



# *Policy Document*

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# CHILD PROTECTION

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*Southern Knights Performing Arts  
Brighton & Hove, East Sussex*

**Registered Charity Number: 294202**

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## **Child Protection Mission Statement**

**Southern Knights Performing Arts are committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children and young people.**

We do this by:

- Recognising that any child / young person under the age of 18 years is entitled to the protection afforded by the contents of this document.
- Acknowledging that the welfare of the child / young person is paramount.
- Recognising that all children / young people, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, racial origin, sexual orientation, language, or religious belief, have the right to protection from physical, mental, sexual or emotional abuse.
- Ensuring that our volunteers and staff are carefully selected and that they accept responsibility for helping to prevent the abuse of children / young people in their care.
- Responding swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and providing parents and children / young people with the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have. Any suspicions or allegations of abuse will not be ignored.
- Appointing a Child Protection Officer who will take specific responsibility for child protection matters and who will act as the main point of contact for children / young people, parents and outside agencies.
- Ensuring access to confidential information is restricted to the Child Protection Officer or the appropriate external authorities.
- Reviewing annually the effectiveness of our Child Protection Policy and this document.

**Our Child Protection Officer is:  
Alan Thompson  
Chairman of Charity Trustees  
Tel: 07774 453385**

## **Legislation**

There is a considerable body of legislation designed to ensure that children and young people are protected and it is important to understand that everyone is responsible for the safety of children and young people. The main acts include: -

### **Children Act 1989**

The intention of the Children Act is to protect children and ensure that their welfare and development is paramount and promoted. The Act gives a local authorities responsibility for ensuring that this happens by working together with all the relevant agencies. The Act says that only the Police, Social Services, and the NSPCC have the legal right and responsibility to investigate concerns about child abuse.

### **The Children (Protection from Offenders) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 1997**

These regulations came into force in October 1997. They are mainly concerned with preventing the approval of people as foster carers or adoptive parents where either they or any member of their household over the age of 18 is known to have been convicted of, or cautioned for, relevant offences. These are regulations also apply to child minding, private fostering and residential care.

### **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The United Nations Convention sets out of the rights of all children, including their right to be protected from harm.

### **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**

This Act allows people not to declare convictions to employers. People who are involved in situations where they have sustained or prolonged access to children are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders legislation. This means that prospective employers, self-employed workers and volunteers must declare all criminal convictions relating to children, however long ago; and that these will be taken into account when deciding on their suitability for working with children.

### **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**

The Health and Safety at Work Act gives all organisations a legal responsibility to prevent injuries and ill-health to employees and others, including members of the public. Much of this responsibility is delegated to managers who have control of work activities but the legislation also provides employees with an obligation to take reasonable care of themselves and others.

**The welfare of the child is paramount and all reasonable steps must be taken to prevent them from harm.**

## **Guidelines for Safeguarding Children's Welfare**

**Please read the following guidelines carefully – they will help you to understand child abuse.**

### **Forms of child abuse**

### **What to look for**

#### **Sexual abuse**

Both boys and girls can be sexually abused in the following ways: -

- full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex and fondling
- showing children pornographic books and videos
- asking children to take part in making videos or taking pornographic photographs.

- pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital area
- stomach pains
- discomfort when walking
- unexplained sources of money
- inappropriate drawings, language or behaviour
- aggressive, withdrawn behaviour or fear of one person.

#### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse can be in the form of injuries sustained through hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting, or burning.

*In certain situations, abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training exceeds that capacity of the child's body.*

- unexplained or untreated injuries
- injuries on unlikely parts of the body
- cigarette burns, bite or belt marks, scalds
- fear of parents being contacted, going home or receiving medical advice
- flinching when touched
- refusal to discuss injury
- covering arms and legs.

#### **Neglect**

Where adults: -

- fail to meet a child's basic physical needs e.g. for food, warmth and clothing
- constantly leaves children alone or unsupervised
- fails or refuses to give children love, affection or attention.

- poor personal hygiene
- constantly hungry
- inappropriate clothing or dress
- constantly tired
- lonely, no friends
- underweight
- no parental support or interest
- dishevelled appearance.

*Neglect might also occur during organised activities if young people are placed in an unsafe environment, are exposed to extreme weather conditions, or where they are at risk of being injured.*

#### **Emotional abuse**

This form of abuse includes: -

- persistent lack of love or affection
- frequently shouting at children
- taunting children
- over protection which can lead to poor social skills.

- over-reaction to mistakes
- sudden speech disorders
- extremes of emotions
- self-mutilation.

*Emotional abuse may include situations where parents, instructors or organisers subject children to constant criticism, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations.*

**PLEASE NOTE THESE PARTICULAR REFERENCES WHICH CAN APPLY TO OUR OWN ACTIVITY**

## **What to do if the child or young person tells about abuse**

- Most importantly, you should listen attentively and let him/her know it was right to tell someone about their worries.
- Stay calm and make sure that the child feels safe and knows that he/she is not to blame for what has happened.
- Explain that you will have to tell someone else about the abuse if it is to stop.
- Try to establish the basic facts but leave detailed questioning to the professionals.
- Make a note of what the child said and the date and time of your conversation.
- Don't act without seeking help from the Child Protection Officer, or from Social Services or the Police, who must be informed about all suspected cases of child abuse.
- Seek advice before telling parents or carers about the conversation or let any person suspected of abuse know what's happened - you could be putting the child in greater jeopardy by doing so.
- Don't worry that you may be making things worse by reporting your concerns - few things are worse than allowing child abuse to continue. Many children are devastated by the experience of abuse and, in the most severe cases, may be seriously harmed.

