



WARSASH THEATRE CLUB

Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

Warsash Theatre Club (hereafter called 'The Club') ensures that both vulnerable adults (VA) and child safety and happiness is our number one priority.

Definitions

For the purposes of The Club and this policy document, the following definitions apply:

Child - a person under eighteen years of age, also referred to as a "**Junior Member**".

Vulnerable Adult - an individual, age eighteen or older, who has the functional, mental, or physical inability to care for themselves and/or is unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Designated Person (DP) - the person in the club who is the point of contact and responsible for addressing and managing any activities and issues in relation to this policy. This role is incorporated into the role of Club Chairman (see "Committee" on The Club website for contact details).

Policy Aims

The aim of The Club's Child & VA Protection Policy is to promote good practice in:

- Providing children and VAs with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of The Club.
- Allowing all members and helpers to make informed and confident responses to specific child and VA protection issues.

The Club believes that:

- The welfare of children & VAs is vital and that safety and welfare come first in all instances.
- All children & VAs have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All members of The Club have a responsibility to report any concerns to the DP.
- The Club has a duty of care to safeguard all children & VAs involved in our activities from harm.

Promoting Good Practice

The Club encourages the following:

- Working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment, i.e. no secrets).
- Treating all children/VAs equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children and VAs (e.g. it is NOT appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children & VAs to share in the decision-making process.
- Making performing fun and enjoyable, and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that any form of manual/physical activity required, is carried out openly with appropriate caution and care.
- Ensuring that all material (e.g; scripts/scene content) is age appropriate and never makes a child or VA feel uncomfortable or concerned.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback, rather than negative criticism.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Informing parents or legal guardians if any child is taken ill or injured during club activities.
- Never offering or allowing children/VAs to be transported home or to events in other members' cars without the permission of parents/guardians.

The following practices are not acceptable:

No one involved with The Club should ever:

- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.

Audio and video recording and the taking of photographs

While The Club allows audio and video recordings and photographs, where appropriate (see The Club's Data Protection Policy), additional conditions apply in the case of Junior Members:

- The Club secures written consent from all junior members' parents or legal guardians through its Membership Registration Form.
- All involved members, parents and legal guardians should be aware that if consent is withdrawn, it may not be possible to delete images that have already been shared or published.
- The club reduces the risk of images being copied and used inappropriately by:
 - only using images of junior members in appropriate clothing (accepting this may be production costume).
 - using images that positively reflect junior members' involvement in the relevant club activity, e.g. productions.
- Junior members are not permitted to make audio or video recordings or to take photographs unless authorised by an adult member.

Responding to suspicions or allegations of abuse

It is not the responsibility of anyone involved with The Club to take responsibility or to decide whether or not child and / or VA abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns. This should, in the first instance, be to notify the DP, who will immediately start investigation and action as appropriate. The Club assures all members that it will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague/volunteer is, or may be, abusing a child or VA. When there is a complaint against such a person The Club will instigate a full investigation involving all impacted parties, including the relevant parent(s) / legal guardian(s).

Bullying

The Club:

- has a zero- tolerance policy to bullying.
- takes all signs of bullying very seriously.
- encourages all children to speak and share any concerns.

Anyone suspecting, discovering or being notified of any kind of bullying in any shape or form must notify the DP immediately so that investigation and appropriate action can be taken. The priority is to ensure the victim is safe and, if appropriate, to reassure the victim that we will help them. However, do not promise not to tell anyone else. A record should be kept of what is said (e.g; what happened by whom, when etc).

This policy will be reviewed at least every 2 years.