

PRIMARY SHAKESPEARE COMPANY SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Primary Shakespeare Company Child Protection Policy Summary

The majority of the work undertaken by The Primary Shakespeare Company (The PSC) takes place within school settings and, whilst practitioners are running sessions for PSC in one of our partner schools, the Safeguarding Policy of that school will take precedence. When working with a school for the first time, practitioners should establish who holds the role of **designated safeguarding officer** and ensure that all concerns are relayed directly to them.

The safety and welfare of the children and young people for whom we provide services is paramount and will over-ride all other considerations. This includes all children, young people and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity. All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

This policy document provides guidelines for safeguarding best practice for our practitioners and aims to cover all situations which might fall outside of the school's Safeguarding policy – for example, during one of the charity's festival days.

In line with the following legislative framework, we aim to provide safe participatory and creative opportunities for all the children who take part in Primary Shakespeare Company activities.

[Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#)

Children Act [1989](#) and [2004](#)

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)

[Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers July 2018](#)

[London Child Protection Procedures 2018](#)

[What to do if you are worried a child is being abused? 2015](#)

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

Primary Shakespeare Company has developed a policy and set of procedures for the use of all individuals, whether they are directly employed by Primary Shakespeare Company, employed as contractors on behalf of Primary Shakespeare Company, or are volunteers.

Training opportunities will be provided to Senior Staff or staff in key positions, to ensure they have a clear understanding of the guidelines.

It is expected that Senior Staff will draw attention to the policy and that individuals will familiarise themselves with it. This expectation will be written into all contractual agreements. Volunteers will be expected to sign a declaration that they have read and understood the summary guidelines and agree to put them into practice.

Designated Safeguarding Officers

The Designated Safeguarding Officers are the Artistic Director (Luke Hollowell-Williams) and the Development and Administration Director (Kirsty McCreadie). Their contact details are available to all staff.

The Guidelines in Section 1 cover how you can promote the safety of children and those working with children.

Children are defined in law as anyone up to and including the age of 18. The term 'young person' is not legally defined and acknowledges that individuals of say, 16 or 17 years old, may not consider themselves 'children' and are often called 'young people' by Youth Workers. Extensions of the definition of a child exist for those who are disabled or for those in local authority care settings.

The Guidelines in Section 2 cover when you should invoke the procedure, what you should do if you have concerns about a child or young person or concerns about the behaviour of a colleague, how to report your concerns to the appropriate authority and what to do if a child or young person starts to tell you about abuse. If you have any concern relating to physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect of a child (up to the age of 18) you should take those concerns seriously. You must maintain confidentiality, as any unnecessary breaches of confidentiality can be very damaging to the child, the family, and any child protection investigations, which can take place. Any concerns should only be discussed with those on the reporting line. It is important to remember that it is not your responsibility to decide if child abuse has occurred, but it is your responsibility to take action, however small your concerns.

The Guidelines in Section 3 cover what you should do when an allegation of child abuse is made against a member of staff or a volunteer, or information is received about an alleged abuser.

The Guidelines in Section 4 cover the recruitment and selection procedures Senior Staff must follow when recruiting individuals. Those individuals who have substantial access to children will also be asked to complete an Enhanced Disclosure application to have this information checked with the government's Disclosure and Barring service. Existing certificates must be no more than three years old. It is important to note that, though an online service is available, and many freelance theatre-in-education practitioners are signed up to this, many schools still request a paper copy of the certificate. It is important to recognise that recruitment and selection procedures do not in themselves prevent abusers from being employed, but that having careful procedures is one way of reducing the risk.

Primary Shakespeare Company Child Protection Policy and Procedures

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SECTION 1 PROMOTING THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION

The Guidelines in Section 1 cover **how** you can promote the safety of children and those working with children.

Children are defined in law as anyone up to and including the age of 18. The term 'young person' is not legally defined and acknowledges that individuals of say, 16 or 17 years old, may not consider themselves 'children' and are often called 'young people' by Youth Workers. Extensions of the definition of a child exist for those who are disabled or for those in local authority care settings.

1.1 Safety of Children and Those Working With Children

- Ensure another adult is present when working with children
- Never receive or pass on contact details from children nor let children have your personal contact details (e.g. mobile number, email, address or social media handles)
- Never take a photograph of a child or allow anyone to photograph children unless it is for specific, agreed purposes and where appropriate consent has been given
- Never use corporal punishment or excessive force in handling a child
- Never do anything of a personal nature for children or young people that they can do for themselves, or any activity that could be misconstrued.
- Do not place yourself in a situation where you are alone with one child or young person away from other people. If working in a one-to-one situation, ensure that this is in a room where the door is either open, or has a glass panel and that you are visible to other adults on the premises.
- Only touch a child when it is absolutely necessary and only after permission is given by the child

In this case, be clear, tell the child where you are going to touch them and how, for example: "I will help you up on to this step by placing my hand on the centre of your back"

- Try to avoid taking children singly to the toilet. If possible take other children with you.
- Never take children in your car alone.
- Never take children to your home.
- Never arrange any contact with children met through PSC activities outside of those activities
- If a child touches you in an inappropriate place, record what happened and ensure that another adult also knows. As it could be a totally innocent touch, do not make the child feel like a criminal. Remember ignoring this or allowing it to go on may place you in an untenable situation. To ignore this or allowing it to go on may place the child or young person in a vulnerable position, as the next person may take advantage and then say the child or young person instigated it.

At PSC festivals the class teacher is responsible for the children, however be mindful of the following:

- Children leaving the premises unattended. If, for any reason, children have to leave the premises temporarily, ensure that they are accompanied, or that, if they need to return home, that they have written permission from their parent or carer to do so (if age appropriate).
- The safety of children is paramount and they should not be left unattended until their parent/guardian arrives. Children should not be handed over to a friend or neighbour to take home or allowed to leave on their own unless you have been authorised by the parent. Where possible, a password should be given to the adult collecting the child or consent form completed by the parent/guardian if the child is allowed to go home. No children under 8 should ever be allowed to leave on their own. Children over 8 should only be allowed to leave on their own if written consent has been given by the parent or carer.
- If strangers appear suspicious you should report them to staff at the school where the festival is taking place or, if it is taking place in a theatre, venue staff. You should not approach any stranger alone – ensure you have a colleague with you. If a child reports an indecent exposure or any other threatening behaviour, the police should be called immediately.

1.2 Children with a Disability

Evidence suggests that children and young people with a disability are at increased risk of abuse, and that the presence of multiple disabilities appears to increase the risk of both abuse and neglect. Children with a disability may be especially vulnerable to abuse for a number of reasons. They may:

- have fewer outside contacts than other children
- receive intimate personal care
- have impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse
- have communication difficulties which make it difficult to tell others what is happening
- be inhibited to complain for fear of losing services
- be especially vulnerable to bullying and/or intimidation
- be more vulnerable than other children to abuse by their peers

Safeguards for children with a disability are essentially the same as for children without a disability. There should be particular attention paid to promoting a high level of awareness of the risks and high standards of practice. All concerns should be acted upon in accordance with the policy and the same thresholds for action apply.

1.3 Online Safety: Social Media including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Tik Tok

Despite their very special value for communications and for inclusion, all technology carries the potential for misuse. Risks associated with user interactive services include: cyber bullying, grooming and potential abuse by online predators, identity theft and exposure to inappropriate content such as pornography. We will seek to promote online safety by:

- immediately removing inappropriate content.
- reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly;
- providing adequate physical security for ICT equipment;
- ensuring that user names, logins and passwords are used effectively;
- using only official email accounts provided via the organisation, and monitoring these as necessary;
- ensuring that the personal information of staff, volunteers and service users (including service users' names) are not published on our website;
- ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their written permission has been obtained, and only for the

purpose for which consent has been given. Photos and video footage will be stored or used for up to five years unless otherwise agreed;

- risk assessing social media tools used in the course of our work;
- risk assessing emerging technologies before they are used by The Primary Shakespeare Company

1.4 Guidelines for Use of Photographic Filming Equipment at Events

There is evidence that some people have used events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photos or film footage of young and disabled people in vulnerable positions. In line with most school safeguarding policies, PSC staff are asked not to take photographs during sessions with mobile phones, or Bluetooth enabled devices. In general, photographs and film of rehearsal and devising sessions should be taken by school staff and shared in line with the school's own Safeguarding policy. At events held by the charity, the administration (Artistic Director, Programme Director and Administrator) are responsible for obtaining permission and release forms from participating schools, and for ensuring that any children whose photographs or likenesses may not be shared are identified. Should practitioners need to obtain specific permission to take photographs, please consult the administration and use the relevant form in Appendix 6

