

Market Drayton Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society

SAFEGUARDING POLICY (Children & Vulnerable Adults)

Policy

Market Drayton Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society (MDAODS) recognizes its duty of care under the law.

The society recognizes that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. The society is committed to practice which protects children and vulnerable adults from harm. All members of the society are encouraged to accept and recognize their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children and vulnerable adults harm.

The society believes that:

- The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount.
- All children and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All members of the society should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

The society will endeavour to ensure that:

- All children and vulnerable adults will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.
- The duty of care to children and vulnerable adults will always be put first.
- A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers the children and vulnerable adults to share in the decision-making process.
- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism.
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned.
- All adult members of the society provide a positive role model for dealing with other people.
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
- It will keep up-to-date with health & safety legislation.
- It will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children.
- It will undertake relevant development and training.

- It will hold a register of every child and vulnerable adult involved with the society and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

The society has child and vulnerable adult protection procedures which accompany this policy. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the society's Anti-Bullying Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Health & Safety Policy and GDPR Policy

The society has dedicated child and vulnerable adult Safeguarding Officers, who are in charge of ensuring that the child/vulnerable adult safeguarding policy is adhered to:

Lisa Savill
Kate Arbon

Procedures

Responsibilities of the Society

At the outset of any production involving children and/or vulnerable adults the society will:

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process.
- Identify at the outset the person with designated responsibility for safeguarding.
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children and/or vulnerable adults.
- Ensure that children and/or vulnerable adults are supervised at all times.
- Produce a rehearsal schedule with dates and times and will notify parents/carers of any changes to this.
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case it needs to report a concern.

Parents

- The society believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents/carers and the society. Parents/carers are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the society and to share responsibility for the care of children and/or vulnerable adults. All parents/carers will be given a copy the society's Safeguarding For Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and procedures.
- All parents/carers have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children/vulnerable adults after rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of the society to take children/vulnerable adults home.

Unsupervised Contact

- The society will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children/vulnerable adults
- If possible there will always be two adults in the room when working with children/vulnerable adults.
- If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimize risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area or in a designated room with a door open.

Physical Contact

- All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children/vulnerable adults.
- Adults will only touch children/vulnerable adults when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity.
- Adults will seek the consent of the child/vulnerable adult prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

Managing sensitive information

- The society has a policy and procedures for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images. (see GDPR Policy)
- Permission will be sought from the parents/carers for use of photographic material featuring children/vulnerable adults for promotional or other purposes.
- The society's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.
- The society will ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of its members, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such as criminal record disclosures. (see GDPR Policy)

Suspicion of abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child/vulnerable adult while in the care of the society, please make this known to the person with responsibility for safeguarding. If you suspect that the person with responsibility for safeguarding is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the Chair or other Committee member if necessary.
- Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed as well as your response, in case there is follow-up in which you are involved.
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of the society, chaperone, venue staff etc., that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms etc. and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children/vulnerable adults in the production.

Disclosure of abuse

If a child/vulnerable adult confides in you that abuse has taken place:

- Remain calm and in control but do not delay taking action.
- Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child/vulnerable adult to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer (i.e. do not ask leading questions)
- Don't promise to keep it a secret.
- Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the person with responsibility for safeguarding.
- Make it clear to the child/vulnerable adult that you will need to share this information with others.
- Make it clear that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help.
- Reassure the child/vulnerable adult that 'they did the right thing' in telling someone.
- Tell the child/vulnerable adult what you are going to do next.
- Speak immediately to the person with responsibility for safeguarding. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually social services or the police.
- As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was said, using the child's/vulnerable adult's own words. Note the date, time, any names that were involved or mentioned, and who you gave the information to. Make sure you sign and date your record and inform the Safeguarding or Deputy Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

Recording

- In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, the details of an allegation or reported incident must be recorded.
- 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. suspension of an individual, where relevant, the reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, and the name of the persons reporting and to whom it was reported.
- The record will be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation.

Rights & Confidentiality

- If a complaint is made against a member of the society he or she will be made aware of his rights under the society's disciplinary procedures.
- No matter how you may feel about the accusation, both the alleged abuser and the child/vulnerable adult who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998. Remember also that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released.

