



Speech & Drama School

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.

Introduction	Page 2
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Information.	Page 3
If the DSL is unavailable; Access and response Team (ART) contact details	Page 4
Staff Roles and Safeguarding Responsibilities.	Page 5
Good working Practice when working with young people.	Page 6
Safeguarding Policies; Social Media, Confidential information, staff ratios.	Page 7
Safeguarding Policies; Uniform, Toilet Policy and DBS checks.	Page 8
Types of Abuse; Definitions.	Page 9-11
Safeguarding concern, what to do guide.	Page 12-13
Whistleblowing Policy	Page 14
Safeguarding Report Form / What the Child has Said template.	Page 15-16

Rhubarb Speech and Drama School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Introduction

Rhubarb Speech and Drama School recognises its legal, moral and professional responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people who access its services. We are committed to providing a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment where children can learn, participate and develop free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination and other forms of harm.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Rhubarb recognises that children may experience harm within or outside the home, including online, and is committed to identifying concerns at the earliest opportunity and providing or supporting access to help when problems emerge.

Effective safeguarding requires partnership working. Where appropriate, Rhubarb will work with parents, carers and relevant agencies, including children's social care, the police, health services, schools and other safeguarding partners. Information will be shared appropriately where necessary to safeguard a child.

All Rhubarb staff, teachers, volunteers and others working with children on behalf of Rhubarb are expected to understand and follow this policy and its safeguarding procedures. Everyone has a responsibility to recognise and report concerns promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Concerns about a child, or about an adult working with children, will be dealt with in accordance with Rhubarb's safeguarding procedures.

Rhubarb will maintain appropriate safeguarding records, handle information responsibly and ensure that the child's welfare, best interests and voice remain central to safeguarding decisions.

This policy should be read alongside Rhubarb's other relevant policies and procedures.

What is a child?

For the purposes of this policy, a child or young person is anyone under the age of 18. The Children Act 1989 defines a child as a person under the age of eighteen.

Legislative and Statutory Framework

Rhubarb will have regard to relevant legislation and guidance applicable to its activities, including the Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004 and *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026*. Rhubarb will also follow the Department for Education's *Out-of-school settings: safeguarding guidance for providers*. Where relevant, Rhubarb may use other safeguarding guidance, including *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, as a source of good safeguarding practice, but KCSIE does not directly govern Rhubarb's provision.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for overseeing safeguarding and child protection arrangements within Rhubarb. This includes providing advice and support to staff and volunteers, responding to safeguarding concerns, maintaining appropriate records, liaising with relevant agencies where necessary, and ensuring that safeguarding policies, procedures and training are kept up to date.

Rhubarb's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is:

Charlotte Attwood

Charlotte@rhubarb-drama.co.uk

07528383341

Any safeguarding or child protection concern must be reported to the DSL as soon as possible.

Where a child is believed to be in immediate danger, **999 should be called without delay**. The DSL should then be informed as soon as possible.

The DSL may ask staff or volunteers to complete a **‘what the child has said’ report** to ensure that concerns are accurately recorded. The relevant form can be found at the end of this policy (see Contents).

The DSL is responsible for:

- Overseeing Rhubarb's safeguarding and child protection arrangements;
- Ensuring concerns are responded to appropriately and referred to relevant agencies where necessary.
- Maintaining accurate and confidential safeguarding records in line with data protection requirements.
- Ensuring staff and volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding information, training and access to relevant policies and procedures; and reviewing and updating safeguarding policies and procedures annually, or sooner where legislation or guidance changes.

If the DSL is Unavailable

If a safeguarding or child protection concern cannot be reported to the DSL, or if the concern relates to the DSL, the concern must be reported directly to the appropriate local authority children's safeguarding service.

Children's 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)

South Gloucestershire Designated Officer

Jon Goddard

01454 868508

LADO@southglos.gov.uk

LADO hours are 10am –3pm Monday to Friday

North Somerset Local Authority Designated Officer

Allyson Donovan

07386 963 406

LADO@n-somerset.gov.uk

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

Rhubarb is not an Ofsted-registered childcare provider. Rhubarb's services are provided as **drama tuition**, similar to other tuition activities such as music and dance, with the majority of sessions taking place outside normal school hours.

Staffing levels will be determined according to the nature of the activity, the ages and individual needs of the children, the venue, the relevant risk assessment and the level of supervision required. Rhubarb will maintain appropriate staffing levels to support the safety and wellbeing of children and will consider recognised safeguarding good practice when determining staff-to-child ratios.

Where practicable, Rhubarb will use the following NSPCC recommended ratios as a guide to staffing levels:

- **Children aged 4–8:** 1 adult to 6 children
- **Children aged 9–12:** 1 adult to 8 children
- **Young people aged 13–18:** 1 adult to 10 young people

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.

Safer Recruitment and DBS Checks

Rhubarb is committed to safer recruitment and will take reasonable steps to ensure that staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children. References and appropriate pre-employment checks will be undertaken, and DBS checks will be completed where the role is eligible.

From 1 September 2026, the removal of the supervision exemption means that volunteers who regularly teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise children may be undertaking regulated activity even when supervised by another person.