- In the latter case, if you would like to use the photo again at a later date you will need to contact the parent/guardian to obtain permission for further usage. This is because children's lives and circumstances can change, and a photo used inappropriately could generate very bad publicity for Primary Shakespeare Company and cause distress to the child, family or guardian. If you are working with vulnerable or disadvantaged children, permission should be sought with sensitivity to this background. All participants and parents/guardians will be given the option of NOT being photographed and their images NOT used in future publications, via the consent form.
- If PSC are commissioning professional photographers or inviting the press to an activity or event we will ensure that they are clear about the expectations of them in relation to child protection. We will provide them with a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour. They will be issued with identification, which must be worn at all times. Whilst copyright lies with the photographer, we will ensure, at the time the commission is confirmed, that photographs will only be used for purposes of which we are aware and approve.

- PSC will

inform participants and parents/carers/guardians that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs.

not allow unsupervised access to participants or one-to-one photo sessions.

not approve photo sessions outside events or at a participant's home.

1.5 Unsupervised Children

Due to the nature of PSC's work, it is highly unlikely that our practitioners will be in a situation where they have to deal with an unsupervised child. Should this happen, your first response should always be to locate a teacher, member of support staff from the child's school or, failing that, an accompanying adult from the school. On the rare occasion where this is not possible, the way in which staff deal with unaccompanied children they discover must be based both on an awareness of the responsibility of the parent or the 'in loco parentis' carer, and the duty of care towards children during all Primary Shakespeare Company activities.

If, at the end of a festival, a school leaves without a child it is the responsibility of PSC to ensure an adult from that school returns to pick the child up.

In the first event, practitioners should make a senior member of PSC staff aware of the situation, at which point that child becomes the responsibility of the senior staff member.

If a senior staff member is not on site the practitioner must, in this order

1. Phone senior member of PSC staff to report
2. Phone the class teacher to arrange for them to return and pick up the child. If, for any reason, they can't be contacted, phone the school office.

If a senior member of PSC staff is not in attendance, the practitioner assumes responsibility and must ensure that the child leaves only with an appropriate adult (member of school's staff, parent/carers, or designated adult).

1.6 Project Planning and Risk Assessment

Risk assessment should be part of planning any project and should take into account all aspects of a project, but particularly any risks relating to protection of children, young people or vulnerable adults. Risk management should be an ongoing part of any project.

The principles of risk assessment are to consider the:

- Practical detail of a project including advice and materials
- Things that can go wrong in a project
- Likelihood of these things going wrong
- Impact of these things going wrong

Once this is done you can:

- Identify measures to reduce the risk
- Decide what to do if things go wrong
- Allocate roles to monitor and manage child protection

The templates in Appendix B, 2 of which can also be found in the Arts Council's guide 'Keeping Arts Safe' (see 1.7), may be useful in carrying out risk assessment and risk management for projects.

1.7 Key Contacts

NSPCC – Child Protection Helpline – 0800 800 5000

Free 24 hour service which provides counselling information and advice to anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse.

Childline – 0800 1111

SECTION 2

DEALING WITH CONCERNS ABOUT CHILD ABUSE

INTRODUCTION

The Guidelines in Section 2 cover when you should invoke the procedure, what you should do if you have concerns about a child or young person or concerns about the behaviour of a colleague, how to report your concerns to the appropriate authority and what to do if a child or young person starts to tell you about abuse. If you have any concern relating to physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect of a child (up to the age of 18) you should take those concerns seriously. You must maintain confidentiality, as any unnecessary breaches of confidentiality can be very damaging to the child, the family, and any child protection investigations which can take place. Any concerns should only be discussed with those on the reporting line. It is important to remember that it is not your responsibility to decide if child abuse has occurred, but it is your responsibility to take action, however small your concerns.

2.1 When to Invoke the Procedures – Definition of Child Abuse and Neglect

You should invoke the procedures whenever a concern is raised that a child may be harmed in one or more of the following ways: -

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. **See Appendix 1 for definitions and indicators of abuse.**

2.2 What To Do When You Have a Concern

- Take any immediate action required to assist the child e.g. emergency medical treatment.
- If possible, seek the support of a member of school staff to witness the situation.
- Record the incident using the Incident Report Form – **Appendix 2**. In the event of an injury to a child, accidental or otherwise, make sure it is recorded and witnessed by another adult, no matter how trivial the injury may seem.

