



# **Speech & Drama School**

## **Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.**

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Last Updated 21.10.24

This policy is to be reviewed every year.

# **Rhubarb Speech and Drama School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Legislation.**

Rhubarb has a legal and moral duty to protect the children and young people that use its services and protect children from Maltreatment, inside or outside the home, including online and understands that it is a collaborative effort to keep young people happy and safe. All Rhubarb Staff and Volunteers are to have read and are to have access to this policy. This ensures that we are working within safe practices; and are protected in our working environment whilst ensuring that we are providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge. This Policy is also to be available online. Failure to comply could result in disciplinary action being taken or dismissal from services.

Rhubarb acknowledges it's Safeguarding and child protection responsibilities and acknowledges that we are part of a big umbrella of organisations that have child protection and safeguarding responsibilities. Other organisations may include; Schools, Social Services, NSPCC, Police and Probation Services, GP, Health Visitors, Midwives and School nurses and Mental Health services.

## **What is a child?**

'The Children Act 1989' defines a child; 'Up to, and including the age of 18'. Extensions exist for Children and Young people who have additional needs, and for those in authority care settings.

## **The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

It is the role of a company's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to monitor Safeguarding and Child Protection within an organisation, to report any concerns/issues of abuse to the relevant channels and to support staff in regards to Safeguarding and Child protection issues.

Rhubarb's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Company Director;

**Charlotte Attwood**

[Charlotte@rhubarb-drama.co.uk](mailto:Charlotte@rhubarb-drama.co.uk)

**07528383341**

*The Designated Safeguarding lead is available 24hrs a day, seven days a week for any issues of Safeguarding or Child protection.*

**Any safeguarding or child protection concerns must be reported as soon as possible.**

If the Designated safeguarding lead believes the child in question is in immediate danger a phone call to emergency services will be made.

The Designated safeguarding lead may ask you to complete a 'What the Child has said report' (Formally 'Disclosure report') the template for which can be found at the end of this document. – See contents page.

The DSL is also responsible for creating Safeguarding and Child protection policies, reviewing and updating these policies annually, and sharing policies with relevant organisations. The DSL is responsible for making sure that all staff and volunteers have relevant training and have access to policies and procedures and The DSL will keep safeguarding records in line with Data protection.

## **Staff Roles and Safeguarding Responsibilities**

All Rhubarb Staff and Volunteers must;

- Have continued access to Rhubarb's Safeguarding and Child protection Policy.
- Report any allegations of abuse to the Designated Safeguarding lead as soon as possible.
- Know who the Designated Safeguarding lead is, and how to report allegations of abuse. All Staff and Volunteers are responsible for reporting Safeguarding and Child Protection issues.
- Know how to complete a 'What the child has said report'. (Formally 'Disclosure report').
- Adhere to Rhubarb's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy at all times.
- Be aware of their behaviour, and what is Inappropriate behaviour towards Children/Young People. Staff must monitor their use of language and gestures when working with Children.
- It is not the responsibility of staff to try to deal with suspected abuse themselves, or to make judgement on the validity of the claim. All reports of abuse should be taken seriously and reported immediately.
- All staff and volunteers should be aware of Rhubarb's Whistleblowing Policy and know how to report suspected malpractice.
- Staff will at times, have access to service user's emergency contact information (ICE) if deemed necessary by the company director. This will usually be in the form of the participants completed registration forms and Health Care Plans (HCP) which have been shared with us. All staff will be fully briefed on GDPR and will adhere to our Data protection policy at all times, treating such information as confidential.
- All Volunteers will have access to/be given a copy of Rhubarb's Child protection policy. Are to be introduced to the Company Director/Safeguarding Lead (Charlotte).
- Volunteers (who do not have a current DBS check) are to be supervised at all times by a member of staff who has a DBS check. In this instance, volunteers who do not have a check are not at any point to be left alone and unsupervised with Children/Young People.

## **Good Working Practice with Children and Young People**

*Good Practice when Working with Young People means:*

- Treating all children equally, with respect and dignity.
- Putting the welfare of each participant before the task/setting.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering children to share in any decision-making process.
- Giving Enthusiastic and Constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Making Theatre Arts safe and enjoyable.
- Being an excellent role model.
- Recognising that children or adults with disabilities may be more vulnerable than others.
- Praising children for positive behaviour.

**Good Practice in Physical contact with Children and Young People means:**

- Only touching participants when necessary, in relation to the particular activity.
- Seeking agreement and consent of participants prior to any physical contact.
  - Making sure that participants with disabilities are informed of and are comfortable with any necessary physical contact.
- Spontaneous hugs from participants should be guided to the side of the body.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance from participants.

**It does not make sense to:**

- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Take children alone in a car on a journey without permission.
- Take children to your home.
- When occasions arise where these situations are unavoidable; they should be done with the full knowledge and consent of those with parental responsibility, and your Safeguarding Lead.

**You Should Never:**

- Engage in rough physical contact with a child.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching.
- Allow staff or children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
  - Make sexual comments about/to/or in the presence of a child.
- Let any Safeguarding issues go unchallenged or unrecorded.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or adults that they can do for themselves.
- Acts of a personal nature for children (toilet, dressing, lifting) should necessitate full parental consent. In an emergency situation which requires this type of help parents should be fully informed as soon as practicable.