Rhubarb will assess each role individually to determine the appropriate DBS eligibility. Where an individual is undertaking regulated activity with children, the appropriate Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information will be obtained in accordance with current DBS guidance.

All recruitment decisions will also consider references, qualifications and experience, safeguarding suitability and any concerns arising during the recruitment process. A DBS check will form part of the safer-recruitment process but will not be regarded as the sole assessment of an individual's suitability to work with children.

Types of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation.

Abuse, neglect and exploitation can take many forms and may occur separately or alongside one another. They can happen at home, within organisations and communities, or online. Children may be harmed by adults or by other children. Staff should remain alert to changes in a child's behaviour, presentation or circumstances and report any concerns in accordance with this policy. Staff do not need to determine the type or severity of abuse before reporting a concern. Any concern about a child's safety or welfare should be reported to the DSL as soon as possible.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse involves deliberately causing physical harm to a child. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing injury.

Physical abuse may also include **fabricated or induced illness**, where a parent or carer creates or exaggerates symptoms or deliberately causes illness in a child.

Possible signs may include: unexplained or repeated injuries, bruising, burns, fractures, bite marks, or explanations that do not appear consistent with the injury.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child that may cause serious and lasting effects on their emotional development.

It may include making a child feel worthless, unloved or inadequate; imposing inappropriate expectations; preventing normal social interaction; serious bullying; threatening or frightening behaviour; or exposing a child to the ill-treatment of others, including domestic abuse.

Emotional abuse can occur alongside other forms of abuse and can be perpetrated by adults or other children.

Possible signs may include: low confidence or self-esteem, withdrawal, anxiety, difficulty managing emotions, difficulties forming relationships or behaviour that is unusual for the child's age or circumstances.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child understands what is happening. It can involve contact or non-contact activity and can occur online or offline.

It may include sexual touching or assault, sexual harassment, grooming, being shown or involved in sexual images or material, the creation or sharing of nude or semi-nude images, sexual activity without consent, up-skirting, and abuse within intimate relationships between children.

Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by adults or by other children and is not limited to any particular gender.

Possible signs may include: changes in behaviour, distress, withdrawal, sexualised behaviour that is inappropriate for the child's age or development, unexplained injuries or physical symptoms, or concerns about online contact or communications.

Neglect

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

This may include failing to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, protection from harm, education or appropriate medical or dental care.

Possible signs may include: persistent poor hygiene or appearance, hunger, tiredness, unsuitable clothing, untreated medical needs, frequent absence from education, being left without appropriate care, or significant changes in behaviour or development.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse includes physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse and psychological or emotional abuse between people aged 16 or over who are personally connected.

A child can be a victim of domestic abuse where they **see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse**. This can have a significant impact on a child's safety, wellbeing and development.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Child Criminal Exploitation occurs when a child or young person is manipulated, coerced or deceived into criminal activity for the benefit of another person or group. This may occur in person or online and can involve threats, violence, grooming, debt or promises of money, status or belonging.

Children may be exploited by adults or by other children.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child Sexual Exploitation occurs when a child or young person is manipulated, coerced or deceived into sexual activity for the benefit of another person or group. It may involve an exchange for money, gifts, status, accommodation, affection or other perceived benefits.

CSE can occur online or offline and may involve grooming, sexual images or sexual activity.

Child-on-Child Abuse

Children can abuse other children. This can happen in person or online and may include bullying and cyberbullying, physical abuse, sexual harassment and sexual violence, sharing or requesting nude or semi-nude images, abuse within intimate relationships, harmful sexual behaviour, grooming for sexual or criminal exploitation, and discriminatory or prejudicial behaviour.

Rhubarb will not dismiss such behaviour as simply "children being children". All concerns will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately.

Other Safeguarding Concerns

Staff should also remain alert to other forms of harm and exploitation, including:

- **Online abuse and exploitation**, including grooming, harassment and exploitation through digital platforms.
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**.
- **Modern slavery and trafficking**, including the exploitation of children.
- **Radicalisation and extremism**, where a child may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism or extremist activity.
- **Serious violence and criminal exploitation**, including risks associated with gangs and county lines.
- **Abuse in intimate personal relationships**, including controlling, coercive or abusive behaviour.

Safeguarding Concern Guide, What to do?

What is a safeguarding disclosure or concern?

A disclosure is when a child shares information that indicates they may be experiencing, or may have experienced, abuse, neglect, exploitation or another safeguarding concern.

A child may also raise a concern without making a direct disclosure. Any information or behaviour that causes a member of staff or volunteer to have a concern about a child's safety or welfare must be taken seriously and reported to the DSL.

All Rhubarb staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report safeguarding concerns promptly in accordance with this policy.

What should I do if a child tells me something concerning?

