

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Thought Bubble Festival LTD is committed to ensuring safe environments for children and young people at all Thought Bubble events. This policy applies to our Board of Trustees, paid staff, volunteers, workshop leaders or anyone else working on behalf of the organisation.

We recognise that the welfare of the child/young person is paramount and that all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse. Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

The purpose of this policy is to provide protection for the children and young people who participate in our events, including the children of staff members, and to provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of harm.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by valuing them, listening to and respecting them and by adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and safe working practice for staff and volunteers. We are committed to recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made and sharing information about child protection and safe working practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers. We will share information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately. We will provide effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

## General Overview:

- All child abuse involves the abuse of children's rights.
- All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- The situation of all children must be improved through promotion of their rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This includes the right to freedom from abuse and exploitation.
- Child abuse is never acceptable.
- We have a commitment to protecting children with/ for whom we work.
- When we work through partners, they have a responsibility to meet minimum standards of protection for children in their programmes.

## Positive Action

We will ensure that all staff and others are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children.

**We will ensure, through awareness and good practice, that staff and others minimise the risks to children.**

**We will ensure that staff and others have clear steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children.**

**We will ensure that action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise regarding possible abuse. In order that the above standards of reporting and responding are met, all Thought Bubble staff and volunteers will also ensure that they:**

- **Take seriously any concerns raised;**
- **Take positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of any concerns;**
- **Support children, staff or other adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns;**
- **Act appropriately and effectively in instigating or co-operating with any subsequent process of investigation;**
- **Are guided through the child protection process by the principle of 'best interests of the child';**
- **Listen to and takes seriously the views and wishes of children;**
- **Work in partnership with parents/carers and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of children.**

#### **Meeting the above requirements**

- **All staff and volunteers will have access to a copy of the child protection policy.**
- **Recruitment procedures will include checks on suitability for working with young people and induction will include briefing on child protection issues.**
- **Every workplace will display contact details for reporting possible child abuse and every member of staff will have contact details for reporting.**
- **Systems will be established by every Thought Bubble staff member to investigate possible abuse once reported and to deal with it.**

#### **Code of Conduct**

**Staff and others must never:**

- **hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children;**
- **develop physical/sexual relationships with children;**
- **develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive;**
- **act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse;**
- **use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive;**
- **behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative;**

- have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised;
- sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working;
- do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves;
- condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
- act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse;
- discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others;

*This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that staff should avoid actions or behaviour which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour.*

It is important for all staff and others in contact with children to:

- be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these;
- plan and organise the work and the workplace so as to minimise risks;
- as far as possible, be visible in working with children;
- ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed;
- ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged;
- talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns;
- empower children - discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.

In general it is inappropriate to:

- spend excessive time alone with children away from others
- take children to your home, especially where they will be alone with you.

Thought Bubble Festival LTD will review this policy each year in line with Safe Network guidance or sooner in light of any changes in legislation or guidance.

# CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR EVERYONE

Thought Bubble Festival LTD use the following policies and procedures:

1. A single, definitive Child Protection Policy as stated above.
2. One or more designated Safeguarding Officers (SO) appointed for each event.
3. Best practice advice and training with support for all staff and volunteers. Including clear reporting procedures for anyone with a concern about a child.
4. Appropriate recruitment and induction procedures for all new staff and volunteers responsible for providing safe environments for everyone.
5. All event stewards wear a red Thought Bubble staff t-shirt or a red staff lanyard.
6. All teachers/parents/guardians/carers are asked to report all incidents of any nature to anyone wearing a red Thought Bubble staff t-shirt or a red staff lanyard.
7. All reported incidents will be handled in accordance with our child protection policy. In addition we will ensure the availability of a quiet area / room where concerns can be expressed in private.
8. For the duration of event all teachers/parents/guardians/carers are responsible for the continuous care and supervision of their own children/pupils/vulnerable adults. If they are unable to attend personally, they must delegate their responsibilities to an identified adult and ensure that their children/pupils/vulnerable adults are aware of the identity and name of the person responsible for their care. This includes supervision throughout all event venues, performance, practice and changing areas that may be provided. Thought Bubble Festival LTD stewards will only provide supervision in the event of a lost or child of vulnerable adult.
9. In the case of workshops, you are responsible for the safety of your child/children whether you attend the workshop or not. Please ensure that you collect your children at the end of the workshop.
10. No unauthorised photography or video recording is allowed at our events. Where parents/guardians/carers do not wish photos to be taken at all, then the responsible adult attending should ensure that their child/pupil/vulnerable adult is not included in official authorised photos. Photos will be kept for no more than two years for use in the programme, on the website and on the video. In practice they will be removed from the website every year, while the video is usually shown for only one year. Photographs will be kept indefinitely for archival use.
11. Some children and vulnerable adults may have specific needs in order to take part. If this is the case we ask the responsible teachers/parents/guardians/carers to contact the Thought Bubble Festival prior to arrival. Thought Bubble Festival actively seeks wherever possible to meet these needs, but must know beforehand in order to prepare support – or to advise that help cannot be provided on this occasion.