



**Stourbridge Amateur
Operatic Society**

Founded 1909

Registered Charity number: 511436

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Stourbridge Amateur Operatic Youth Society

CHILD PROTECTION and SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Stourbridge Operatic recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014 (Copy attached), the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 (in Scotland change to Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003) and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021.

The society recognises 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 from harm. All members of the society accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm. The society keeps up to date with safeguarding addendums to policies. The Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL) and Deputy Safeguard Lead complete bi-annual Level 2 training. All chaperones are licenced by the local authority that they live in.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Checking all chaperones are licenced and have completed their level 1 safeguarding training and keeps a record for each show of their expiry dates.
- Liaising with Safeguarding leads of each authority re performance licences and working regulations for children
- Update the Society's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy annually.
- Completing the licence for the society
- Being safer recruitment trained. The DLS completes all safer recruitment and vetting of all DBS supervising adults and checking the DBS for any declarations. The DSL will seek advice from the LA Safeguarding lead if necessary. Only supervising adults that are known to the society are used and the DSL seeks verification of their current workplace.
- Devising the chaperone/supervising adult rota and ensuring ratio is correct for each group of young performers.
- Setting up the dressing room areas to ensure that all young performers re safeguarded.
- Keeping accurate records: emergency contacts, medical information and care plans, media consent, microphone consent, signing in and out sheets. These records will be kept for up to 6 months after the end of the performance, then shredded securely.
- Liaise with parents and young performers re safeguarding.
- Hold a safeguarding briefing for all chaperones and supervising adults before each performance.

- Hold a safeguarding briefing for all young performers in tech week before the dress rehearsal.
- Display safeguarding leaflets and posters throughout the venue signposting what to do in the event of a disclosure or witnessing an incident/ having a concern (including low-level) and who to report it to.
- Create and update a chaperone and supervising adult rota for each performance. In case of a BOPA licence, ensure that supervising adults are not left alone with young performers at any time.
- Be the point of contact for any chaperone, supervising adult, member, volunteer or performer to report concerns to
- Be responsible for reporting any concerns to Children's Services

The society believes that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse. All performers are protected under the Equalities Act 2010.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. Low level concerns are reported and not dismissed. These are reported to the named Designated Safeguard Lead or Deputy Safeguard Lead.
- All members and employees of the society should be clear on how to respond appropriately. Safeguarding leaflets are shared with all members prior to each show an area available in the venue throughout the show. Safeguarding posters are displayed in all key areas of the venue.

The society will ensure that:

- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.
- The duty of care to children will always be put first.
- A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers the children 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 face to face or online, including child-on child abuse.
- 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 involved with the society and will retain contact names and numbers (at least two) close at hand in case of emergencies.

The society has child protection procedures which accompany this policy.

The society has a Designated Safeguard Lead, who is in charge of ensuring that the child protection policy and procedures are adhered to.

That person's name is Caz Brasnell she can be contacted on 07305 78261 or cazbrase@blueyonder.co.uk

This policy will be regularly monitored by the Executive Committee of the society and will be subject to annual review.

Date: 19/05/2024

CHILD PROTECTION and SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

Responsibilities of the Society

At the outset of any production involving children the society will:

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process.
- Identify at the outset the person with designated responsibility for child protection and safeguarding.
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting, (all chaperones must be approved by the Local Authority (LA) and the child(ren) should only ever be in the care of an approved chaperone or supervising adult with an enhanced DBS).
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times.
- 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 and the society. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the society and to share responsibility for the care of children. All parents will be given a copy of the society's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedures.
- All parents have the responsibility to sign in, sign out and collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of the society to take children home.

Unsupervised Contact

- The society will ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children other than Chaperones who are approved by the LA, or supervising adults approved by the DSL.
- If possible there will always be two adults in the room when working with children. One of these adults must be a chaperone approved by the LA
- Unsupervised contact must be avoided, Chaperones and supervising adults must be in attendance.
- Individuals will not be allowed unsupervised contact with children, Chaperones and supervising adults must be in attendance.

Physical Contact

- All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.
- Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity. There **must** always be an approved chaperone present.
- Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear e.g. putting on and removal of microphones

Managing sensitive information

- The society has a policy and procedures for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images of children.
- Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children 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.

Suspicion of abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of the society, please make this known to the Designated Safeguard Lead or Deputy Safeguard Lead. If you suspect that the Designated Safeguard Lead is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the Chairperson who may report this to the LA Safeguard Lead
- 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 may be suspended immediately. The Designated Safeguard Lead will refer this to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) for further advice until the investigation is concluded. An individual risk assessment will be undertaken which may result in the alleged individual to be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms etc. and may not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production.

Disclosure of abuse

If a child 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 to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification: what/ who/when. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- **Do not promise to keep it a secret/ confidentiality.** Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the Designated Safeguard Lead. Make it clear to the child 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 that 'they did the right thing' in telling someone.
- Tell the child what you are going to do next.
- Speak immediately with The Designated Safeguard Lead. 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 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.

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 will be

recorded, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a statutory child protection agency.

