



C H I L D P R O T E C T I O N P O L I C Y

Steptacular Performing Arts Ireland value and encourage the participation of children and young people in our school, workshops and activities. We acknowledge participation in physical theatre can enhance physical, emotional and social development. We recognise the rights of all children and are committed to their protection and support. We will work to do all in our power to create a safe environment for children and young people in order to secure their protection and enable their full participation in the appropriate events.

The Principles are derived from:

Certificate of Participation awarded to Nicole McDonald

Keeping Safe Child Protection Module 1

Presented by LUCAN/NORTH KILDARE YOUTH SERVICE

- All adults have a duty to report allegations or suspicions of child abuse Where reasonable grounds for concern exist, irrespective of the status of the person suspected or their relationship to them or to the child.
- Due regard must be given to the criminal dimension of any action.
- A proper balance must be maintained between protecting children and Respecting the needs and rights of carers and adults however, where there is a conflict, the welfare of the child must be paramount.
- Actions taken to protect a child should not in themselves be abusive or Cause the child unnecessary distress. Every action and procedure should consider the overall needs of the child.
- Organisations have a corporate responsibility to operate effective systems to assure the protection of children. They should ensure best practice in relation to recruitment and selection processes, provide appropriate training and ensure that all personnel are aware of their responsibility both to prevent child abuse and to report concerns about child abuse.

- All agencies and disciplines concerned with the protection and welfare of children must work cooperatively in the best interests of children.

BEST PRACTICE AND CODE OF BEHAVIOUR WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
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Code of Good Practice

- Listening to children and young people;
- Valuing and respecting them as individuals;
- Rewarding their efforts as well as achievements;
- Involving them in decision making (where appropriate);
- Encouraging and praising them.

Meetings with Children and Young People

- If any aspect necessitates meeting a child solo, such meetings should not be held in an isolated environment. The times and designated locations for meetings should allow for transparency and accountability (for example, be held in rooms with a clear glass panel or window, in buildings where other people are present, and with the door of the room left open). Both the length and number of meetings should be limited.
- Parents or guardians should be informed that the meeting(s) took place, except in circumstances where to do so might place the child in danger.
- Visits to the home should not be encouraged, nor should meetings be conducted in such locations.
- When the need for a visit to the home of a child or young person arises, professional boundaries must be observed at all times.

Respect for Privacy

- The right to privacy of children and young people must be respected at all times.
- Particular care regarding privacy must be taken when young people are in locations such as changing areas and toilets.
- Tasks of a personal nature (for example, helping with toileting, washing or changing clothing) should not be carried out for children or young people if they can undertake these tasks themselves.

Respect for Physical Integrity

- The physical integrity of children and young people must be respected at all times.
- Personnel must not engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind –including rough physical play, physical reprimand and horseplay (tickling, wrestling). This should not prevent appropriate contact in situations where it is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of a child (for example, where a child is distressed).

- If during a workshop a tutor needs to demonstrate a physical action by touch the tutor should first explain by words what they are about to do and then ask the child if they can show them before demonstrating the action

General Conduct

- Physical punishment of children is not permissible under any circumstances.
- Verbal abuse of children or telling jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of children can never be acceptable. Great care should be taken if it is necessary to have a conversation regarding sexual matters with a child or young person.
- Being alone with a child or young person may not always be wise or appropriate practice. If a situation arises where it is necessary to be alone with a child, another responsible adult should be informed immediately, by telephone if necessary. A diary note that the meeting with the young person took place, including the reasons for it, should be made.
- Best practice in relation to travel with children and young people should be observed. Personnel should not undertake any car or minibus journey alone with a child or young person. If, in certain circumstances, only one adult is available, there be a minimum of two children or young people present for the entire journey. In the event of an emergency, where it is necessary to make a journey alone with a child, a record of this should be made and the child's parent or guardian should be informed as soon as possible.
- Accurate and up to date records in relation to all activities should include attendance register, accident and incidents and authorisation from parents.
- All children and young people must be treated with equal respect; favouritism is not acceptable.
- Personnel should not engage in or tolerate any behaviour – verbal, psychological or physical – that could be construed as bullying or abusive.
- A disproportionate amount of time should not be spent with any particular child or group of children.
- Under no circumstances should event or workshop personnel give alcohol, tobacco or drugs to children or young people.
- Alcohol, tobacco or drugs must not be used by personnel who are supervising or working with children or young people.
- Only age-appropriate language, material on media products (such as camera phones, internet, video) and activities should be used when working with children and young people. Sexually explicit or pornographic material is never acceptable.
- General health and safety should consider standard of premises, heating and ventilation, Sanitation facilities, Fire precautions, First Aid facilities and regular checking of equipment.
- Children should not be left unattended and always know where children are and what they are doing.

- Some children with behavioural difficulties may require special attention.

Trips away from Home

- All trips, including day trips, overnight stays and holidays, need careful advance planning, including adequate provision for safety in regard to transport, facilities, activities and emergencies. Adequate insurance should be in place.
- Consent by a parent or guardian specifically for each trip and related activities must be obtained well in advance.
- A copy of the itinerary and contact telephone numbers should be made available to parents and guardians.
- There must be adequate, gender-appropriate, supervision for boys and girls.
- Arrangements and procedures must be put in place to ensure that rules and appropriate boundaries are maintained in the relaxed environment of trips away.
- Particular attention should be given to ensuring that the privacy of young people is respected when they are away on trips.
- The provision of appropriate and adequate sleeping arrangements should be ensured in advance of the trip.
- At least two adults should be present in dormitories in which children or young people are sleeping.

RECRUITMENT & TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS

- Always applying thorough selection procedures regardless of who the applicant is and whether the position is full-time, part-time, permanent, paid or voluntary.
- Judging the suitability of applicants across a broad range of criteria, through interview.
- Taking all reasonable steps to exclude unsuitable candidates by insisting on and verifying references, qualification and previous records of employment.

CLEAR DEFINITION OF ROLE

- **I**NTERVIEWS
- **R**EFERENCES
- **G**ARDA **V**ETTING

Children's Code of Behaviour

- Treat all other children with respect, and do not use bullying tactics.
- Be fair and do not spread rumours or tell lies about other children or adults.
- Abide by the rules as set out in Steptacular Ireland's policy on Child Protection.

- Respect the venues used by the Steptacular and promote good behaviour.
- Do not harm any other children, or property.
- Do not shout or argue with other participants.
- Do not use violence or physical contact with others.
- Talk to the person in charge if you have a problem of any kind.
- Behave in a manner suitable to the production at hand.
- Smoking or drinking is not tolerated under any circumstances.

Steptacular Ireland Policy Statement

Steptacular Performing Arts is a vibrant and happy environment that aims to nurture and encourage each individual pupil, according to their range of ability. Most of all we believe in the happiness and well being of our pupils, who are friendly and courteous and know they are valued.

Contact Personnel

Samaritans Helpline	1850 609 090
Childline	1850 666 666
Emergency Numbers	999 or 112