



PARSNIPS YOUTH THEATRE

Parsnips Youth Theatre – Safeguarding Policy

Our commitment:

All children without exception have a right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs.

Our Policy:

It is the policy of Parsnips Youth Theatre (PYT) to safeguard the welfare of all young people with which it works by protecting them from neglect and physical, sexual and emotional harm.

We are committed to:

Taking the interests and wellbeing of young people into account, in all our considerations and activities.

Respecting the rights, wishes and feelings of the young people with whom we work.

Taking all reasonable practicable steps to protect them from neglect, physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Promoting the welfare of young people and their protection within a position of trust.

All directors or employees of Parsnips Youth Theatre or volunteers who work with PYT are responsible for putting this policy into practice at all times. Each employee, director, teacher, assistant or volunteer has a responsibility to ensure that young people are protected from harm. It is the responsibility of all to ensure that:

Their behaviour is appropriate at all times.

They observe the rules established for the safety and security of young people.

They follow the procedures following suspicion, disclosure or allegation of child abuse (see below).

They recognise the position of trust in which they have been placed.

In every respect, the relationships they form with the young people under their care are appropriate.

It is the policy of PYT that all employees, contractors and volunteers over the age of 16 years, who will work with young people undergo a DBS check unless one is already held by the individual which is less than two years old. It is the responsibility of the individual to contact PYT regarding the status of their current DBS and provide a photocopy of the certificate.

Individuals who are working with PYT on a short-term basis such as photographers for the local paper, work experience students, or those helping with front of house who have not been DBS checked must be overseen by a DBS checked member of staff. 'Overseen' means checked upon regularly but does not mean watched continually. This oversight role must be taken very seriously by the member of staff who takes responsibility.

All allegations or suspicions of abuse, no matter how insignificant they might seem or when/where they occur, must be referred to Claire Bower (nee Parsons) immediately. No information must be withheld or filtered. Young people's welfare is ALWAYS paramount.

A one page "Code of Behaviour" will be issued as a handout for all staff and volunteers, which they must read, sign and return. In the case of staff members being under 18 years old, a parent/guardian must also sign the handout to confirm that the young person has read and understood what is expected of them. A copy of this document will be made available publicly. Verbal training will also be given by the Director of PYT, Claire Bower (nee Parsons).

Coverage:

This policy applies to all activities involving children, young people and vulnerable adults at PYT. It also applies to those staff, students and volunteers who work with children and young people, as part of PYT activities, off the usual sites we work in (ie during festivals, arts weeks, summer schemes or if hired in to run school classes/enrichment).

Technology

Students and adults are reminded, that while phones and tablets are allowed during classes and shows as a means of communication, line-learning (scripts brought in on a tablet) and entertainment, the taking of photographs or videos is strictly prohibited in the backstage areas/changing rooms at all times.

Photographs and videos are also not allowed during classes or shows, except for during a designated time when the process will be monitored by DBS checked members of staff and registered chaperones. We understand the

desire for memories and support it, but are also committed to protecting all the young people in our care from bullying, embarrassment and abuse.

PYT will provide official photographs and videos of the shows which have been obtained in a controlled and responsible way.

Any unauthorised photographs or videos of the students, including, but not restricted to, those being used on social media to bully or embarrass students, staff or volunteers of the company, must be reported to the Director and where appropriate the Council.

Bullying

PYT has a zero tolerance policy to bullying, and any reports of verbal or physical abuse amongst the students, staff, volunteers, directors or assistants must be reported to the Director Claire Bower (nee Parsons). No information should ever be withheld or filtered.

Wherever possible, issues between students that can be resolved in the classes will be dealt with immediately and it will be down to the discretion of the Director of PYT/the teacher in question, to judge the situation and take appropriate action.

No incident, however seemingly small will be ignored or not addressed. The emotional wellbeing of the children in PYT is of utmost importance.

However if the bullying is of a more serious nature the procedure below will be followed.

Procedure when a child makes a disclosure

Initial discussion

If a child makes a disclosure that they have suffered significant harm through abuse or neglect, our initial response should always be limited to listening carefully to what the child says so that we have a clear picture of the child's situation. We should offer reassurance about how we will keep a child safe and explain what action we will take. It is vitally important that we do not promise to keep the information secret. If a child can understand the implications of making a referral to the Local Authority's Children's Services then we should ask the child for their view but we should always be clear that it is our responsibility to take what action is necessary to ensure the child's safety. The steps which should be followed are:

Stay calm.

Listen carefully to what the child is saying. □

Ensure that you find an early opportunity to explain that is likely that you will need to speak to other people – do not promise to keep secrets.

Allow the child to speak at their own pace. Ask questions that will give clarification but do not press the child for answers or ask ANY leading questions.

Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by talking to someone.

Make sure the child understands what you will do next, that you will be speaking to the person in PYT who is responsible for their protection and that you may need to speak to the Local Authority Children's Services.

Record the disclosure using the child's words where possible and noting time and date.

Contact the Director of PYT as soon as possible.

Do not discuss the disclosure with other staff; discussion should be on a 'need to know' basis.

Recording concerns

The member of staff should report the disclosure to the Director (Claire Bower – nee Parsons) immediately or as soon as they are able. The Director may then contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for advice on further action. Having received a disclosure from a child, the member of staff or volunteer should complete an Incident Report Form.

If the Director is implicated in any concerns, the matter should be taken directly to the relevant authorities at the council.

Access to our policy

This safeguarding will be available on our website (www.parsnipsyouththeatre.co.uk) and will be sent to any volunteer, teacher, director or assistant currently working within the company.