



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & VULNERABLE ADULTS – SAFEGUARDING POLICY “What You Can Expect From Us”

Wigan Little Theatre is committed to promoting good practice in relation to working with and preventing the abuse of children and vulnerable adults. To help us do this effectively we have implemented Child Protection and Health & Safety policies which are designed to protect members of our Youth Theatre or those who get involved in other productions by performing or volunteering backstage or front-of-house.

In addition there is a set of Youth Theatre Rules which your child needs to observe while s/he is in our care (*See Appendix A at end of this document*).

Child Protection Policy Statement

Wigan Little Theatre is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children and young people in order for them to benefit from and enjoy all the opportunities the Youth Theatre has to offer.

We do this by:

- Recognizing that all children have the right to freedom from abuse.
- Ensuring that our volunteer staff are carefully selected and accept responsibility for helping to prevent the abuse of children in their care.
- Responding swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and providing parents and children with the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have.
- Appointing a nominated Safeguarding Officer who will take specific responsibility for child safety and act as the main point of contact for parents, children and outside agencies.
- Ensuring access to confidential information is restricted to the Safeguarding Officer, Executive Management Team or the appropriate external authorities.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of our Child Protection Policy annually.

Health and Safety Policy Statement

Wigan Little Theatre is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy working environment for all its staff, volunteers, guests, visitors and members while in or working at its premises.

VOLUNTEER STAFF & HELPER GUIDELINES

The following information is designed to help all staff and helpers who come in to contact with young or vulnerable people working at Wigan Little Theatre

Staff and Helpers working at WLT should:-

- Understand their personal responsibility for protecting the children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom they work.
- Take all reasonable steps to protect those people from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment.
- Respond in an appropriate manner to any child who alleges or discloses that abuse is happening.
- Respond to any allegations swiftly in accordance with WLT's Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- Accept responsibility to implement procedures to provide a duty of care for all users, to safeguard their wellbeing and protect them from harm.
- Take appropriate action if there are suggestions or suspicions that a child or young person is being abused.

It is NOT the responsibility of the Staff member or Helper to decide whether or not a child is being abused.

It is possible to reduce situations where allegations of abuse against children may occur.

Staff and Helpers are strongly advised not to:-

- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Take children alone in a car on journeys, however short.
- Take children to their home where they will be alone with them.
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games.
- Engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to any child or young person.

Potential signs of child abuse

Staff and Helpers can help to prevent harm by keeping an eye out for the signs or indicators of harm, and then taking appropriate action early.

Staff and Helpers should pay attention to:

- **Physical signs** of abuse or neglect. This could include bruises, burns, fractures (broken bones) or regular patterns of injuries.
- **Behavioural signs** of abuse or neglect. This could include showing little or no emotion when hurt, seeming to be afraid of their parents, alcohol or drug abuse, or age-inappropriate sexual behaviour.
- If the child talks about being abused.

HOW TO RESPOND

- Make a formal notification to the Safeguarding Officer or WLT Executive Management if you encounter abuse in the course of your time at WLT.
- They will talk to you and make a report or fill out an Incident Report Form (Appendix B).
- You are required to make a report each time you become aware of any further grounds for your belief.
- You don't have to prove that the abuse has occurred.
- It is your principal responsibility to report your belief.

Each situation is different and requires a different response. To consider the most effective response to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing, you may need to gather information and facts. This could include:

- **Make notes** – fill out an Incident Report Form (Appendix B). Date and sign the entry.
- **Continue to observe** – record what you observe on the additional notes section on the overleaf of the incident Report Form, and date and sign each entry.
- **Consult colleagues** – get support and advice from the Safeguarding Officer or Executive Management team. Compare notes and brainstorm possible strategies.
- **Develop action plans based on procedures** – Consult procedures and processes about what to do.
- **Talk to other agencies about helping the family** – collaborate with or engage community health services or local government services (see contacts below)
- **Talk to the child** - do this with respect for the child's or young person's need for privacy and confidentiality.
- **Talk to the parents or carers** - only do this when it will not jeopardise the safety of the child or young person.

Wigan Little Theatre's designated Safeguarding Officer is:

Stacey Vernon, Youth Theatre Leader 07913 972441 or staceyvernon@hotmail.com

You may also contact any member of the Executive Management Committee via the following email – secretary@wiganlittletheatre.co.uk or chairman@wiganlittletheatre.co.uk

Useful local contacts:

Wigan Council Local Authority Designated Officer
(for concerns about professionals and volunteers who work with children)
01942 486034

Wigan Council Children's Duty Team (for concerns around family issues)
01942 828300

Wigan Police: Emergencies only 999, all other calls 101

YOUTH THEATRE CODE OF CONDUCT (Appendix A)

“What We Expect From You”

Each Youth Theatre member will be asked to agree to a code of conduct before they join. WLT reserves the right to suspend or permanently exclude any individual whose behaviour is deemed detrimental to the safety or well being of the group.

- Always register with your workshop leader every time you enter or leave the building.
- Always arrive in plenty of time for each workshop and rehearsal.
- Please let someone know if you will be arriving late or cannot come for any unavoidable reason.
- Always consider other members working in the building. Do not run or shout either inside the rehearsal spaces, in the corridor areas, front or backstage or in the foyer areas of the theatre.
- Do not bring in any valuable items unless you absolutely have to.
- Do not bring bicycles, scooters or skateboards in to the building.
- Always clean away all of your rubbish in the bins provided.
- Always listen to staff members and respect them when they are talking. You should not talk when you have been asked to remain quiet; you may miss some important information.
- Always tell a member of staff if you are involved in an accident.
- Always tell a member of staff if you have, or witness, any problems.
- Always switch your mobile phone off at the start of each session.
- Do not take anything from the building without permission.
- Do not eat or chew gum in workshop sessions.
- Do not smoke anywhere in or around the building.
- Do not swear at anytime in or around the building.
- Do not bully physically or emotionally any member of the theatre.
- Always treat others as you wish to be treated yourself.

Follow these rules and you will create a safe and happy working environment that will allow everybody, including yourself, to have fun.

INCIDENT REPORT FORM (Appendix B)

Name of WLT Member concerned (Child, Young Person or Vulnerable Adult)	
Date of birth	Ethnicity
Religion	First language
Disability	Any special factors
Parent / Carer Name	
Home Address	
Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of somebody else? Give details	
Description of what has prompted the concerns: Dates, times, any specific incidents	
Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?	
Have you spoken to the child/YP/adult? If so, what was said?	
Have you spoken to the parent(s)? If so, what was said?	
Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, give details	
Have you consulted anybody else? Give details	
Your name & position	
To whom reported and date of reporting Any action agreed?	
Signature	Today's date
Contact details	

Use extra sheets if necessary and attach before returning to the Safeguarding Officer