

# **Intimate scenes policy & guidelines**

The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company (hereafter referred to SDP) is committed to providing a safe environment for all cast, crew and audience.

As one of the policies to do so, we have strict guidelines on sexual/ intimate and suggestive scenes (indeed any scenes which require physical contact), which all cast and crew must follow. While intimate scenes in our shows are rare, they do occasionally appear, and as such it is important to state the general ground rules.

## **Before casting**

When advertising roles which require intimacy (kissing, simulated sexual acts or gestures, provocative behaviour, partial nudity/suggested nudity, etc) this will be made clear, in writing, in the audition pack within the character descriptions. These roles will be strictly for actors aged over 18. No actor who is aged under 18 may play any role involving these elements. It will also be stated that no actor will be asked to go beyond their personal boundaries of what is safe and acceptable to them, and that these boundaries do not affect whether they are cast or not.

## **During casting/ auditions**

No applicant will be asked to disrobe, or perform any of these acts, and if they request to do so, this will be turned down at the audition stage.

It will be made very clear at the audition time, that no actor will be asked to go beyond their personal boundaries of what is safe and acceptable to them, and that these boundaries do not affect whether they are cast or not.

It will also be made very clear that this does not equate to an offstage relationship, nor should it be deemed as such.

Penetrative acts or any choreographies involving the touching of genitals, are strictly forbidden.

## **During rehearsals**

Rehearsals for intimate scenes will take place with a nominated safeguarder/ intimacy choreographer, acting alongside the director, who must be present at all relevant rehearsals.

Written notes of the direction and choreography should be kept.

The rehearsals for any sexual scene will not be photographed or videoed.

The choreography will be planned and rehearsed with full discussion as to the personal boundaries of the individual cast members, and the reiterated statement that anyone who is uncomfortable may immediately say so, without fear of being questioned, ridiculed, or penalised.

The production team are prohibited from pushing actors boundaries, and individual actors are prohibited from pushing the boundaries of the other actors (No means no, and will not be questioned).

Any actor can request to stop, without needing to give an explanation, at any time.

Any coverings for areas of body which the actors do not wish seen, will be arranged and provided for use.

These rehearsals will take place on a closed set with the required production team, and the actors involved in the scene; especially while choreography is planned. Actors and production team members who are not required for the scene, will be asked to step outside.

Any cast member involved in such a scene, regardless of age or gender, is most welcome to have a chaperone of their nomination, who is aged over 18, present at these rehearsals (the same as is common in the modelling industry), who will be subject to the same standards of respectful behaviour as the rest of the cast and production team.

Any deviation from choreography, which has not been discussed and agreed, is forbidden. Should any actor or production team member ask the actors in the scene to go beyond their personal boundaries or the requirements of the production, or make lewd “jokes” about the scene or rehearsals, this will result in disciplinary action, and the offender risking immediate dismissal from the production.

### **Additional notes on general touching (non-sexual).**

While intimacy is usually taken to mean scenes of a sexual nature, and our guidelines above relate to that kind of scene, it can also mean things as simple as hugs, holding hands, etc. While we do not tend to break down these kinds of contact in the character descriptions, we do work carefully to ensure that everyone feels comfortable and safe in the production.

In non-sexual intimate scenes, all contact between actors should be consensual, and not involve the touching or brushing of a “private” area.

Best practice is to talk about the physical contact during rehearsals and then demonstrate slowly, asking if this is acceptable (if it is not, then we find another way to choreograph or plan that scene, and the action within it. As with provocative scenes, if an actor is not comfortable, they are encouraged to tell the production team at once if they are uncomfortable, so that the scene can be replanned. They are not obliged to give a reason).

If touching a minor (in this case, a person aged under 16), it is best practice to make sure that your hands are in sight at all times and imperative that the choreography is fully explained and discussed with both the minor, and the parent/ chaperone; that both the minor and the parent/ chaperone are comfortable with it, and that it is rehearsed with the minors parent or chaperone present. (Please note that as per our children's policy, no minor is permitted to be unaccompanied by a parent or chaperone in our rehearsals or shows. If the parent/chaperone is not present within direct visual link of the minor, that minor cannot rehearse or perform). Again, the need to stick to planned choreography, is emphasized.

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