## **Responding to signs of abuse advice sheet**

It is not the responsibility of everyone working with children to decide if child abuse is taking place. It is, however, their responsibility to act on any concerns and to safeguard children in order to allow the appropriate agencies to take any necessary action.

Social Services and the Police have a legal responsibility to safeguard the welfare of a child and have a duty to investigate any potential case of child abuse.

When concerns about the safety of a child arise the following action should be taken:

If a volunteer has concerns that a child is being abuse they must report their concerns to the Child Protection Officer.

The Child Protection Officer will decide whether to involve Social Services. If the signs are insufficient to warrant reporting the incident a note should be made in an incident book held by the person in charge; recording date, times, nature of injury or behaviour and child's explanation of what had happened. The notes should be based on fact only and should not refer to child abuse.

It is the responsibility of the Child Protection Officer to inform Social Services. In their absence, the volunteer who was first concerned should contact Social Services. If the Child Protection Officer decides not report the incident but the volunteer continues to be seriously concerned they may decide to contact Social Services in their own right.

Out of office hours it may be difficult to contact Social Services, in these circumstances where it is necessary to avoid delay contact the Police.

Parents are the most important people in a child's life and should be involved in decisions relating to their child. Where Social Services are to be involved, decide with them how parents or carers are to be informed.

**All concerns regarding child abuse should be treated as a priority and acted upon immediately.**

## **Recording information**

The Child Protection Officer should maintain a confidential record book in which staff or volunteers can log details of any incidents and circumstances that have caused them concern. It is important that all concerns should be recorded whether Social Services are to be involved or not.

The following information should be recorded: -

Name and address of child

Age and date of birth

Name and address of adults involved if known

Date and time of alleged incident

Nature of injury or behaviour

If the child arrived with an injury, child's explanation of what happened in their own words

Adult's explanation of what happened

Date and time of the record

Any questions that were asked

Signature of person recording the incident

## **Local Professional Contacts List**

The Sussex Police unit with responsibility for child protection is contactable via -

**Email:** [contact.centre@sussex.pnn.police.uk](mailto:contact.centre@sussex.pnn.police.uk)

**Telephone:** From within the UK call **101** (calls cost a flat rate of 15p per call)

**Local call:** You can also dial **01273 470 101**

Brighton & Hove Social Services Child Protection team, who can also provide general advice and support, can be contacted via:

Whitehawk Community Hub  
179A Whitehawk Road  
Brighton BN2 5FL  
Telephone (01273) 295920

**Our Child Protection Officer is:**  
**Alan Thompson**  
**Chairman of Charity Trustees**  
**Tel: 07774 453385**

Southern Knights Performing Arts subscribes to The Safe Network



The **Safe Network** is jointly managed by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and Children England, funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

NSPCC registered charity numbers 216401 and SC037717. Children England charity registration number 1044239, company registration number 3011053. [www.safenetwork.org.uk](http://www.safenetwork.org.uk)

**Children  
England**

  
child accident  
prevention trust

**NSPCC**   
Cruelty to children must stop. **FULL STOP.**

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## **Volunteer and Staff Support Sheet**

### **The child safety code for staff and volunteers**

#### **Do:**

Treat all young people with respect and take notice of their reactions to your tone of voice and manner.

Always seek the parents and child's consent if he/she is very young or disabled and needs help to go to the toilet.

Remember that it is okay to touch children in a way which is not intrusive or disturbing or threatening.

Make sure that any allegations or suspicions are recorded and acted upon.

#### **Do not:**

Engage in rough physical games including horseplay.

Touch a child in an intrusive or sexual manner.

Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even as a joke.

Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as a going to the toilet or changing clothes.

#### **Try to avoid:**

Spending too much time alone with the child.

Giving a child a lift in your car.

Taking a child to your home.

**If some of these situations are unavoidable, try to get parental permission first. If this isn't possible make sure you let the parents know what happened as soon as you can.**

**Remember : The welfare of the child is paramount and all reasonable steps must be taken to prevent them from harm.**

**Are you concerned about a child?**

**> NSPCC 0808 800 5000 text 88858**

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## **Volunteers and Staff Declaration**

I understand the nature of my role and responsibilities at:

*Southern Knight Performing Arts*

I confirm that I have received a copy of the club's child protection policy including the "*Volunteers and Staff Support Sheet*" and the "*Guidelines For Safeguarding Children's Welfare*" and am committed to the child protection policy of this organisation.

I have read and understood the "*Guidelines For Safeguarding Children's Welfare*" and I accept my responsibility to care for the children and young people with whom I come into contact. I can confirm that there is no reason why I should not have unsupervised access or otherwise to children or young people whilst working within the organisation.

I have declared all my previous convictions (subject to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) to the organisation. There are no criminal convictions, civil findings, or injunctions relevant to this declaration, and I am willing for a criminal conviction check to be carried out. I understand that failure to disclose, or purposely withhold such information will lead to my instant dismissal from the organisation and in some circumstances may lead to criminal prosecution being taken against me.

Signature

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Name (print)

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Date

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