## **Social Media Policy**

Rhubarb staff and volunteers are NOT to engage with Young People (under 18) that they know through Rhubarb projects on Social Media platforms; including Facebook, Twitter (X) Instagram, WhatsApp and TikTok. Any attempted contact must be reported (this can be done informally) to the Designated Safeguarding officer.

Although we do not wish to limit our staff and volunteers use of social media, we ask that they are aware of open access platforms such as Twitter/X, Instagram, YouTube and TIK Tok as posts can be accessed by young people and adults without your knowledge. Please be cautious of your language and uploaded content whilst working with us.

Rhubarb also asks that their staff and Volunteers never give young people their phone number or contact details.

Photographic permission must be checked prior to any uploads of photographs to any online platforms and no names or 'tags' will ever be applied to specific children in photographs.

## **Confidential Information**

Rhubarb staff will at times have access to information regarding the Children/Young people taking part in activities. This will be Information such as;

- Emergency Contact Details.
- Photographic/Recording consent.
- Medical information and Health care plans including any information concerning additional needs or support.

This is to ensure that our sessions are both fun and safe and that any access arrangements and plans can be made.

Please note that Rhubarb Speech and Drama is a member of the ICO, and is fully GDPR compliant. This information will be treated as confidential at all times, will be stored appropriately and will not be passed on to third parties.

If the Child/Young person does not continue to use our services, their registration form/Emergency contact details will be shredded. Please see our Data Protection policy for more info.

## **Staff Ratios**

Please note that as Rhubarb's services are categorised as 'Drama Tuition' with the majority of our services happening out of/ after School hours, we therefore do not qualify as a 'Registered childcare provider' and cannot unfortunately accept Childcare Vouchers.

Due to our categorisation as 'Drama Tuition'; similarly, to other tuition providers such as Music and Dance tuition, we are not monitored by Ofsted.

We do however where possible aim to adhere to the recommended NSPCC staff to child ratios when possible.

- 4 - 8 years 1 adult to 6 children
- 9 - 12 years 1 adult to 8 children
- 13 - 18 years 1 adult to 10 children

## **Uniform**

Rhubarb asks all Staff and Volunteers to wear clothing that they feel is both comfortable and suitable for working with Children and Young People. T-Shirts and Jackets will be provided to all Staff and we ask that short skirts or shorts are not worn without leggings underneath.

## **Toilets**

Toilets should be identified and checked beforehand if possible. Staff and Volunteers are to use other toilets if available, (including Disabled toilets if an alternative is not available) to avoid staff and participants using the same facilities. If separate facilities are not available. Staff/Volunteers should try and use toilet facilities when children and young people are not likely to be using them (before / after or during lesson changeover times etc).

If a young person requires the toilet during session time, a member of staff with a full DBS check can escort them to these facilities, however they must wait outside and not enter the facilities to walk the participant back afterwards.

## **DBS Checks**

All paid Rhubarb staff are to have a full Enhanced up to date DBS checks. Volunteers are not required by law to have a DBS check; however, they are to be fully briefed on Child Protection Policy's; and are not to be left unsupervised with the Children/Young People at any time.

## **Types of Abuse, neglect and exploitation.**

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

It is important to recognise that Physical abuse can also be perpetrated by other children (child on child abuse) and peers.

#### ***Things to look out for;***

*Signs of physical abuse may include: Bruises, Broken/Fractured bones, Burns/Scalds, bite marks, scarring.*

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development, and may involve:

- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved or inadequate.
- Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another e.g. where there is domestic violence and abuse.
- Serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger;
- Exploiting and corrupting children.
- Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- Child on child abuse can also be a form of emotional abuse and can happen both in and out of school settings, this can take the form of bullying and cyberbullying.

#### ***Things to look out for;***

*Signs of Emotional abuse may include: Lack of confidence, self esteem or lack of self assurance, difficulties controlling emotions, difficulties making and maintaining relationships. Behaviour that is inappropriate for their age.*

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

Sexual abuse may involve;

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex).
- Non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.
- sexual harassment; such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- Sexual abuse can also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, pornographic materials; including online and with mobile phones.

- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Forcing or enticing the creation of pornographic materials involving children.
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- Grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).
- Absence from education could also be a warning sign of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (also known as teenage relationship abuse).
- Up-skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm.
- Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children and peers.
- Female genital mutilation (FGM) which involves partial or total removal of external female genitalia.