- **Listen calmly and give the child your full attention.**
- **Take what the child says seriously** and do not dismiss, judge or show disbelief.
- Allow the child to explain in their own words. Ask only open and necessary questions to clarify what they are telling you. **Do not investigate or repeatedly question the child.**
- **Do not promise confidentiality or secrecy.** Explain that you may need to share the information with people who can help keep them safe.
- Thank the child for telling you and reassure them that they have done the right thing by speaking to you.
- Explain what you are going to do next, using simple and reassuring language.
- Report the concern to Rhubarb's DSL **as soon as possible.**
- Complete a **'What the Child Has Said' Report** as soon as possible while the information is fresh.
- If the child is believed to be in **immediate danger, call 999 without delay** and inform the DSL as soon as possible.

The 'Rhubarb Keys'

If a child asks to speak to a member of staff, or a staff member believes a child may be about to share something concerning, but the current environment is not appropriate, staff may use the **'Rhubarb Keys'** phrase:

"I am just going to get the Rhubarb Keys."

This is an internal signal to other staff that a member of staff needs privacy and support to speak with a child. The use of the phrase must not result in a child being taken to an isolated or inappropriate location. Staff should maintain appropriate visibility and safeguarding arrangements while obtaining support.

How Do I Report a Safeguarding Concern?

If you have a concern about the safety or wellbeing of a child, **report it to the DSL as soon as possible.**

1. **Complete the 'Safeguarding Concern' / 'What the Child Has Said' form** as soon as possible.
2. Give the completed form directly to the DSL, Charlotte Attwood, as soon as possible.
3. **Do not investigate the concern yourself** or delay reporting while waiting for further information.
4. If you believe a child is in **immediate danger, call 999 without delay**, then inform the DSL as soon as possible.

If you are unsure whether something is a safeguarding concern, report it. It is always better to share a concern than to assume it is not important.

What should be recorded?

The 'What the Child has said report' should include:

- Date, time and location of the concern or disclosure;
- The name of the child and the person receiving the information;
- Anyone else who was present or who may have relevant information;
- A clear and accurate record of what the child said, using their own words as far as possible;
- Any relevant observations made by the member of staff or volunteer;
- Any action or reassurance given; and
- Who the concern was reported to and when.

Records should be factual and should clearly distinguish between what the child said, what was observed and any assumptions or opinions.

What do I do with the report?

The completed '**What the Child Has Said**' Report should be provided to the DSL as soon as possible, either using a completed paper form or by emailing it directly to Charlotte Attwood using the organisation's designated email address.

Where sending by email, staff should use the subject line '**CONFIDENTIAL – Safeguarding Concern**' and include only information necessary to safeguard the child. The report should not be shared with anyone who does not have a safeguarding need to know.

The DSL will ensure that safeguarding information is handled, recorded and stored securely and confidentially, in accordance with Rhubarb's safeguarding procedures and applicable data protection requirements.

Safeguarding 'Quick Guide'

DO

- Listen.
- Stay calm.
- Take the child seriously.
- Use the child's own words.
- Report promptly.
- Record accurately.

DON'T

- Investigate.
- Ask lots of questions.
- Suggest answers.
- Promise secrecy.
- Confront an alleged perpetrator.
- Delay reporting because you're unsure.

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).

Whistleblowing Policy

Whistleblowing is defined as;

“Raising concerns about misconduct within an organisation.”

Whistleblowing is the process of raising concerns about wrongdoing, unsafe practice or misconduct within an organisation.

Rhubarb encourages all staff and volunteers to raise safeguarding concerns promptly. If you have a concern about a child or young person, you should follow Rhubarb's Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures and report the concern to the DSL as soon as possible.

If your concern relates to a member of staff, volunteer or other adult working with children, you should report this to the DSL in accordance with Rhubarb's safeguarding procedures. Depending on the nature of the concern, this may require referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), children's social care or the police.

If your concern is about the **DSL**, or you do not feel able to raise a safeguarding concern through Rhubarb's usual procedures, you should contact the appropriate local authority safeguarding service, the police where appropriate, or seek advice from the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line.

Raising a concern in good faith will not result in detrimental treatment. Staff and volunteers should feel able to speak up where they believe children may be at risk or safeguarding procedures are not being followed.

NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line

Telephone: 0800 028 0285

The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line provides advice and support to professionals who are concerned about how child protection issues are being handled within their organisation. Concerns can be raised anonymously.

If a child is in immediate danger, **call 999 without delay.**

Safeguarding Concern Form; What the Child Has Said Report

Your Details

Name:	
Job Title:	
Telephone Number:	
Email Address:	
Date and Time concern was identified.	

Child's Details

Name of child	
Date of Birth.	
Parent/ Carer(s) Name(s) If known.	
Parent/Carer Contact details if known.	
School (If Known.	

Details of the concern

When did the concern / incident occur?	
Where did the incident occur?	
Who was involved?	

Were there any witnesses? If so, who?	
What did the child say? Or what did you observe? Record the information as accurately as possible. Use the child's own words where appropriate. Include relevant observations, but do not speculate or investigate.	
Any other information?	
Immediate action taken? Record any immediate action taken, including any action to ensure the child's safety.	
Who was the concern reported to?	
Date and time reported	

Give this completed form directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as possible.

If the child is in **immediate danger**, call **999** without delay and then inform the DSL as soon as possible.

Information recorded on this form must be treated as **confidential safeguarding information** and only shared with people who need to know in order to safeguard or support the child.

Signature.

Date: