

## The South Devon Players Overall Safeguarding Policy

The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company (SDP) acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. All persons involved in our projects will endeavour to work together to encourage the furtherance of an ethos that embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of all children, young people and adults.

SDP recognises its duty to report any concerns about unsafe practice by any of its participants or trustees to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), and if necessary also to the Police, social services, and other official bodies as relevant.

Proven contravention of this policy may result in action up to and including being removed from the organisation or project.

This document must be read alongside our policies available on [www.southdevonplayers.com](http://www.southdevonplayers.com) (policies tab), namely, but not limited to child protection\_policy, diversity overview, equal opportunities, code of conduct, and accessibility. It should also be read alongside Equity's Safe Spaces (anti-bullying) policies.

Any person who is a designated safeguarder with SDP will be required to be fully conversant with legislation appropriate to their role, as well as Union and other best practice. Training is updated regularly as appropriate.

Everyone involved in the team is advised who to contact in case of concerns, both at rehearsals/ training sessions, but also in information shared to those involved in each project.

### Behaviour Statement

All persons involved in a show (actors, crew, admin, volunteers, and venue staff) are expected to:

- Treat others as you would expect them to treat you
- Provide a professional and ethical example you wish others to follow
- Ensure that another adult is present when you are in the company of young people and vulnerable adults including situations when a young person/ vulnerable adult is waiting to be collected
- Respect a person's right to privacy
- Encourage young people and vulnerable adults to feel comfortable to point out attitudes and behaviour they do not like
- Remember someone might misinterpret your actions and your comments, no matter how well intentioned.

- Recognise that caution is required, particularly in sensitive moments, such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement, grief or abuse
- Be aware of the possible implications of physical contact with young people and vulnerable adults
- To be aware of the stated access/ communication needs of those involved in the cast and crew (and to take note and revise actions, if an error is made and a reminder is given).
- Remain friendly, calm and polite when interacting with any other cast, crew, venue staff, etc.
- Require that all children under the age of 16 are accompanied by one of their parents or legal guardians, at all rehearsals, workshops, castings and performances.

**All persons involved in a show (actors, crew, admin, volunteers, and venue staff) must never:**

- Make suggestive remarks or gestures
- Do things of a personal nature for a child or a vulnerable adult that they could do for themselves
- Allow young people or vulnerable adults to use inappropriate language unchallenged (i.e. swearing, racial/sexual taunts). Where content of script or drama exercise demands strong language or adult themes it must be the responsibility of the staff or volunteer to ensure participants feel comfortable and safe.
- Permit abusive youth peer activities (e.g. bullying, ridiculing or initiation ceremonies)
- Jump to conclusions
- Exaggerate or trivialise abuse issues
- Rely upon just your good name to protect you
- Engage in egotistical/ boastful behaviour that may, intentionally or unintentionally, make someone feel inadequate, or use reputation or namedropping to “impress” others.
- Wear clothing which displays sexual, abusive, drug related, or discriminatory motifs (often T-shirts with rude slogans or images) unless a specific part of costume.
- Take images (including selfies) unless specifically engaged to take official photos and videos of the stage, or backstage.
- Intentionally intimidate, bully, gaslight or frighten a person as a means of control or coercion.

- Permit guests (eg family or friends) or unknown persons (who are not actors, crew, chaperones or venue staff) to backstage areas unless they have been invited in a specific emergency
- Allow allegations made by a child/vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Request money of other participants (sometimes we may have a “donate your unwanted items to a fundraiser” but this is entirely optional and nobody must be made to feel obligated to donate. )No person should personally request money from another participant.
- Permit engaging in any form of inappropriate touching of minors or vulnerable adults. Any scenes depicting such will be performed between adult actors only, in a strictly regulated show scene led by a designated Intimacy Choreography professional, to strict choreography, in discussion with the relevant actors about their own personal boundaries.
- Share unauthorised show / rehearsal/ backstage images, (eg backstage photos, selfies, rehearsal photos, etc) publicly in any medium, or to friends, without formal permission from the show's production team and safeguarder.
  - Expect or demand to stay overnight at the home of another cast or crew member
  - Attend rehearsals, workshops or performances under the influence or aftermarth of behaviour altering substances (eg drugs, alcohol) unless prescribed medication.
  - Belittle another person's health conditions or disabilities, or other characteristics (eg age, race, gender, body size, etc). Self-identification is fully permissable.