- In criminal law the Crown or other prosecuting authority has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Accidents

- To avoid accidents, chaperones and children/vulnerable adults will be advised of “house rules” regarding health and safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds. Children/vulnerable adults will be advised of the clothing and footwear appropriate to the work that will be undertaken.
- If a child/vulnerable adult is injured while in the care of the society, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the society’s accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for safeguarding.
- If a child/vulnerable adult joins the production with an obvious physical injury a record of this will be made in the accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for safeguarding. This record can be useful if a formal allegation is made later and will also be a record that the child/vulnerable adult did not sustain the injury while participating in the production.

Criminal Record Disclosures

- The society will inform any individual of the necessary procedures and the level of disclosure required in order to obtain criminal record disclosures for chaperones or other personnel. A Standard disclosure will apply for anyone with supervised access to children/vulnerable adults. An Enhanced disclosure will be required for anyone with unsupervised access.
- The society will have a written code of practice for the handling of disclosure information. (see GDPR Policy)
- The society will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

Chaperones

- Chaperones will be appointed by the society for the care of children/vulnerable adults during the production process. By law the chaperone is acting in loco parentis and should exercise the care which a good parent/carer might be reasonably expected to give to a child/vulnerable adult. The maximum number of children/vulnerable adults in the chaperone’s care shall not exceed 12.
- Potential chaperones should be members of the society or parents/guardians/carers of child/vulnerable adult members.
- They will register with Shropshire Council and undertake the relevant Child Protection Training.
- If society linked chaperones are not available, the society may obtain the services of Shropshire Council registered chaperones.
- Chaperones will be made aware of the society’s Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

- Chaperones will not usually have unsupervised access to children/vulnerable adults in their care.
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the safeguarding officer.
- If a chaperone considers that a child/vulnerable adult is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the producer and if necessary the safeguarding officer.
- Under the Dangerous Performances Act no child/vulnerable adult is permitted to do anything which may endanger life or limb. This could include working on wires or heavy lifting. Chaperones should tell the producer to cease using children/vulnerable adults in this way and should contact the local authority.
- During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children/vulnerable adults at the stage door and signing them into the building.
- Children will be kept together at all times except when using separate dressing rooms.
- Chaperones will be aware of where the children/vulnerable adults are at all times.
- Children/vulnerable adults are not to leave the theatre or rehearsal rooms unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parent/guardian/carer
- Children/vulnerable adults will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
- Children/vulnerable adults will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms.
- Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures in the venue and will ensure that children/vulnerable adults in their care do not place themselves and others in danger.
- Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by the society.
- Chaperones should have written arrangements for children/vulnerable adults after performances. If someone different is to collect the child, a telephone call should be made to the parent/guardian/carer to confirm the arrangements.
- Children/vulnerable adults should be signed out when leaving and a record made of the person collecting.
- If a parent/guardian/carer has not collected the child/vulnerable adult, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child until the parent/guardian/carer makes suitable alternative arrangements for collection by them or their appointed representative.

Whistleblowing

- If a society member needs to pass on information concerning wrongdoing, they should contact our chair:
Matt Baker tel: 07972 580049
- The wrongdoing will typically (although not necessarily) be something they have witnessed at the society. To be covered by whistleblowing law someone who makes a disclosure must reasonably believe two things. The first is that

they are acting in the public interest. This means in particular that personal grievances and complaints are not usually covered by whistleblowing law. The second thing must be a reasonable belief that the disclosure tends to show past, present or likely future wrongdoing falling into one or more of the following categories:

- criminal offences (this may include, for example, types of financial impropriety such as fraud)
- failure to comply with an obligation set out in law
- miscarriages of justice
- endangering of someone's health and safety • damage to the environment
- covering up wrongdoing in the above categories

(Ref: [Whistleblowing: Guidance for Employers and Code of Practice \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/115222/whistleblowing-guidance-for-employers-and-code-of-practice.pdf))

MDAODS is committed to regular review of its policies and procedures to ensure they continue to promote the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

Adopted: 09/03/2024

Signed:

Colin Whitfield (Chair of Trustees)