

Natural Theatre Company (NTC) **Safeguarding Policy 2024**

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors working in the NTC building. The following document has been created with reference to the Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 policy document.

In addition, it also applies at outreach activities organised by the NTC at other locations or settings. However, staff should also ensure compliance to the settings own safeguarding policy – (for example, if you go into a school you would need to let their safeguarding lead know in advance).

Key Staff

Designated Safeguarding Lead – Mark Bishop, Participation Manager
01225 469 131
Designated Deputy - Georgina Craft, Company Manager
01225 469 131

The Designated Safeguarding lead is the first point of contact for all staff and volunteers to go to for advice if they are concerned about a child.

For further information about safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults in B&NES visit:

- **B&NES Report a Concern about a Child:**
<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/report-concern-about-child>
- **BNES Policies & Procedures:**
<https://bcssp.bathnes.gov.uk/policies-and-procedures-?search=&topics%5B104%5D=104&topics%5B106%5D=106>
- **BNES Recognising Abuse:**
<https://bcssp.bathnes.gov.uk/recognising-abuse>
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (December):**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 (September):**
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64f0a68ea78c5f000dc6f3b2/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023.pdf

1. Introduction

We at the NTC are committed to a practice, which safeguards the children, young people* and vulnerable adults we work with. We will ensure they are kept safe and have a positive and enjoyable experience working with us.

* A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children's Act 1989).

Good communication is essential in any organisation. In the NTC every effort will be made to assure that, should individuals have concerns about a child, young person, or another member of staff, they will be listened to, taken seriously and their concerns will be acted on.

The NTC will safeguard children, young people, and vulnerable adults by ensuring that staff and volunteers are committed to:

- Treating children and young people and vulnerable adults with respect, dignity and using appropriate language
- Always listening to what a child or young person is saying
- Valuing each child and young person
- Recognising the unique contribution each individual can make
- Challenging any inappropriate language used by a young person or child or an adult working with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- All staff and volunteers receive a copy of this Safeguarding Policy

Parents and carers

Parents / carers with parental responsibility are always ultimately responsible for their children's welfare, and they should be assured that their children are involved with a credible organisation.

The NTC achieves this by:

- Publishing the contact details of the Designated and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead on our website
- Publishing a full copy of this Safeguarding Policy on our education webpage
- Publishing details of how to make a complaint on our education webpage
- Ensuring that the Designated Lead and Deputy undertake training in Safeguarding every two years.

2. Statement of Intent

It is the policy of the NTC to safeguard the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults by protecting them from all forms of abuse including neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual harm and Child Sexual Exploitation. The NTC is committed to creating an environment in

which children and young people can feel safe and secure while engaged in any activities at the NTC or where NTC staff are engaged to deliver outreach sessions at other locations.

3. Types of abuse

Neglect: is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape,) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse as can other children.

Emotional abuse: is the persistent emotional maltreatment 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 insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Children who are missing or who are at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE): CSE is a form of sexual abuse. It occurs when an individual or group take advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim wants or needs and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. CSE does not always involve physical contact, it can also occur through the use of technology.

Cyber abuse: is a type of bullying (or harassment) using an electronic means. It is becoming extremely prevalent as technology advances and is not easily tracked or reported.

4. Guidelines for all staff and volunteers

Staff must at all times show respect and understanding for individual's rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the ethos and principles of NTC. Staff must behave in a professional way at all times ensuring that their conduct does not compromise their role or bring NTC into disrepute. As an organisation, which engages with children and young people and vulnerable adults, it is imperative that each member of staff is aware of their responsibilities and has a working knowledge of safeguarding procedures.

a. CONTACT

- Staff should try to always be visible to others in their contact with children.
- In the event of having to meet with an individual child or young person alone make every effort to keep this meeting as open as possible e.g. by leaving the door open
- If privacy is needed, ensure that other staff are informed of the meeting, the reason for it, and its whereabouts.
- Be aware that children and young people's behaviour can lead to staff finding themselves in a vulnerable situation (for example having to intervene with aggressive behaviour), if you are concerned, please seek advice from the Designated Lead or the Deputy.