### **Safeguarding Children and Young People**

SDP will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in our projects through adherence to our Child Protection guidelines. A child is defined as under 18 The Children Act 1989. All child involvement is subject to the granting of applicable child actor licences for each child by their home Local Authority, and the adherence of themselves and their parents, to chaperoning law. Parents or legal guardians are required to be fully involved and conversant with this.

### **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults.**

We also acknowledge our responsibilities in respect of adult participants who might be deemed to be ‘at risk’ because they are ‘vulnerable’. A vulnerable person may be identified as a person aged 16 or over who has a condition of the following type: (i) a visible or non-visible disability; (ii) a physical or mental illness or mental disorder, chronic or otherwise; (iii) a significant reduction in physical or mental capacity. Vulnerable adults may be involved in any capacity. It should be noted that SDP is founded and led by a vulnerable adult.

### **Safeguarding other persons**

We are aware that abusive, egotistical, sexual or other harmful behaviour can result in new illness eg depression, anxiety or feelings of worthlessness, or in extreme cases,

PTSD, in anyone, whether or not they are previously deemed vulnerable, or a child. (please see our use of the anti-bullying guidelines from Equity trade union, known as Equity Safe Spaces Policy) and therefore while a safeguarding policy generally is aimed at young people and vulnerable adults, ours does in fact include everyone's wellbeing.

### **Policy Aims Of The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company (SDP)**

- Provide all involved with our projects, with appropriate safety and protection whilst participating in shows/ workshops/ rehearsals/ activities wholly or partially led by SDP
  - Allow administration and production team members to make informed and confident responses to specific child and vulnerable adult protection issues
- \* update knowledge and training of safeguarding issues.
- \* consult with professionals who are experienced and qualified in safeguarding for supervision and guidance.

### **\* The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company (SDP) believe that**

- The welfare of everyone involved in our productions is vital and that safety and welfare comes first in all instances.
- All participants, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse, intimidation, or harmful behaviour
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All cast and crew working with and alongside SDP have a responsibility to report concerns to the identified person or body responsible for safeguarding.

SDP has a duty of care to safeguard all children and vulnerable adults involved in our workshops, rehearsals, castings and shows from harm.

The needs of disabled children and others including adults who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account at all times, via our access policies, and safeguarding procedures followed

### **The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company (SDP) will adhere to**

- Always working in an inclusive group environment with and alongside staff from the show venue/ rehearsal space/ school/institution/community group (e.g. avoid private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment i.e. no secrets)
- Treating all participants equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Take access requirements for participants with both visible and non-visible disabilities/ health conditions into account, and have a discussion with the relevant

participant to ensure we are being as accessible as is within our power, documenting the access procedures needed

- Providing an access rider to all venues where we have rehearsals, performances, or workshops, so that external venue managements are fully aware of the wellbeing needs of our more vulnerable participants, to prevent any unintentional discriminatory or ableist incidents.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with all participants (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship , or make sexual/ personal requests of a child or vulnerable adult, or to expect an intimate relationship with or favours from someone who is either not interested, or in a relationship already )
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children/ vulnerable adults to share in the decision-making process.
- Making performing fun, enjoyable and promoting professionalism and mutual respect.
- Ensuring that all material (i.e scripts /scene content) is age/ability appropriate and never make a a person feel uncomfortable or concerned or exploited.
- Keeping up to date with the skills, qualifications and insurance in performing arts, safeguarding policies, diversity and mental health training to the best of our ability
- Being an excellent role model – this includes behaving in a positive, professional, and inclusive manner, not being boastful or making someone feel inadequate to further your own ego, not being under the influence or after-effects of drugs or alcohol in a rehearsal, show or workshop;
- 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 in an accident report book that is property of the school/institution/community group.