### ***Things to look out for;***

*Signs of sexual abuse may include: Bruises, bleeding, discharge, pains or soreness in their genital or anal area, sexually transmitted infections including in the throat, pregnancy, difficulty in walking / sitting that are not usual for the child.*

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may involve a parent failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers).
- Ensure that their child (children) regularly attends School and has access to education.
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

### ***Things to look out for; Signs of neglect may include:***

*Poor appearance and poor Hygiene: being smelly, dirty having unwashed clothes, having the wrong clothes such as no warm clothes in winter.*

*Health and development problems; being hungry, anaemia, Medical or dental issues, weight or growth issues, untreated injuries, tiredness, skin issues such as sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies, ringworm. Missed medical appointments such as for vaccinations, poor muscle tone or prominent joints.*

*Poor language or social skills.*



*Housing and family issues; Living in unsuitable home environment, being left alone for a long time, taking on the role of carer for other family members.*

*Change in behaviour: Becoming clingy, aggressive, withdrawn depressed or anxious, displaying obsessive behaviour, missing school, finding it hard to concentrate, showing signs of self harm, using drugs or alcohol.*

## **Domestic Abuse**

Definition of domestic violence and abuse (2013): "Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence and abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender and sexuality.

This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Psychological.
- Physical.
- Sexual.
- Financial.
- Emotional.

Children can be affected by seeing, hearing and living with domestic violence and abuse as well as being caught up in any incidents directly

## **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

This is a form of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator.

## **‘What the Child has Said Report’**

*(Formally called Disclosure reports)*

### What is a ‘disclosure’?

If a child reports that they are suffering, or have suffered significant harm through abuse or neglect, or have caused or are causing physical or sexual harm to others, this is called a ‘Disclosure’. Similarly, if a child raises a concern in or after sessions, that require action (reporting or recording) this is treated as a ‘Disclosure’. Legally all staff and Volunteers have a duty to report disclosures through their Safeguarding lead and by completing a ‘What the Child has Said report’.

### The ‘What the Child has said report’ should include:

- Time/date of disclosure.
- Place of disclosure.
- Who; Name of the young person who disclosed the information, and member of staff who received information? Was anyone else present?
- Does anyone else know? Young People, Staff etc.
- Details of the disclosure, this must be as close in words to what the young person has said.
- Details of any advice given by staff.

### What should I do if a child discloses information to me?

- Report all disclosures to Rhubarb’s DSL, if the child is in immediate danger, they are to kept in the setting and the police are to be called.
- If a child asks to talk to you, or you believe they are about to tell you something however the setting isn’t suitable, for example there are too many other people around, or if you are concerned about others overhearing etc you may find it useful to use the **‘Rhubarb Keys’**; “I am just going to get the Rhubarb Keys” This is a code that warns other staff members of a potential disclosure and asks for space.
- Stay calm, remember that the child might be deciding whether/how much to tell you, so be calm and approachable never judgemental.
- Clarify the concerns; what has happened, when, where, who, has it happened before? Have they told anyone else about this?
- Try not to ask leading questions, make assumptions or put words into the child’s mouth. Let the child clarify.
- Never promise confidentiality (it is illegal to not report a disclosure).
- Thank the child for telling you, reassure them they have done the right thing and explain that you want to help.
- Offer re-assurance about how you are going to help to keep the child safe and what you are going to do next; e.g. “I am going to tell (DSL) Charlotte who is going to try and help. Explain that you are only going to tell people who need to know.
- Complete a ‘What the child has said’ report in as much detail as possible. Template available below.

### What do I do with the report?

- Hand It to Rhubarb’s DSL, who will place it in an envelope for confidentiality.

### **What will Happen next?**

Once the Safeguarding lead receives your 'What the child has said' report they will then decide which action is to be taken. They may seek advice and if necessary and file a report to the Access and Response team (ART).

### **Access and response Team (ART)**

**01454 866000**

**South Gloucestershire**

(Mon – Thurs 9:00-5:00, Friday's 9:00-4:30)

**01275888 808**

**North Somerset Professional Consultation Line**

(Mon-Thurs 9:00-5:00, Friday's 9:00-4:30)

**01454 615165**

**Out of hours and weekends, emergency duty team.**

### **Local Authority Designated Officer's (LADO'S)**

**North Somerset Local Authority Designated Officer**

**01275 888211**

**[LADO@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@n-somerset.gov.uk)**

**South Gloucestershire Designated Officer**

**01454 868508**

**[LADO@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@southglos.gov.uk)**

## **Whistleblowing Policy**

Whistleblowing is defined as;

*“Raising concerns about misconduct within an organisation.”*

If your concern is about a child or young person using Rhubarb’s services, then you need to follow Rhubarb’s Safeguarding and Child Protection policy guidelines, and report such concerns to the (DLS) Designated Safeguarding lead as soon as possible who will take appropriate action.

However, if your concern is about a colleague, member of staff or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) then It is recommended that you contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) their details can be found on page ten of this document, who will investigate for any signs of malpractice or wrongdoing. The possibility of abuse cannot be eliminated, and constant vigilance is necessary.

Date of report:

Time of report:

## What the Child Has Said Report

### Your Details

Name:	
Job Title:	
Telephone Number:	
Email Address:	

### Details of the Person affected

Name of child who raised the concern.	
Date of Birth.	
Parent(s) / Carer(s) Names:	
Parent/Carer Address:	
Parent / Carer telephone Number:	
School Attended (If Known.	

### Details of the Incident

Where did the incident occur?	
When did the incident occur?	
Who did the incident involve?	
Did anyone else witness the incident? If so, who?	
What happened? <i>Please describe the incident in as much details and as accurately as possible.</i>	
Any other information?	

Signature: