

Our Safeguarding Procedures

Responsibilities of the Society

At the outset of any production or activity involving children, young people or vulnerable adults, Wigan Little Theatre will:

- Identify the person with designated responsibility for safeguarding
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for vulnerable members, including appropriate vetting
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in the case a concern needs to be reported

Suspicion of Abuse

Staff and members of Wigan Little Theatre can help to prevent harm by being aware of signs or indicators of abuse or neglect and taking appropriate action early.

- Every member of the theatre has a duty to report any suspicions of abuse or neglect to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- If an individual sees or suspects abuse or neglect, they must make a note of what was witnessed and their response, in case there is a follow-up in which they are involved.
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of the society, the individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre premises and will not have any unsupervised contact (defined below) with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Disclosure of Abuse

If an individual confides that abuse has taken place:

- The allegation or reported incident must be taken seriously.
- You are to listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the individual to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Avoid leading questions.
- Do not promise to keep it a secret. Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the Designated Safeguarding Officer (contact details below). In the event the allegation is against the Designated Safeguarding Officer, please share the information with a Deputy Safeguarding Officer and the Chairman of the Theatre.
- Make it clear to the individual that you do need to share this information, but that you will only tell the people who need to know and who will be able to help. You do not need the consent of the individual to share the information with the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

- Reassure the individual that they have done the right thing in telling someone.
- Advise the individual of the next steps.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer (or Deputy Safeguarding Officer or Chairman) will liaise with the relevant authorities.
- As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was said, using the individual's own words. Note the date, time and any names that were involved or mentioned, and the action you took in light of the allegation. Make sure you sign and date the record.

Recording

- In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence (as above), the details of the allegation or reported incident will be recorded, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with outside agencies/authorities.
- An accurate note shall be made of the date and time of the incident or disclosure, the parties involved, what was said or done and by whom, any action taken to investigate the matter, any further action taken (e.g. the suspension of an individual) and, where relevant, the reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency. The name of the persons reporting and to whom it was reported should also be noted.
- The record will be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation.

Rights and Confidentiality

- If a complaint is made against a member of Wigan Little Theatre, they will be made aware of their rights and the action that has been taken.
- The alleged abuser, the victim and the individual who suspects abuse have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998. This means their names and details of the incident will only be shared to the Designated Safeguarding Officer and relevant authorities.
- In the event the allegation is serious enough to warrant the suspension of an individual, the name of the alleged abuser will be shared with the Executive Committee once a decision as to whether suspension is necessary has been made and only if it is deemed necessary. The Designated Safeguarding Officer should initially present the case to the Executive Committee without disclosing names.

Managing Sensitive Information

- Wigan Little Theatre has procedures for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images. An individual must give consent (verbal or written) before a photograph containing that individual is shared publicly.

- Wigan Little Theatre's web-based materials and activities are carefully monitored for inappropriate use.
- Wigan Little Theatre will ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of its members, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information.

Accidents

Wigan Little Theatre is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy working environment for all its staff and members.

- All members will be advised of "house rules" regarding health and safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds.
- Members will be advised of clothing and footwear appropriate to the activities they are undertaking.
- If a member is injured whilst in the care of Wigan Little Theatre, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the society's accident book.

Safeguarding Children and Young People

A child is defined as an individual up to the age of 16; a young person is an individual aged between 16 – 18. Wigan Little Theatre recognises the importance of safeguarding all children and young people involved with the society, but also recognises the differing levels of support and supervision required for the two distinct groups.

Parents/Carers

- We believe it is important that there is partnership between parents/carers and Wigan Little Theatre. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the society and to share responsibility for the care of children. All parents/carers will have access to a copy of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

Unsupervised Contact

- Unsupervised Contact is defined as an adult member's contact with a child or young member without the presence of another adult, if the adult member has not had the relevant vetting.
- Wigan Little Theatre will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with a child or young person.
- If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimise the risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area, or in a designated room with the door open. Every effort will be made to notify the parent/carer of

the child/young person and the child/young person themselves before unsupervised contact is to take place.