

The South Devon Players

Appropriate Behaviour Contract (Page 1)

Name of production _____
Name of Cast/ Crew Member _____

This is a document which we are bringing in, from July 2023, after multiple incidents of bullying and inappropriate behaviour over the years, some of which have required police involvement and which have resulted in a lot of distress, mental health emergencies, and time taken up detracting from productions. It is a condition of being cast or crewed in a show with us, that this is filled out and signed, and then adhered to. We recommend that all team members of a production retain a copy for their records. Nobody, regardless of role, or frequency of involvement, is exempt.

Incidents of proven inappropriate/ bullying/ abusive behaviour may result in anything from a mandatory meeting to remind those involved of correct conduct and discuss acceptable ways forward, through to immediate termination of involvement in current & future productions.

Depending on the nature and severity of any incidents, the South Devon Players reserve the right to involve Equity (creatives trade union), or other enforcement organisations, like, but not limited to, the Police, Social Services, or ActionFraud, without prior discussion.

Appropriate behaviour in a South Devon Players creative project or production. By accepting a role in the production, the above named person agrees to the following:

- Communicating politely with other production team members, and members of the public in a socially acceptable tone of voice/ socially acceptable wording / socially acceptable body language at all times. (Behaviour that appears designed to intimidate, denigrate, undermine, or attack others is not acceptable)
- Respecting that other team members may have disabilities, access / reasonable adjustments needs, personal situations, or other factors which require adjustments to their involvement. These team members are not to be judged negatively for such adjustments or have such conditions used to judge their competence in the show. (This however does NOT excuse behaviour which involves aggression, violence, endangering others mentally or physically, or sexual impropriety)
- Mobile phones must not be used in rehearsals unless in specific emergencies (eg family emergencies) or as an access aid (eg an actor with ADHD needing something in hand while waiting for a scene), in which case the phone must be on silent. No mobile phone may ever be brought on stage, and usage must not impact attention to scenes or cues.
- Sexual impropriety is strictly forbidden. This includes sexual comments/ jokes made outside of scripted scenes, improvising scenes/ actions involving sexual content outside of that discussed with the person in charge of intimacy co-ordination, or any kind of sexual approaches, or actions which could be interpreted as such, made to other members of the production or members of the public.
- Returning any and all costumes, props, scripts or other items belonging to the company, or those loaning them, to the South Devon Players, within 2 weeks of the cessation of any involvement in our production, or the end of the the production. (Failure to do so, will result in being ineligible to be involved with us again, and for items worth over £15, may result in theft being reported)
- Shouting out “notes” or “ideas” mid-scene; stopping scenes, is not acceptable unless there is a safety emergency, and must be addressed to the relevant person in the production team in an appropriate break time.

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Appropriate Behaviour Contract (Page 2)

Name of production _____

Name of Cast/ Crew Member _____

Appropriate behaviour in a South Devon Players creative project or production. By accepting a role in the production, the above named person agrees to the following (continued)

- Refraining, under all circumstances, from using/ playing with stage weapons, technical equipment, pyrotechnics, etc, outside of the authorised choreography, use and supervision by the relevant crew member(s).
- Refraining, under all circumstances, from fiddling with or moving props / costumes, outside of the authorised choreography, use and supervision by the relevant crew member(s)
- Refraining, under all circumstances, from opening or rifling through other peoples personal bags or properties unless specifically asked by the owner.
- Refraining from wilfully damaging/ tearing/ staining/ breaking equipment, props or costumes; or property of any of our venues, and ensuring that they immediately report any accident where such an occurrence has unintentionally happened.
- Arriving at a performance in reasonable time before the show starts, and ensuring that they are fully familiarised with the blocking, props, and performance requirements (which may vary from venue to venue) before the show day.
- Refraining from wearing clothing with graphic sexualised motifs or swear words.
- Ensuring that when reasonable adjustments for someone's disabilities/ health are stated, usually on the main read-through day just after casting, that you do your best to adhere to those adjustments. (Anyone may make a mistake, but doing your best always shows!)
- Refraining from creating or participating in “secret” team social media groups/ chats to which a company director is not invited. (historically these have been used to backseat-direct, coerce, scam, bully and undermine. Any to which you are invited must be reported to the company directors).
- Refraining from making any recruitment, contractual, legal, financial, publicity, organisational/ production agreements, with any person, organisation, or group, if you are not an SDP company director as registered with Companies House.

It is important to note, that several of the production team are autistic or have other disabilities or conditions like PTSD. It is NOT acceptable to assume incompetence or lack of experience, just because someone may be quieter or less pushy, or less confident. Some of them each have 20 – 30 years experience in what they do.

The theatre company management has 20 years of experience running the company as well as external experience. Attempting to undermine or coerce, or trying to be pushy/ negatively assumptive will be challenged. We are an inclusive organisation, and ableism (conscious or unconscious) will be challenged.

In case of a problem

- Ensure, in the first instance, that the director and production team are made aware of the problem. If possible keep screenshots, a diary of any unacceptable behaviour etc. You may be asked to write an email statement about what has occurred. This may be provided to the Police, trade Unions, or other enforcement organisations. .
- You will receive a prompt response to this, and if possible, signposting to external relevant assistance.

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Name of production _____
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In case of a problem – continued

- If you are contacted about an alleged problem by a company director as registered with Companies House, and an informal verbal chat does not seem to have worked, you are likely to be asked, via email, to attend a meeting to discuss what has happened, find the best way forward and how to work around an issue. Failure to respond to this in a timely manner, is likely result in our needing to remove you from the project while we look further into things.
- In any cases where it is felt by the senior production team or company directors as registered with Companies House, that someone may come to physical/ mental harm, where the show may be jeopardised by repeated undermining other team members, ignoring safety guidance, attempting backseat directing, or where an incident of inappropriate behaviour is felt to be extreme (eg shouting/ swearing; theft, verbal or physical assault, harassment, sexual impropriety) and where proof (witnesses, images or recordings, etc) exist, the company directors reserve the right to immediately suspend the suspected perpetrator, from all current and future involvement, as well as immediately contacting trade union and/or law enforcement and/or safeguarding authorities, while the incident(s) are investigated, and permanently if it is deemed beyond reasonable doubt that the alleged incident(s) did take place.

Declaration

I hereby confirm that I have fully read through all three pages of this acceptable behaviour policy, and agree to be involved in the production of

as _____

on these terms. This means that I agree to adhere to socially acceptable behaviour, and the standards of professionalism and inclusion as expected in this document. If I have any concerns I will bring them to one of the directors/ or senior production team as relevant to the concern, and if anything goes wrong that affects me, or if approached by the directors, I will work with the production team/ company directors required, in a calm, positive and constructive manner to resolve the query or problem in a manner that ensures and underpins the wellbeing and professionalism of the team.

SIGNED

DATE