Staff and volunteers should never:

- Do things of a personal nature for a child or a young person for example, where a child or young person has limited mobility, and would need help with toileting. NTC staff should seek a member of school staff or leader of the youth organisation to deal with this.

b. WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON MAKES A DISCLOSURE

- Offer reassurance without making promises, and take what the child says seriously

- Never guarantee absolute confidentiality, as safeguarding will always have precedence over any other issues.
- Remember your role is to report concerns, NOT investigate.
- Listen to the child, without interruption, rather than question him or her directly.
- Explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell.
- Record the discussion accurately, as soon as possible after the event,
- Use the child's words or explanations – do not translate into your own words in case you have misconstrued what the child was trying to say. Do not use emotive language, or opinions.
- Contact one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads for advice / guidance.
- The Designated Person may then discuss the concern / suspicion with the relevant organisation, and, if appropriate, make a direct referral to Children & Families Assessment Intervention Team (CAFAIT). See below p5
- If Designated Person is not available, or it is inappropriate to approach them, the volunteer /member of staff with the concern should make direct contact with local authorities (LADO/DOFA/MASH) See below p7 who will advise them.

In any case where an allegation is made, or someone in has concerns, a record should be made – see NTC Concerns Record.

- Essential information which would need to be recorded will include child's name, address, date of birth, disability (if known) family composition, reason for referral, name of person receiving the referral and any advice given. This written confirmation must be signed and dated by the referrer.
- Confidentiality must be maintained and information relating to individual children and young people/families shared with staff on a strictly need to know basis
- All records, information, and confidential notes, relating to safeguarding issues will be kept in separate files in a locked drawer or filing cabinet. Only the Designated Safeguarding Leads will have access to these files.

c. MAKING A REFERRAL

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy - will immediately inform either:
For Bath: B&NES Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on 01225 396 810
For Wiltshire: Designated Officer for Allegations (DOFA) or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0300 456 0108

- The telephone referral to LADO/DOfA/MASH will be confirmed in writing to NTC within a maximum of 48 hours, ideally 24 hours, with a copy to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- In extreme circumstances where the child is in immediate danger, the safeguarding lead will call the police on 999.

d. ALLEGATION OF ABUSE AGAINST STAFF

- When an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, then the allegation must be passed to your Designated Safeguarding Lead or their Deputy or, if the allegation concerns them both, direct to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) – Bath, or Designated Officer for Allegations (DOfA) – Wiltshire.
 - Your designated person for child protection should contact one of the following:
 - For Bath: B&NES Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on 01225 396 810
 - For Wiltshire: Designated Officer for Allegations (DOfA) or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0300 456 0108
- Within 1 working day. The officer contacted will record a note of the consultation and will advise on the appropriate action that needs to be taken

e. TRAINING

- The Designated Lead and Deputy must receive training every 2 years in Child Protection.

f. RECRUITMENT OF STAFF

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers, both full and part time. To ensure this the following steps should be taken when recruiting:

- All potential employees and volunteers recruited to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults will be required to undertake an interview with the Director and the Participation co-ordinator
- Evidence of their identity and current address will be checked.
- Any gaps in employment will require an explanation
- Their qualifications will be substantiated
Two references must be requested and followed up
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified
All training needs are to be identified and provided if necessary
- They will be asked to agree and sign up to the Staff handbook
If the role involves working directly with young or vulnerable people a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Certificate is required

g. RELATIONSHIPS

Staff and volunteers who are involved in relationships with other members of staff or volunteers should ensure that this does not adversely affect their role within NTC or the work of the NTC.

Safeguarding implementation at the Natural Theatre Company

NTC Personnel has a concern about a child, young person



**Record &
Report concern**



Inform either Mark Bishop or Georgina Craft



Is this concern serious?



Yes / Possibly



Designated safeguarding lead or deputy will contact the local authority officers for consultation.

For B&NES: Seek advice from B&NES Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on 01225 396 810

For Wiltshire: Seek advice from the Designated Officer for Allegations (DOfA) or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0300 456 0108

(If the child is in immediate danger the (D) DSL will call the police on 999)



LADO/DOfA/MASH deems that the concern is serious



Follow guidelines and protocol set out by LADO/DOfA/MASH

If LADO/DOfA/MASH does not deem the concern is serious

- **Follow guidelines and protocol set out by LADO/DOfA/MASH**
- **Regular assessment and continual monitoring of situation**
- **Identify any potential training or practice issues**

This Policy will be reviewed in January 2025

Signed by Designated LeadM. Bishop.....Date...11.01.2024...

Chair of Trustees..... Date.....