- Create a safe environment for the child to talk. Be clear about what the child has said, record what is said using the Incident Report Form (Appendix 1) and maintain confidentiality. If possible have a witness present.
- If in a school or educational setting, speak immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (this is likely to be the Head or Deputy Head Teacher). It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually social services.
- If in a theatre, speak to the class teacher accompanying the children and ensure that the information is passed on to the designated adult within the child's school who will advise whether Social Services need to be informed.

Social services will liaise with the relevant departments on a 'need-to-know' basis and will, if appropriate, inform the police. It is the responsibility of the authorities to determine whether abuse has occurred.

- Keep records of any false allegations a child or young person makes against you and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the school and a senior member of PSC staff. This should include everything from 'You are always picking on me' to 'You hit me' or comments such as 'Don't touch me'.
- Never keep suspicions of child abuse by a colleague to yourself. Although it is particularly difficult to report colleagues your primary duty is to protect children and you personally could be implicated by silence.

Whistle-Blowing and Complaints

The Primary Shakespeare Company assures all staff that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports concerns regarding a colleague's behaviour towards a child, young person or Adult at Risk. The Primary Shakespeare Company takes all complaints seriously. Any complaints made by a child, young person or vulnerable adult, staff, volunteer, parent or carer will be referred to the Board of Trustees.

2.3 What to Say to Parents/Carers

In most situations you should be completely honest to parents about what has happened to their child. In some situations it may not be appropriate to discuss the matter with the parent/carers if the child has asked you not to

inform them or if the parent/carer has been named or is expected to be perpetrator of the abuse.

Always ensure that you enlist the support of a member of school staff and inform a senior member of PSC staff.

2.4 What To Do if a Child/Young Person Discloses Abuse to You

- Stay calm, reassuring and listen
- Create a safe environment for the child to talk, arrange a time and place to talk privately as soon as possible after the child has initiated contact.
- Explain that you cannot promise to keep what the child tells you a secret; you may have to contact a social worker or the police.
- Don't make any other promises to the child – the situation may cause you to react emotionally.
- Do not press for details – this is likely to need further and possibly extensive investigation. It is better for the child if s/he does not have to report details unnecessarily.
- Tell the child that s/he was right to tell – that s/he is not to blame for the incident. Let the child know that you understand how difficult it is to talk about such experiences. Thank the child.
- As soon as possible afterwards, record your conversation with the child. Remember the child's exact words. Record your own statement to the child using the Incident Report Form – Appendix 1. If possible take a witness to take notes of the conversation.
- Refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the school and a senior member of PSC staff.

2.5 Recording Physical Injuries on Children

When you notice an injury to a child, which needs to be recorded, do this as soon as possible and make a note of when the injury was first seen. Try to record the following information in respect of each mark.

- Exact position of injury on the body eg upper outer arm/left cheek
- Size of injury – in approximate centimetres or inches (use indicators eg size of a one pence coin)

- Approximate shape of injury eg round, square or straight line
- Colour of injury
- Whether the skin is broken
- Whether there is any swelling at the site of the injury or elsewhere
- Whether there is a scab, any blistering, any bleeding
- Whether the injury is clean or dirty
- Whether mobility is restricted as a result of the injury
- Whether the site of the injury feels hot by asking the child
- Whether the child feels hot
- Whether the child feels pain

2.6 Who Should Be Contacted for Advice Within the Organisation

Contact the Artistic Director or Development and Administration Director. If they are not available, contact Social Services.

2.7 Responsibility for Passing Concerns On To Social Services

The person who completes the Incident Report Form – **Appendix 2** – should inform Social Services after consulting with the Artistic Director or Development and Administration Director

2.8 Time Scale for Passing on Concerns

Concerns should be passed on by telephone or in person to the Artistic Director or Development and Administration Director on the same working day. This should be followed up in writing by using the Incident Report Form – **Appendix 2** – within 24 hours.

2.9 Making a Referral

If a referral to Social Services is required, the person who completes the incident form should contact your local Social Services Office depending in which area you are based and where the child lives after consultation with the Artistic Director or Development and Administration Director.

SECTION 3 ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

INTRODUCTION

The Guidelines in Section 3 cover what you should do when an allegation of child abuse is made against a member of staff or a volunteer, or information is received about an alleged abuser.

3.1 STAFF: Allegations of Child Abuse Against Staff

Children who report that they have been abused by a member of staff must be listened to and heard, whatever form their attempts to communicate their worries take. Listened to means just that; on no account should suggestions be made to children as alternative explanations to their worries. A written, signed and dated record should be made of the allegations as soon as practicable – within 24 hours using the Incident Report Form (Appendix 1).

Employees cannot promise total confidentiality to young people who make allegations. The incident should be discussed with your Artistic Director or Development and Administration Director. It must be made clear to the young person who requests complete confidentiality that in some cases staff would be bound to pass on what they were told.

3.2 Action to be Taken by Person First Hearing the Allegations

Staff who hear an allegation of abuse against another member of staff should report the matter immediately to the Artistic Director or Development and Administration Director, unless the allegation is made against them, in which case it should be reported to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

3.3 Initial Action by Manager Responsible for the Member of Staff

Where an allegation is made against a member of staff, the Artistic Director should be informed. They will discuss the circumstances of the allegations with:

- i) a manager in the local Child Protection Unit of Social Services to establish whether or not to investigate under local child protection procedures. This decision is made by Social Services.

Establishing whether an allegation warrants further investigation is not to form a view on the allegation itself, or to interview children, but to consider in consultation whether the allegation requires further investigation and, if so, by whom. If the allegation was trivial or demonstrably false, a further investigation would not be warranted.

Where, following the initial consideration, the Artistic Director believes that the allegation is without foundation, he or she should:

- Inform the member of staff of the allegation and the fact that no further action is to be taken under disciplinary or child protection procedures.
- Prepare a written report setting out with reasons that the allegation is without foundation. Use the Incident Report Form – Appendix 1.

3.4 Investigation Under Child Protection Procedures

An investigation will be undertaken by Social Services and usually by the Police. The Artistic Director will be advised to refer the detail of the allegations to the Social Services office responsible for the investigation.

Any disciplinary process should be clearly separated from child protection investigations. While the disciplinary process may be informed by Child Protection Investigations and in some circumstances the Child Protection agencies might decide to make a recommendation about suspension or other protective action as a result of the strategy discussion, the Child Protection process has different objectives from the disciplinary procedure and the two should not be confused.

Any investigation by the Social Services or Police Child Protection Team will take priority over an internal (disciplinary) investigation by Primary Shakespeare Company. An internal investigation running alongside a child protection team enquiry is not likely to be good practice and should be held in abeyance pending the outcome of the external investigation.

3.5 Action Under Disciplinary Procedures

Once the outcome of the Child Protection Investigation is known a decision should be taken by the Board of Trustees in consultation with the Artistic Director, whether to reactivate disciplinary procedures or whether to initiate

disciplinary procedures if suspension or a disciplinary investigation has not already taken place.

The immediate suspension of the employee against whom the allegation was made should be considered. In making a decision as to whether suspension is appropriate, the Artistic Director should seek advice from a Manager in the local Child Protection Unit. The decision to suspend must be made by the Artistic Director with the support of the Board. Circumstances in which suspension properly occurs include:

- Where a child or children are at risk
- Where the allegations are so severe that dismissal for gross misconduct is possible
- Where suspension is necessary to allow the conduct of the investigation to proceed unimpeded.

In all cases where suspension is being considered the Artistic Director should advise the member of staff to seek assistance from a trade union and/or a professional organisation.

Wherever possible the Artistic Director will arrange an interview before suspension commences to explain the reason for the suspension, its expected duration, and the course of action to be undertaken (eg to conduct the investigation) The employee should be given the right to be accompanied at that interview and the reason for the suspension given to him/her in writing at the interview or sent to his/her home address.

Details of the allegations made should not be given to the member of staff – either at the interview or in writing as this could prejudice any subsequent police investigation. The employee should be informed that allegations have been made against him/her that require investigation under child protection procedures.

The suspension must be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that timescales laid down within the disciplinary procedure are met. The manager should also consider carefully, and keep under review, decisions as to who is informed of the suspension and investigation and to what extent confidentiality can or should be maintained, according to the circumstances of the particular case.

In a situation where a matter becomes common knowledge or the subject of general gossip, it may be desirable to provide an accurate statement for

public information. The Artistic Director, should act on advice from the Director of Social Services on this matter as necessary.

The suspended member of staff should be given the name of someone in Primary Shakespeare Company as an information contact, this is likely to be the Development and Administration Director. The main role of this person is to provide information on the progress of the investigation. Social contact with the member of staff's colleagues and friends at work should not be precluded except where likely to be prejudicial to the gathering and presentation of evidence.

Although it is the aim that all investigations should be conducted as speedily as possible, consistent with establishing the full facts, arrangements should be made for the member of staff to be contacted regularly with information on progress and developments on the case. The decision as to whether payment should be received during a period of suspension should be made in consultation with the Personnel Section.

3.6 Lifting Suspension

In lifting suspension, whether after the investigation or at the conclusion of a disciplinary hearing, consideration should be given to allowing for a cooling off period, and or to return to work meeting to discuss or clarify any outstanding matters (e.g. to provide advice or counselling), or to discuss the decision of the disciplinary panel)

3.7 Following Investigation and Disciplinary Process

All documents relating to the investigation and any subsequent disciplinary hearings should be retained, together with a written record of the outcome and, where disciplinary action has been taken, retained on the employees personal and confidential file. The Artistic Director may find it helpful to consider at the conclusion of the investigation whether there are any general matters arising from it that should be brought to the attention of the Board of Trustees, for example, a review of procedures. Any training needs for members of staff might also be considered as part of such a review.

3.8 VOLUNTEERS

Where an allegation is made against a volunteer, there should be urgent initial consideration by the manager of whether or not there is sufficient substance in an allegation to warrant investigation. Staff should make contact with the Artistic Director, who will discuss the circumstances of the allegations with a Manager in the Child Protection Unit of Social Services if this is indicated.

It should be noted that the decision on whether or not to investigate under local Child Protection Procedures rests with the Social Services.

Establishing whether an allegation warrants further investigation is not to form a view on the allegation itself, or to interview children, but to consider in consultation whether the allegation requires further investigation and, if so, by whom. If the allegation was trivial or demonstrably false, a further investigation would not be warranted.

Where following the initial consideration the Artistic Director believes that the allegation is without foundation, he or she should:

- Inform the volunteer of the allegation and the fact that no further action is to be taken under Child Protection Procedures.
- Prepare a report setting out in conclusion that the allegation is without foundation, with reasons. Use the Incident Report Form (**Appendix 2**).

Investigation Under Child Protection Procedures

Where a Child Protection Investigation has been initiated by Social Services and/or Police, the volunteer should be informed by the Artistic Director, that he/she will not be used as a volunteer during the period of investigation.

Details of the allegation should not be given to the volunteer – either at the interview or in writing. The volunteer should be informed that allegations have been made against him/her which require investigation under child protection procedures.

In a situation where the matter becomes common knowledge or the subject of general gossip, it may be desirable to provide an accurate statement for public information. The Artistic Director should take advice on this from the Board of Trustees.

The Volunteer should be given the name of a member of Primary Shakespeare Company staff as an information contact. The main role of this person is to provide information as to the progress of the investigation.

At the end of the investigation, the Artistic Director will decide in consultation with the Board of Trustees, whether or not the Volunteer should be allowed to work for Primary Shakespeare Company again.

If it is agreed that the volunteer may return to work, consideration should be given to allowing for a cooling off period or a return to work meeting to discuss/clarify any outstanding matters.

3.9 CASUAL/TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Casual staff and temporary staff who have access to children should be subject to the same disciplinary procedures as permanent staff.

3.10 CONTRACTED OUT STAFF

All service providers whether they are Contractors/Delegated Senior Staff/Lease Holders/Hirers or similar will be expected to adopt this policy on child protection or provide their own policy document of a similar standard where they have access to children.

A copy of this policy should be included in any documents relating to obtaining quotations, tenders or any agreements where service providers have access to children.

A monitoring process must be established by Senior Staff whereby the service provider confirms their adherence to the Primary Shakespeare Company policy and/or provides their own policy. In addition the service provider must provide updated versions of their own policy throughout the contracted/hired/delegated/lease period.

SECTION 4 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

INTRODUCTION

The Guidelines in Section 4 cover the recruitment and selection procedures Senior Staff must follow when recruiting individuals. Those individuals who have substantial access to children will also be asked to complete a Criminal Records Disclosure and have the information checked with the Disclosure and Barring Service. It is important to recognise that recruitment and selection procedures do not in themselves prevent abusers from being employed, but having careful procedures is one way of reducing the risk.

4.1 Confidentiality

All information received concerning applicants for employment **MUST** remain confidential to the relevant staff on a 'need-to-know' basis.

4.2 Individuals Included

All individuals including all permanent, temporary, sessional, casual and volunteers employed by Primary Shakespeare Company are covered by these procedures.

All posts including temporary, sessional, casual or volunteer staff will be defined by the charity as either i) or ii) below.

- i) applying for work which will give them substantial unsupervised access on a sustained or regular basis to children under the age of 18 or
- ii) applying for work with Primary Shakespeare Company which will not have substantial unsupervised access to children under the age of 18.

4.3 Posts Requiring a Disclosure and Barring Service certificate

The Artistic Director in consultation with the Board of Trustees will decide which posts require a Disclosure and Barring Service Declaration.

To qualify for a DBS, posts should entail a substantial level of access to children, which may also be unsupervised and will be regular or sustained. In cases where it is less clear whether individuals have substantial access a judgement must be made by the Artistic Director on whether the amount of access to children can be regarded as substantial and therefore whether it

is necessary to request a check. All new posts will be considered against the DBS criteria before the recruitment process begins.

The following guidelines may be helpful in reaching a decision as to whether a position should be subject to a DBS Disclosure. They should generally be considered together, though there will be individual circumstances where one factor alone would be enough to justify a check.

- Does the position involve one-to-one contact?

Such contact is relevant, especially if it occurs on a regular basis, away from the child's home, or separate from other adults or children.

- Is there regular contact?

The more regular contact a person has with the same child, or group of children, the greater the opportunity to put the child at risk. This is especially so if the contact is unsupervised or occurs away from other children. Duties should normally bring them into unsupervised direct contact with the same children on a regular basis.

- Are the children or young people particularly vulnerable?

It may be considered that younger children are more vulnerable than older children and generally less able to protect themselves but the nature of the risk must also be considered. Children with a physical or learning disability are likely to be more vulnerable than those who are without disability.

4.4 Prior to Interview

Job Description and Person Specification

A written specification of the proposed activity should be produced with a person specification.

Application Form

All applicants seeking employment on a paid or voluntary basis must send an up to date CV which includes details of previous employment, paid or unpaid and gaps in employment.

Identity

It is important to be sure that the person is who he or she claims to be. In some cases, the candidate will already be known to Primary Shakespeare



Company. If not, ask to see proof of identity such as an original birth certificate, driving license or passport. Such proof of identity will, in any event, always be required in connection with an application to the Disclosure and Barring Service for a standard or Enhanced Disclosure.

Qualifications

Always verify that the candidate has actually obtained any academic or professional qualifications that are deemed essential for the job, and check these against the CV. Ask to see a copy of the relevant certificate or diploma or a letter from the awarding institution. If the original documents are not available ask for a properly certified copy.

Professional and Character References

References should always be taken up and obtained directly from the referee. It is not good practice to rely solely on references or testimonials supplied by the candidate. Wherever possible a reference should be obtained from the current or most recent employer, and where this does not cover a substantial period of time a reference from a previous employer(s) is advisable.

Online Search

The Primary Shakespeare Company may carry out an online search as part of our due diligence on any potential new employees- as recommended in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.(See Part 3, Safer Recruitment).

Employment History

Always ask for information about previous employment, and obtain satisfactory explanations through careful interviewing for any gaps in employment. In cases of doubt it may be deemed necessary to obtain the candidate's permission to confirm details of their employment and their reason for leaving from a previous employer(s) other than the one(s) given for reference purposes.

Disclosure and Barring Service Check

All applicants for positions involving work with children should be checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Normally, full Disclosure Clearance should be received before a person takes up a position. (see below for further information)

Children's and Adults' Barred Lists

In 2009, this replaced List 99 and the PoCA (Protection of Children Act) List. It is part of the **Vetting and Barring Scheme** run by the **Disclosure and Barring Service (previously the Independent Safeguarding Authority)** and is a confidential document which contains the names, dates of birth, National Insurance numbers and teacher reference numbers of people whose employment in relevant positions has been barred or restricted by the Secretary of State. Regulations are in place requiring employers to check these lists to ensure they do not appoint someone to a post from which they have been barred. A person whose employment has been restricted by the Secretary of State may only work in a post that does not contravene the terms of the restriction. A check against these combined lists is made through the DBS.

