

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The Quince Players Amateur Dramatic Society (“the Society”) recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Child (Performances) Regulations 1968, the Protection of Children Act 1999 Childrens Act 1989, Children Act 2004, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Children and Families Act 2014 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

The Society recognises that abuse can take many forms, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. The Society is committed to practice that protects children from harm. All members of the Society accept their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues that cause children harm.

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. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise that some children are additionally vulnerable and may face barriers including, but not exclusively, bullying and communication issues.
- 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 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.
- 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 a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies. The Society has child protection procedures that accompany this policy.

The Society has a dedicated Designated Safeguarding Officer who is in charge of ensuring that the safeguarding policy and child protection procedures are adhered to. The current Officer is **Ruth Matthews** and she can be contacted by email at **ruthmatthews3@gmail.com**.

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

Date of next review: July 2023

CHILD PROTECTION 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.
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting (if necessary in consultation with the local education authority).
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times.
- Know how to contact the local authority social services, in case it needs to report a concern: RBWM LADO (LA Designated Officer) contact – Tel: 01628 683 202. Secure email to: lado@rbwm.gcsx.gov.uk. Emergency Duty Service (out of hours) - Tel: 01344 786 543.

Parents

- The Society believes it is important to have 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. A copy of the Society's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures will be made available to parents and are posted on the website: www.quinceplayers.com.
- Parents have responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children to and from rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of the Society to take children home.

Unsupervised Contact

The Society will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children. If possible there will always be two adults in the room when working with children. If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimise 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. Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity. Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

Managing Sensitive Information

- The Society has a policy and procedure 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 person with responsibility for child protection. If you suspect that the person with responsibility for child protection is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the Chairman.
- 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 Society until a decision is made by the LADO.

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 its own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Do not ask questions that suggest a particular answer. Do not promise to keep it a secret. 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 to the person with responsibility for child protection. 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 whom 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. 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 further action taken e.g. suspension of an individual, 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 their 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 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.
- 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

- If the Society believes it is in its best interests to obtain criminal record disclosures for chaperones or other personnel, it will inform the individual of the necessary procedures and the level of disclosure required. 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.
- 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 during the production process. By law the chaperone 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 care shall not exceed 12.
- Potential chaperones will be required to supply photographic proof of identity (e.g. passport, driving licence) and two references from individuals with knowledge of their previous work with children, unless already well known to the Society. They will also be asked to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children.
- Chaperones will be made aware of the Society's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Chaperones will not usually have unsupervised access to children in their care. If unsupervised access is unavoidable, or if this is a requirement of the local authority, a criminal record disclosure will be sought.
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the Stage Manager or Director. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily, the chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue.
- If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the Director and not allow the child to continue.
- 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. Chaperones should tell the producer to cease using children in this way and should contact the local authority.
- During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the stage door and signing them into the building.
- Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times.
- Children are not to leave the theatre unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents.
- Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
- Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures in the venue, and will ensure that children 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 examine accident books each day. If an accident has occurred, the Director is not allowed to use that child until a medically qualified opinion has been obtained (not just the word of the parent or child).
- Chaperones should have written arrangements for children after performances. If someone different is to collect the child, a telephone call will be made to the parent to confirm the arrangements.
- Children should be signed out when leaving and a record made of the person collecting.
- If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child or make arrangements to take them home.