- 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 eg. 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 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, supervising adults and children will be advised of "house rules" regarding health and safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds. Children will be advised of the clothing and footwear appropriate to the work that will be undertaken.
- If a child 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 countersigned by the person with responsibility for child protection. The accident must also be reported to the Duty Manager at the said venue and recorded in their accident/injury book. This should also be reported to the LA, Regulation 15 (5). This is a Chaperone/ supervising adult responsibility. This includes if a child becomes ill, parents will be contacted to collect. This includes if a child is ill before the production/ rehearsal- parents will contact the Production Secretary who make note of this and inform the Production Team/ Stage Manager.
- If a child joins the production with an obvious physical injury a record of this will be made in the accident book. This record will be countersigned by the person with responsibility for child protection. This record can be useful if a formal allegation is made later and will also be a record that the child did not sustain the injury while participating in the production.

Criminal Record Disclosures

- The society must obtain criminal record disclosures for chaperones, it will inform the individual of the necessary procedures and the enhanced disclosure required.
- The society will have a written code of practice for the handling of disclosure information.
- The society will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

Chaperones and Supervising Adults

- Chaperones and Supervising Adults will be appointed by the society for the care of children during the production process. By law the chaperone and supervising adult is acting in loco parentis and should exercise the care which a good parent might be

reasonably expected to give to a child. The maximum number of children in the chaperone's/ adult's care shall not exceed 12.

- Chaperones will have been through the Disclosure and Checking Barring service with their Local authority, safeguard Level 1 training and references prior to their chaperone licence being approved. Chaperones must show their updated badge with licence number and expiry date to the Designated Safeguard Lead prior to chaperone duties commencing.
- Supervising Adults will have an enhanced DBS, usually through their work or voluntary work for another society. The DSL will check this prior to the supervising adult volunteers for the society. If there are any declarations on the DBS this will be discussed with the adult and further advice sought from the LA Safeguard Lead. This society only accepts supervising adults that are known to the company, DSL or Deputy DSL.
- Chaperones and supervising adults will be made aware of the society's Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- Where chaperones and supervising adults are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the Designated Safeguard Lead who will inform the Chairperson, Stage Manager and Production Team. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily, the DSL should consider not allowing the child to continue. If these concerns have not been addressed chaperones/ supervising adults should report this and the actions, they have taken to the LA.
- If a chaperone or supervising adult considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone/ supervising adult must inform the Director and Stage Manager and not allow the child to continue. Parents/ Carers will be informed to collect their child immediately. In the case of a serious injury/ illness, first aid will be sought, and an ambulance called if necessary.
- Under the Dangerous Performances Act, no child of compulsory school age is permitted to do anything which may endanger life or limb. This could include working on wires or heavy lifting. In the case of wires/ flying, express permission must be sought from the parent/ carer with a full risk assessment completed and signed off by the Stage Manager, Production Team and Chairperson. In the event where this has not been sought and signed off, chaperones/ supervising adults should tell the Director to cease using children in this way and should report this to the DSL who will contact the LA Safeguard Lead.
- During performances, chaperones/ supervising adults will be responsible for meeting children 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/ supervising adults will be aware of where the children are at all times.
- Children are not to leave the dressing rooms or theatre unsupervised by chaperones/ supervising adults unless in the company of their parents.
- Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
- Chaperones/ supervising adults should be aware of the safety arrangements, including use of phones in the dressing rooms and online safety, and first aid procedures in the venue and will ensure that children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger.
- Chaperones/ supervising adults should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by the society.
- Chaperones/ supervising adults should examine accident books each day. If an accident has occurred, the Production Team are not allowed to use that child until a medically qualified opinion has been obtained (not just the word of the parent or child).

- Chaperones/ supervising adults should have written arrangements for the collection of children after performances. If someone different is to collect the child, the parent/ carer should have informed the chaperone/ supervising adult on duty, who will make a note of this. Where chaperones/ supervising adults were not made aware prior to collection, a telephone call should be made to the parent/ carer to confirm the arrangements.
- Children must be signed out when leaving and a record made of the person collecting (signature and time stamp).
- If a parent/ carer has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone/ supervising adults to stay with that child until they are collected.
- Chaperones/ supervising adults must be informed of the Late Collection Procedures: stay with the child, remain in contact with the parent/ carer until the child is collected. Chaperones/ supervising adults do not have permission to take the child home unless they are listed as one of their emergency contacts/ approved collector signed by the parent/ carer.
- If anyone from Stourbridge Amateur Operatic Youth Society has any concerns about a child they should contact:

Child protection referrals

Dudley Multi Agency Referral Form

The Dudley Multi Agency Referral Form is an online form on the Dudley Children's Portal for referring safeguarding concerns regarding children and young people.

Please complete the form online via the [Dudley Children's Portal site](#) to send it to the single point of access team.

For children

0300 555 0050

For adults

0300 555 0055

Out of office hours

0300 555 8574 or in an emergency call 999

Allegations against members:

All statutory partner agencies are required to report all allegations to the LADO within one working day. All referrals should be sent to allegations@dudley.gov.uk .

In Dudley, Yvonne Nelson-Brown and Valerie Wilmot are responsible for managing allegations, they report to Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership.

For advice and information about allegations against staff and volunteers please contact safeguarding:

- For Yvonne Nelson-Brown – 01384 813110
- For Valerie Wilmot – 01384 813164
- General line: 01384 813061