

Sitges ETC Child Protection Policy

“Organisations should endeavour to raise awareness amongst all members and volunteers of the issues involved. There is an onus on everyone to report suspicions or concerns. It is important for individuals to be familiar with the definitions of abuse and to be equipped to recognise any signs or symptoms and know how to take a concern or an incident forward. Once protection and welfare policies and procedures are drawn up and agreed by the board they should be made available to all members, volunteers, parents and children. It is important that all those involved understand, accept and agree to abide by them.”

Guidelines for the protection and welfare of children and young people in the arts sector (The Arts Council, Ireland)

Sitges ETC Child Protection Policy Statement

We, Sitges English Theatre Company, are committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children and young people. We undertake to provide a safe environment and experience, where the welfare of the child/young person is paramount. We will adhere to the recommendations of *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, published by the Department of Health and Children. We have implemented procedures covering:

- Code of behaviour for all members and helpers.
- Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse and confidentiality.
- The selection of team leaders for activities that involve children or young people.
- Involvement of parents.
- Allegations of misconduct or abuse by staff.
- Complaints and comments.
- Incidents and accidents.

This policy will be reviewed on 30th July 2017.

[Signed by Designated Person] _____

Date: _____

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR MEMBERS IN ACTIVITIES **INVOLVING CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE**

The code of behaviour can be categorised under the following headings:

- Child-centred approach
- Good practice
- Inappropriate behaviour
- Physical contact
- Health and safety

Child-centred approach

- Treat all children and young people equally.
- Listen to and respect children and young people.
- Provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability).
- Use appropriate language (physical and verbal).
- Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere.
- Offer constructive criticism when needed.
- Treat all children and young people as individuals.
- Respect a child's or young person's personal space.
- Discuss boundaries on behaviour and related sanctions, as appropriate, with children and young people and their parents.
- Agree group 'contract' before beginning session.
- Encourage feedback from group.
- Use age-appropriate teaching aids and materials.
- Lead by example.
- Be aware of a child's or young person's other commitments when scheduling rehearsals or activities, e.g., school or exams.
- Be cognisant of a child's or young person's limitations, due to a medical condition for example.
- Create an atmosphere of trust.
- Respect differences of ability, culture, religion, race and sexual orientation.

Good practice for SETC members and helpers

- Register each child/young person (name, address, phone, special requirements, attendance, emergency contact).
- Make parents, children/young people, visitors and facilitators aware of the Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- Have emergency procedures in place and make all members aware of these procedures.
- Be inclusive of children and young people with special needs.
- Plan and be sufficiently prepared, both mentally and physically.
- Report any concerns to the Designated Person and follow reporting procedures.
- Sitges ETC has an anti-bullying policy. We encourage children and young people to report any bullying, concerns or worries and to be aware of our anti-bullying policy.
- Observe appropriate dress and behaviour.
- Evaluate work practices on a yearly basis.
- Provide appropriate training for members involved in leading activities involving children or young people.
- Report and record any incidents and accidents.
- Update and review policies and procedures regularly.
- Keep parents informed of any issues that concern their children.
- Ensure proper supervision based on adequate ratios according to age, abilities and activities involved.
- Have a written agreement with any external organisation that child or young person from SETC is working with.
- Don't be passive in relation to concerns, i.e., don't 'do nothing'.
- Don't let a problem get out of control.
- Avoid taking a session on your own. If this is not possible then it should be in an open environment with the full knowledge and consent of parents.
- Avoid if at all possible giving a lift to a child/young person and if you do then make sure that parents are informed.
- Maintain awareness around language and comments made. If you think that something you said may have caused offence or upset, then try to address it in a sensitive manner.