Right to Live and Work in the UK

Where a candidate does not hold a National Insurance Number it will be necessary to ascertain that s/he has the right to live and work in the UK. This will include whether s/he has any necessary work permit. Such checks will need to be undertaken sensitively with due care for the feelings and sensitivities of the individual concerned. In order to avoid any allegations of discriminatory treatment. It is also advisable that all prospective employees are asked whether they require a work permit so that this check is not undertaken selectively.

Posts Subject to Declaration Only – Criminal Convictions Have Been Declared

The interview panel need to make a decision as to the suitability of the applicant taking into account only those offences that may be relevant to the particular job. If there is any doubt as to the suitability of the applicant, the applicant should not be appointed.

All posts where candidates declare they have a record should be discussed with the Board of Trustees who will advise whether to:

- a) pursue a DBS Disclosure
- b) not to offer the post

4.5 Post Interview Procedure

The overriding principle is that wherever possible people (staff, volunteers, contractor staff) should not be deployed to work with children in a supervised or unsupervised capacity prior to completion of all relevant checks including a full DBS Disclosure.

Where there are good and pressing business reasons to allow people who have not been cleared by the DBS to start work, they should be appropriately supervised whenever they have access to children. A risk assessment will help determine the nature of the supervision to be put in place.

Supervision arrangements should be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure that they are operating effectively.

Where Senior Senior Staff deem it inappropriate for someone to commence working with children without clearance, but where the delay in the processing of DBS checks has the potential to mean the loss of a good candidate, a conditional offer of employment may be made subject to receipt of a full clear DBS Disclosure. Where appropriate Senior Senior Staff may ask staff to commence on alternative/restricted duties until clearance has been received.

4.6 Contractors' Staff

Primary Shakespeare Company has responsibility for the safety of children taking part in its activities whoever is providing the service. Service contracts which involve working with children should be subject to the same levels of checks as Primary Shakespeare Company employees prior to undertaking the work with children.

Monitoring on behalf of Primary Shakespeare Company should aim to ensure that access to children is given only within the context of this policy.

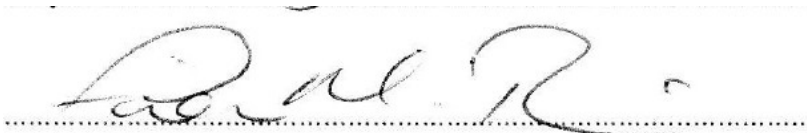
4.7 Recording of Information

The information the police will provide is of a sensitive and personal nature. It must be used only to judge the suitability or otherwise of a person for the position. Once a decision regarding the applicant has been made the information must be destroyed. An indication on the records that a check with the police has been carried out may be made but should not refer to any specific offences.

4.8 Induction and Training

As with all training and development the individual and Senior Staff need to consider and decide the level of knowledge and skill required by the individual to perform well in their current role. Basic awareness training sessions delivered internally as part of Primary Shakespeare Company's ongoing training programme are organised in relation to demand.

Policy reviewed and Agreed by the Board of Trustees: 14th January 2026



Signed

Fiona Mallin Robinson (Chair of Trustees)

APPENDIX 1: DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

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 or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen Syndrome by proxy.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve frequently causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

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. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE

The signs of physical abuse may include

- unexplained bruising
- marks or injuries
- bruises that reflect hand marks or fingertips
- cigarette burns
- bite marks
- broken bones
- scalds

Changes in behaviour can also indicate physical abuse:

- fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- flinching when approached or touched
- depression withdrawn behaviour

It is important to remember that children and young adults collect cuts and bruises in their daily life. It is important that these can be readily explained.

The signs of sexual abuse may include:

- stomach pains
- discomfort when walking or sitting down

Changes in behaviour that might indicate sexual abuse include:

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- running away
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- saying they have a secret they cannot tell anybody about
- substance or alcohol abuse suddenly
- having unexplained sources of money
- not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

Some indicators of neglect may include:

- looking badly presented with old, torn clothing
- always hungry and looking for food
- not being expected to be at home when it seems reasonable that they should be
- adults not seeming to know or be interested in what is happening to them
- becoming thin and under-nourished
- not having what they need for their studies
- not receiving medical attention when it seems appropriate

Emotional abuse can be difficult to identify but behaviour changes may include:

- fear of making mistakes
- sudden speech disorders
- self-harm
- fear of parent being approached concerning their behaviour

APPENDIX 2 INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

Name of young person.....

Name of school/college young person attends.....

Date	
Incident	
Action	
Staff signature	