

Wick Theatre Company Safeguarding Policy

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1. Policy statement and aims

The Wick Theatre Company is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment in which everyone can come together voluntarily to create drama and to enjoy the social activities. We aim to promote a climate where everyone will feel confident about sharing any concerns which they may have about their own safety or the well-being of others. In particular we believe that the safety of children and vulnerable adults is paramount and that specific measures are necessary to ensure the company fulfils its legal and ethical responsibilities.

This policy applies to all trustees, members of the company, associates or contractors when engaged in company activities. Such activities can easily be identified as they will be promoted through our website, the newsletter and/or ad hoc communications from our membership secretary. This will include rehearsals, meetings, production activities, performances and social events.

2. Definitions

- i. **Child/Young Person:** Any person aged under 18 years.
- ii. **Vulnerable Adult:** Any person aged 18 years or over who by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or personal circumstances may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation.
- iii. **Abuse:** Includes physical, emotional, sexual abuse, neglect, financial exploitation and discriminatory abuse.

3. Principles

- i. Children and vulnerable adults have the right to be protected from harm and maltreatment and to engage in enjoyable, creative and collaborative activity in a safe environment;
- ii. All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately;
- iii. We will work to ensure that our policies and practice are informed and relevant by working with children, vulnerable adults, their carers/parents, external agencies and statutory bodies.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Our Trustees are responsible for:

- i. ensuring that the safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and reviewed annually or more frequently when there is a change in legislation or best practice;
- ii. publicising the policy through the website and other appropriate means to ensure that our members are aware of the policy;
- iii. appointing a designated safeguarding officer (DSO).
- iv. ensuring that where members are working directly with children and

4.2 The Designated Safeguarding Officer will:

- i. Receive and act on safeguarding concerns including recommending changes of practice to the Trustees;
- ii. Liaise with the statutory bodies when required;
- iii. Maintain secure records of safeguarding concerns.

4.3 Our members are responsible for:

- i. Acting within the terms of this policy;
- ii. Not colluding with any unsafe practices;
- iii. Reporting any concerns or disclosures promptly to the DSO or a trustee.

5 Guidance when working with children and vulnerable adults

5.1 We should ensure that:

- i. A minimum of two adults is present during sessions with children or vulnerable adults.
- ii. Wherever possible, a parent or guardian or support worker is present.
- iii. Activities take place in an open environment (e.g. a meeting room at the Community Centre rather than someone's home)
- iv. We treat all children, and vulnerable adults with equal respect as any other member of the Wick Theatre Company.
- v. We give positive and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- vi. We model appropriate conduct, excluding any bullying, shouting, racism, sexism or other discriminatory or undermining behaviour.
- vii. Report any concerns immediately

5.2 Things not to do - include:

- i. Working with any child or vulnerable adult in a one-on-one situation;
- ii. Making any unnecessary physical contact (except if there is risk of imminent harm to anyone present);
- iii. Making suggestive or inappropriate comments;
- iv. Driving one child or young person home on your own.

6 How to respond to a disclosure of possible abuse

- i. Stay calm.
- ii. Listen to what is said.
- iii. Find an appropriate opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared – do not promise to keep secrets.
- iv. Ask questions for clarification only and always avoid questions that suggest a particular answer.
- v. Give reassurance that the right thing has been done by sharing the information.
- vi. Explain what you will do next.
- vii. Record in writing what was said as soon as possible, in the exact words used, – note the date and time, to whom the information was given – and ensure the record is signed and dated.

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of possible abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional Safeguarding agencies (Childrens' or Adults' Social Care), following a referral from the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

7. Police Checks - DBS checks

We will follow the guidance on whether a role requires a DBS check which will depend on the level and purpose of contact with children and/or vulnerable adults. As we do not have a specific youth group or work regularly with groups of vulnerable adults we are unlikely to require enhanced DBS checks but where possible we prefer those working with children and young people to have a basic DBS check from either from their employment or from another voluntary organisation.

8. Photography and the Internet

There have been increasing concerns about the risks posed by the Internet to children and young people through the use of social media and photographs on websites. To reduce this risk we have a privacy policy which ensures the safety of children in the use of photographs with their names and the need for parent/carer and personal consent to the use of images.

9. Licence requirements

There is a legislative requirement in certain circumstances for children and young people to have a licence to perform if cast in a Wick Theatre production. This may involve the need for chaperones to be appointed. If you are directing a play where children or young people are to be performing you should speak to a committee member.

10. Contact Information

Company trustees - see the newsletter for contact details

Designated Safeguarding Officer: Michael Wells

West Sussex County Council Safeguarding contacts:

Children's social care support:

Telephone: 01403 229900

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/social-care-support/children/contact-us-for-childrens-social-care-support/#contact-details>

Adult social care support:

Telephone 01243 642121

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/social-care-support/adults/how-to-get-adult-social-care-support/#contact-us>

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

11. Policy last reviewed: February 2026