, where the post involves direct contact with Children and Young People.

In each and every case:

- Applicants must provide evidence of their identity and this process will be recorded
- Applicants must provide details of previous experience, voluntary or paid, of working with children.
- At least two references will be sought, at least one of which will make an informed comment on the applicant's experience of paid or voluntary work with children and young people.
- It will be made clear to applicants that the position is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which means that all convictions however old must be declared. It will be stressed that this process is confidential.
- Applicants will be interviewed and this will be seen as an opportunity to assess the individuals' experience of working with children.
- All paid and voluntary appointments will be conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period.
- Applicants must undergo a Police Check to generate an enhanced DBS certificate as required under criteria set by the Welsh Office and adopted by the Arts Council of Wales in its Children and Young People Protection Policy and Guidelines. This specifies four key reasons why Police Checking is necessary, each of which applies to Newport Youth Arts scheme:
  - (1) There may be occasions involving one to one contact between creative facilitators and workshop members
  - (2) Some Classes will be run by one adult, and no other adult will be present (Where possible the company will ensure that a minimum of 2 adults are present for workshops)
  - (3) There will be regular (weekly) contact between creative facilitators and members



- (4) Some of the children (i.e. from disadvantaged backgrounds or with learning difficulties, for example) may be particularly vulnerable

### **Health and Safety**

All managers, staff, volunteers and contractors must be aware of the company's Health and Safety Policy and issues affecting the operation of performances, classes, workshops and other activities.

A risk assessment for creative engagement physical and digital will be developed and kept under review based on the delivery of classes, workshops and performances by experienced and qualified professional facilitators both at home base, on location or over a digital platform.

Any additional local risk factors, any outdoor activity or additional sessions involving a different format will be assessed separately. There will be a shared responsibility between the company staff, volunteers and contractors to maintain effective communication on Health and Safety issues, so that any additional risk which may arise can be assessed.

Members of staff, tutors and volunteers should encourage safe and authorised use of different areas at the home based and other venues. Unsafe or inappropriate use of rooms or equipment should be actively discouraged.

Smoking may only take place in designated areas.

Illegal drugs may not be brought onto the premises.

Prescribed drugs should be hidden out of sight and reach.

### **Guidelines for good practice in schools**

Some readers may feel that what is being advised in the following is only common sense. Hopefully this is the case! However certain procedures need to be consciously acknowledged before they can enter the realms of "common sense".

#### **1. When arriving at a school or venue**

- Ask if there is a visitors book to be signed and make sure all in your party sign in and out
- Ask for the location of the staff toilets
- Never use children's toilets! Even innocent use can be mis-red.
- Never give a pupil a lift if you are the only adult present
- Inform contact person of any expected visitors i.e. funding representatives, VIP's, press etc
- Ask for details of fire procedure and identify fire exits

#### **2. Conduct Around the School or venue**

- Do not smoke anywhere on the school / venue premises
- Alcohol and recreational drugs should not be taken onto school premises under any circumstances
- The consumption of alcohol or the use of recreational drugs before attending a school is not permitted
- Prescription drugs should be kept hidden and out of the reach of children
- Move around the school quietly- avoid shouting, loud laughter or any unnecessary noise
- Make sure language and conversation is appropriate



- Ensure your actions do not conflict with school rules
- Take responsibility for clearing up completely after your session, take any rubbish with you
- Report any accidents or breakages immediately
- Never work or perform without the presence of teachers
- You are an ambassador for TSTC and a role model for the children: make sure everything about you reflects this

### **3. Physical Contact With Young People**

Possibly the most difficult area of day to day work is in relation to contact initiated by young children (4 to 8 year olds). Often these age groups show a genuine desire to express their gratitude and appreciation to tutors in a physical way, with a hug for example.

There are two problems here:

- The idea of encouraging children to hug/touch unfamiliar people is not advisable.
- Contact itself can be open to the suspicion and scrutiny of other children or adults (parents and teachers).

Again most of the following is common sense:

- Keep physical contact with young people to an appropriate level in relation to the work. Where activities require any physical contact this should be discussed with the teachers in advance.
- Sometimes it is appropriate to ask a pupil if he/she minds physical contact (especially when working with adolescents).
- Never work or perform without the presence of teachers.
- Avoid being left alone with a single child.
- If a child initiates physical contact (eg approaches for a hug) try and deflect them (eg offer them a hand to shake).
- Do not allow a child to sit on your knee, encourage them to sit on the floor beside you.
- If you become involved in a situation with a child that concerns you, inform the school or venue contact and TSTC staff as soon as possible.
- If a child has an accident in school you are not responsible for administering first aid - find a member of staff to deal with it.

### **Updates to our Safeguarding Policy to include online engagement**

**How we connect:** We are using Zoom to connect with groups for workshops and the Spond app to connect with parents and young people. As Tin Shed Theatre Co company members and workshop facilitators are freelance practitioners they will be using their personal computers and telephones to stay in touch. Personal details such as names, numbers and addresses will not be shared with 3rd parties and will only be accessible by Tin Shed Theatre Co facilitators. Please note, for the purpose of this document we refer to a child as being under the age of 11 and a young person to be aged between 11-18yrs. Over 18's are classed as adults.

**How we deliver:** Most, if not all sessions will be delivered in person and managed & delivered by TSTC's freelance or salaried staff.

**How we create Content:** As we generate digital it is important for us to keep children and young peoples images safe. We ask that whilst children and young people are filming content and sharing it, they wear appropriate clothing and avoid using offensive language (unless this has been agreed by the workshop facilitator and is specifically relevant to a piece of work).



Data, images and videos shared to us will be stored on Tin Shed Theatre Co practitioners personal devices but will be contained in a locked, password guarded folder, only accessible by the workshop practitioner. This data will be used for the purposes of making and editing video, images and sound for creative content. After editing and unless needed, the video, image and sound data will be deleted.

**How we share:** We want to be able to tell and share with everyone who will listen how incredible and inspiring the children and young people are that we work with, and to do this we would like to share the digital content that they create. This may also be used in the future to promote the Youth Theatre and our work in developing creative communities. This will be done safely and responsibly through our social media, web and email channels. If you do not wish your child's/young person's image to be shown please make us aware.

The right to share screen will not be granted to any participant of the workshop unless otherwise agreed for the purposes of the activity.

**How we ask for permissions:** We ask that all children under the age of 18 have the permission of a parent or guardian to attend the online sessions with us. We want to make sure that parents are fully aware of our contact with participants, this becomes increasingly difficult when children and young people are so well connected digitally.

**How we define online conduct:** We ask all participants of digital workshops to notify house members that they are engaging in such activity. We ask that participants and household members are dressed appropriately and have the right to end / mute videos and microphones if we feel it necessary for the safety and wellbeing of others. Where the participant is under 18 we ask for a parent or guardian's permission to engage with the digital workshop. Unless otherwise needed we ask that all other background browser windows and apps are closed.

**NAME:** Georgina Harris (Safeguarding Officer)

**CONTACT DETAILS:** 07921366038

**DATE:** 08/01/2025

**DIGITAL SIGNATURE:**

**Signed on behalf of the board of directors by Naomi Cummings**

**NAME:** Naomi Cummings (Board Member for Tin Shed Theatre CIC)

**CONTACT DETAILS:** 07713756713

**DATE:** 08/01/2025

**Digital Signature:**