Inappropriate behaviour

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children/young people.
 - Don't use or allow offensive or sexually suggestive physical and/or verbal language.
- Don't single out a particular child/young person for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule, or unwelcome focus or attention.
- Don't allow/engage in inappropriate contact of any form.
- Don't hit or physically chastise children/young people.
- Don't socialise inappropriately with children/young people, e.g., outside of structured organisational activities.
 - Avoid exchanging phone numbers or email addresses with children/young people without the knowledge of the parents.
 - Avoid taking photos of individual children or small groups of children as this could lead to misinterpretation.
 - Avoid sharing photos, websites, apps etc with children or young people as they could lead to misinterpretation.
 - Avoid the exchange of presents of any kind as they could lead to misinterpretation.

Physical contact

- Seek consent of child/young person in relation to physical contact (except in an emergency or a dangerous situation)
- Avoid horseplay or inappropriate physical contact.
- Check with children/young people about their level of comfort when doing touch exercises.
 - Don't force a child to engage in any show of affection.

Health and safety

- Don't leave children unattended or unsupervised.
- Manage any dangerous materials.
- Provide a safe environment.
- Be aware of accident procedure and follow it accordingly.

WHO TO CONTACT ABOUT ISSUES RELATED TO CHILD PROTECTION AND WELFARE

Bridget Nelson has been designated as the person to contact if you have an issue or concern about any aspect of a child's or young person's safety and welfare. It is the responsibility of

this person to support and advise SETC members and helpers about policy and procedures in relation to child protection and to ensure that procedures are followed. It is also the responsibility of the Designated Person to liaise with Social Services, the Police or Health services where appropriate.

Bridget Nelson can be contacted at Paseo de la Ribera 34,1º, Sitges and on 677082636.

Jan Cooper has been designated as deputy to Bridget Nelson and can be contacted on 665369092

REPORTING OF SUSPECTED OR DISCLOSED ABUSE

The following excerpt from *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* shows what would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- (i) specific indication from the child or young person that s/he has been abused.
- (ii) an account by a person who saw the child/young person being abused.
- (iii) evidence, such as an injury or behaviour, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way.
- (iv) an injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse [an example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour].
- (v) consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

Recording procedures

Sitges ETC has an incident file where concerns over any child or young person should be recorded. This record is confidential and access to the file is only available to :

Sitges ETC President , Secretary and Treasurer.

Child Protection Designated Person (who will be responsible for storing the file) and Deputy.

Members and helpers should record the following information in relation to children and young people giving as much detail as possible :

- Suspicions.
- Concerns.
- Worrying observations.
- Behavioural changes.
- Actions and outcomes.

The entry should be signed and dated by the person reporting the incident.

Dealing with a disclosure

- Stay calm and listen to the child/young person, allow him or her enough time to say what s/he needs to say.
- Don't use leading questions or prompt details.
- Reassure the child/young person but do not promise to keep anything secret.
 - Praise the child / young person for being brave enough to have shared their feelings with you.
- Don't make the child/young person repeat the details unnecessarily.
- Explain to the child/young person what will happen next (explanation should be age-appropriate).

Reporting procedures

In the event of a child / young person disclosing any kind of abuse to a SETC member, the Designated person or deputy should be informed before the end of the day and it should be recorded in the Incident file. If there are reasonable grounds for concern as outlined above, the designated person will contact the Social Services, Health Services or Police. If the Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person is not available, contact Fundacion Vicki Bernadet directly for help.

- The person who expresses the concern should be involved and kept informed of any actions taken.
- Actions and outcomes should be noted.

- All details, including the date, time and people involved in the concern or disclosure and the facts should be recorded. Information recorded should be factual. Any opinions should be supported by facts.
- The most appropriate person should discuss the concern or consult with the parents. Parents, carers or responsible adults should be made aware of a report to the Health Service Executive unless it is likely to put the child/young person at further risk.
- The Designated Person may contact the Health Services or Fundacio Vicki Bernadet for an informal consultation prior to making a report to the health or Social Services or the Police.
- Information will be shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis.
- In case of emergencies and in situations that threaten the immediate safety of a child/ young person, it may be necessary to contact the Police directly.

Confidentiality statement

Confidentiality statement

We in Sitges English Theatre Company are committed to ensuring peoples' rights to confidentiality. However, in relation to child protection and welfare we undertake that:

- Information will only be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard the child/young person.
- Giving such information to others for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality.
- We cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the child or young person are at risk.
- Parents, children and young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is being made to the Health or Social Services, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk.
- Images of a child/young person will not be used for any reason without the consent of the parents (however, we cannot guarantee that cameras/videos will not be used at public performances)
- Procedures will be put in place in relation to the use of images of children/young people.

- Procedures will also be put in place for the recording and storing of information in line with our confidentiality policy.

Staff management policy statement

To protect both Sitges ETC members, helpers and children /young people, we undertake that:

New members, helpers and parents involved in Sitges ETC activities with children will:

- Be made aware of our code of conduct, child protection procedures, and the identity and role of who has been designated to deal with issues of concern.
- Be expected to have read and signed the Child Protection Policy Statement.

Policy statement on the involvement of parents

We are committed to being open with all parents.

We undertake to:

- Advise parents of our child protection policy.
- Issue contact/consent forms where relevant.
- Comply with health and safety practices.
- Operate child-centred policies in accordance with best practice.
- Adhere to our child protection guidelines.
- Ensure as far as possible that the activities are age-appropriate.
- Encourage and facilitate the involvement of parent(s), where appropriate.

If we have concerns about the welfare of the child/young person, we will:

- Respond to the needs of the child or young person.
- Inform the parents on an on-going basis unless this action puts the child or young person at further risk.
- Where there are child protection and welfare concerns we are obliged to pass these on to the Social Services, and, in an emergency, the Police.

In the event of a complaint against a member of staff, we will immediately ensure the safety of the child/young person and inform parents as appropriate.

As a child-centred organisation, we are committed to putting the interest of the child/young person first.

- Encourage parents to work in partnership with us under the guidelines set out by SETC to ensure the safety of their children.
- Have a designated contact person available for consultation with parents in the case of any concern over a child or young person's welfare.

Dealing with an allegation against staff

Two separate procedures must be followed:

1. In respect of the child/young person Jan Cooper will deal with issues related to the child/young person.

2. In respect of the person against whom the allegation is made Bridget Nelson will deal with issues related to the staff member.

- The first priority is to ensure that no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk.

- If allegations are made against the Designated Person, then the Deputy Designated Person should be contacted.

- Both the parents and child/young person will be informed of actions planned and taken. The child/young person will be dealt with in an age-appropriate manner.

- The staff member will be informed as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation.

- the staff member will be given the opportunity to respond.

- SETC chairperson will be informed as soon as possible.

- Any action following an allegation of abuse against a member of SETC will be taken in consultation with Social Services, Fundacion Vicki Bernadet and/or the Police.

- After consultation, SETC chairperson will advise the person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.

In the event of complaints or comments:

- Complaints or comments will be responded to within 1 week.

- SETC chairperson has responsibility for directing complaints/comments to the appropriate person.

- Verbal complaints will be logged and responded to.

Accidents procedure

- Sitges ETC will maintain an up-to-date register of the contact details of all children/young people involved in the organisation.
- External organisations with whom SETC has dealings must provide proof that they have public liability insurance.
- First-aid boxes will be available and regularly re-stocked.
- A first – aid box and an accident/incident book will be present at all Sitges ETC activities and events.
- Children and young people must be advised of risks of dangerous material.
- Details of risky equipment used will be recorded and steps taken to minimise risk.

Important Phonenumber

Local Sitges Police :938110016

Emergency services : 112

Vicki Bernadet Foundation : Helpline for cases of sexual abuse : 93 3189769

Infancia Respon - DGAIA (Direccion general de atención a la Infancia y Adolescencia) : 116111

RUMI (Registre Unificat de Maltractaments Infants) : 900300777

Serveis Socials Basics Sitges 938949494