Informing relevant persons staff if any child/vulnerable adult is taken ill or injured during workshops, communicating with parents/carers if relevant and necessary

Never offering or allowing children to be transported home in cars or to events with unrelated people working with The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company (SDP) unless the childs parent or licenced chaperone.

### **Guidelines for use of photography or filming**

SDP does not allow any filming or photographing to take place UNLESS;

We/or the school/institution/community group as relevant, have signed consent in advance from parents/carers or those in position of guidance and responsibility working with a vulnerable adult. (If they are unable to do so themselves.)

- The photography or video is done by an authorised person from SDP or the venue (or a specifically hired photographer).

This includes selfies, backstage photos, family or friends photographing a performance.

We ask all participants to put mobile phones away in bags, completely out of sight before starting any rehearsals, workshops, or performances.

SDP crew may use technology for playing music and recording in sessions or performances only

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### **Recruitment and selecting team members**

The company recognizes that anyone may have the potential to abuse others in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with our team.

This includes meetings with new team members specifically regarding appropriate behaviour. Discussions of correct behaviour, details of appropriate conduct are reminded at all first cast readthroughs on a new show, and verbal reminders about minor infractions.

- Actors and crew are asked to read and sign a contract showing that they understand the requirements of correct and safe behaviour in and around theatre, and that SDP reserves the right to report unsafe behaviour to the relevant authorities (eg Police, Social Services, medical professionals) .

### **Responding to suspicions or allegations**

It is not the responsibility of anyone working at SDP in a paid or unpaid capacity to take responsibility or to decide whether or not abuse has taken place towards a child or vulnerable adult.

However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. SDP assure all team members that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports their concern that a colleague is or may be engaging in behaviour which could be deemed abusive, or which may bring harm to others.

### **Suspected abuse**

Any suspicion that someone has been abused by any member of an SDP project, should be reported to the designated safeguarding lead who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the person in question and any other person who may be at risk. This may include speaking to wider professional bodies for advice.

Should a child/young person or vulnerable adult wish to speak about any concerning issue, all SDP team members will let that person know that they have a duty of care

to inform a professional if they believe in good faith there is a safeguarding risk or threat to that person.

Should any child/young person or vulnerable adult make any concerning disclosure to SDP admins, they will inform the designated safeguarding leads who will take the appropriate action as a duty of care to the person who is disclosing the information.

The appropriate action may range (in the case of a first minor issue) to a discussion with the offender and clarifying the problem and that it cannot occur again; up to immediate removal from SDP and reports being made to the Police or Social Services, in the case of a more serious, or repeated, infractions.

There will always be more than one safeguarding person within the team to whom a person may make a report.

### **Dealing with Bullying and Intimidating Behavior**

Have a zero-tolerance policy to bullying, Please refer to Equity's safe spaces policies

Take all signs of bullying very seriously

Work alongside and support a venues anti bullying statement

Challenge the intimidating behaviour immediately and explain the situation and try to get the person who is doing the bullying to understand the consequences of their behaviour

Seek an apology to the victim/s.

If behavior remains unsafe and continues we may ask the person who is showing intimidating behavior to leave the production.

Report any concerns to the designated safeguarding leads within the venues that we work within, as appropriate.

Inform staff who are responsible for a vulnerable adults safety and well being.

Encourage and support changes in bullying and negative behavior

Inform all appropriate persons of the action taken

Keep a written record of action taken (whom, when etc)

#### **In an emergency (eg violence, abuse, or health issue arising from same)**

team members should immediately involve the safeguarding lead, and if it is the safeguarder who is being attacked, other core members of the team.

The Police should be called at once and other services as relevant.

All team members who have witnessed the situation will be required to write a signed report which may be passed to the Police or Social Services as relevant.