



Children, Young People & Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy

Healthy Arts is committed to promoting good practice in relation to working with and preventing the abuse of children and vulnerable adults. To help us do this effectively we have implemented Child Protection and Health & Safety policies which are designed to protect participants in all our projects.

Healthy Arts is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children and young people in order for them to benefit from and enjoy all the opportunities that our projects have to offer.

Child Protection Policy Statement

Healthy Arts is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children and young people in order for them to benefit from and enjoy all the opportunities that Theatre projects have to offer.

We do this by:

- Recognizing that all children have the right to freedom from abuse.
- Ensuring that our staff are carefully selected and accept responsibility for helping to prevent the abuse of children in their care.
- Responding swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and providing parents and children with the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have.
- Appointing a nominated Safeguarding Officer who will take specific responsibility for child safety and act as the main point of contact for parents, children and outside agencies.
- Ensuring access to confidential information is restricted to the Safeguarding Officer or the appropriate external authorities.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of our Child Protection Policy annually.

Health and Safety Policy Statement

Healthy Arts is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy working environment for all its staff, volunteers, guests, visitors and members while working on its projects.

Staff and Helper Guidelines

The following information is designed to help all staff and helpers who come in to contact with young or vulnerable people working for Healthy Arts.

Staff and Helpers should:-

- Understand their personal responsibility for protecting the children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom they work.
- Take all reasonable steps to protect those people from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment.
- Respond in an appropriate manner to any child who alleges or discloses that abuse is happening.
- Respond to any allegations swiftly in accordance with our Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- Accept responsibility to implement procedures to provide a duty of care for all users, to safeguard their wellbeing and protect them from harm.
- Take appropriate action if there are suggestions or suspicions that a child or young person is being abused.

It is NOT the responsibility of the Staff member or Helper to decide whether or not a child is being abused.

It is possible to reduce situations where allegations of abuse against children may occur.

Staff and Helpers are strongly advised not to:-

- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Take children alone in a car on journeys, however short.
- Take children to their home where they will be alone with them.
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games.
- Engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to any child or young person.

Potential signs of child abuse

Staff and Helpers can help to prevent harm by keeping an eye out for the signs or indicators of harm, and then taking appropriate action early.

Staff and Helpers should pay attention to:

- Physical signs of abuse or neglect. This could include bruises, burns, fractures (broken bones) or regular patterns of injuries.

- Behavioural signs of abuse or neglect. This could include showing little or no emotion when hurt, seeming to be afraid of their parents, alcohol or drug abuse, or age-inappropriate sexual behaviour.
- If the child talks about being abused.

How to respond

Each situation is different and requires a different response. To consider the most effective response to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing, you may need to gather information and facts. This could include:

- Make notes - fill out an Incident Report Form. Date and sign the entry.
- Continue to observe - record what you observe on the additional notes section on the overleaf of the incident Report Form, and date and sign each entry.
- Consult colleagues - get support and advice from the Safeguarding Officer, colleagues and supervisors. Compare notes and brainstorm possible strategies.
- Develop action plans based on procedures - Consult procedures and processes about what to do.
- Talk to other agencies about helping the family - collaborate with or engage community health services, local government services, regional Department of Human Services/Child Protection contacts, and disability services. You may want to call a case meeting.
- Talk to the child - do this with respect for the child's or young person's need for privacy and confidentiality.
- Talk to the parents or carers - only do this when it will not jeopardise the safety of the child or young person.

The designated **Safeguarding Officer** is:
Julie McKiernan: Telephone 07817 309873

Useful local contacts:

Wigan Council Local Authority Designated Officer
 (for concerns about professionals and volunteers who work with children)
 01942 486034

Wigan Council Children's Duty Team (for concerns around family issues)
 01942 828300

Wigan Police: Emergencies only 999, all other calls 101

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF MEMBER

- It is important to make a formal notification to the Safeguarding Officer if you encounter abuse in the course of your time on a Healthy Arts project.
- You must make a report and fill out an Incident Report Form without delay.
- You are required to make a report each time you become aware of any further grounds for your belief.
- You don't have to prove that the abuse has occurred.
- It is your principal responsibility to report your belief.

How to make a notification (Incident Report Form)

- Details - the child's or young person's name, age and address.
- Indicators of harm - the reason for believing that the injury or behaviour is the result of abuse or neglect.
- Reason for reporting - the reason why the call is being made now.
- Safety assessment - assessment of immediate danger to the child or children. For example, information may be sought on the whereabouts of the alleged abuser or abusers.
- Description - description of the injury or behaviour observed.
- Child's whereabouts - the current whereabouts of the child or young person.
- Other services - your knowledge of other services involved with the family.
- Family information - any other information about the family.
- Cultural characteristics - any specific cultural or other details which will help to care for the child - for example, interpreter or disability needs.
- Please note - a notification should still be made, even if you don't have all the information listed above.

Your ongoing role

After making a notification, your ongoing responsibilities can include:

- Continuing to monitor the child's or young person's behaviour in relation to ongoing harm.
- Providing written reports for case planning meetings or court proceedings.