



POLICY: CHILD SAFEGUARDING

REVISED 20.03.23 // TO BE REVIEWED 20.03.24

Purpose

- To protect children and young people from harm.
- To provide all members of the Grit community, as well as children and young people with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection

The Grit acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Child (Performances) Regulations 1968, the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 and The Children Acts 1989 and 2004, government guidance and complies with best practice and industry requirements.

We recognise that:

The welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. We acknowledge that some children, including disabled children and young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

We aim to ensure that regardless of age, culture, ability or disability, gender, racial origin, religious belief, sex or sexual identity or socio-economic background, all children

- Have a positive and enjoyable experience at the Grit in a safe environment
- Are protected from abuse whilst participating in performances and rehearsals or other activities.
- Will be treated equally and with respect and dignity

The Grit believes that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind

- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people to keep them safe and to practice in a way that protects them.

The Grit will ensure that:

- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback is given rather than negative criticism
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned;
- All adult members provide a positive role model for dealing with other people;
- We avoid any inappropriate contact with children
- We do not show favouritism to any individual child
- The welfare and safety of each child will always be put first
- It will hold a register of every child involved and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies
- Children, young people and their families know about the safeguarding policy and what to do if they have a concern
- Staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and are provided with appropriate learning opportunities to undertake training so they recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people
- Support children's right to privacy, including the misuse of photographic images, video and social media

- Appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern
- Confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored
- They prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals
- Robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.
- Staff and volunteers are informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children

This policy will be widely promoted and is mandatory for everyone involved in the Grit. Failure to comply with the policy will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

Child Protection and Visiting Companies and groups

Visiting companies and groups who are rehearsing/performing at the Grit are required to have their own Child Protection Policy and procedures in place where members of the company are children, young people or vulnerable adults or where the visiting company plan to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults as part of an ancillary education package. We reserve the right to ask for copies of all child protection documentation on request and ensure that all permissions and arrangements for supervision are in place.

Health and Safety

An assessment to identify risks will be carried out prior to every new class, workshop or production involving children at the Grit. This will ensure that risks

are minimised in the studios, auditorium and gallery spaces, dressing rooms and back stage areas for workshops and/or rehearsals. The following things will be checked prior to a group of children or young people using a space:

- Is the room temperature suitable?
- Is the room light enough?
- Are the exits clearly identified and free from obstruction?
- Is the floor area free from obstruction?
- Are there any potential trip, slip or other hazards?
- Are the fire extinguishers clearly visible and unobstructed?

The member of staff/volunteer leading the session/rehearsal must be made aware of fire evacuation procedure from the space they are using.

Dealing with Concerns of Abuse

The following action should be taken if you suspect a child or vulnerable adult may be suffering abuse in some way:

- Do not attempt to investigate
- Privately voice your concerns to the supervising teacher/youth worker/carer
- If you continue to feel concerned speak immediately to the Safeguarding Officer who will contact the relevant authorities
- As soon as possible after becoming aware of possible abuse, make notes about your concerns.
- Pass on your written record to the Safeguarding Officer. Do not discuss the incident with anyone else

- Ask for support for yourself if you feel you need it

Dealing with Disclosures

The following action should be taken if a child who has suffered abuse confides in you:

- Listen attentively to what the child or young person is saying
- Do not promise confidentiality. The child, or young person, must be supported to understand that you will have to pass on information and why it is important
- Ask open non-leading questions which help to clarify what the child is say but not lead into an investigative situation. Intrusive questioning could contaminate a subsequent child protection investigation.
- Reassure the child, that s/he has been courageous in speaking to you about this.
- Do not make judgements about what is disclosed or about the alleged abuser.
- Explain the next step, the child should know that they will be kept informed and supported as appropriate
- Treat the allegation seriously and report it immediately to the Safeguarding Officer.
- Write down exactly what was said using the pro-forma attached to this policy (Pro-forma for recording concerns/allegations of abuse)
- On no account should you speak to the parent or carer about what has been alleged until the Safeguarding Officer has investigated the matter and discussed concerns with the Police or Social Worker if appropriate.
- Ask for support for yourself if you feel you need it

Dealing with disclosures against a staff member

- Good practice in both the recruitment and supervision of staff and volunteers should be designed in such a way that the risk of abuse is reduced and staff can protect themselves from false allegations. However, the possibility of abuse cannot be eliminated and constant vigilance is necessary.
- If a user tells you that someone in the organisation has caused them harm, this should be treated in the same way as any other disclosure a child may make.
- The information should be passed on to the Safeguarding Officer and handled in the same manner.

Please note that in managing concerns/disclosures it is not your responsibility to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. You must abide by these guidelines if you are concerned about the welfare of a user.

Storing of and access to confidential child protection data

The Grit abides by all relevant data protection legislation. We follow best practice for the processing of information relating to individuals, including obtaining, holding, use or disclosure of such information. Children are entitled to the same duty of confidence as adults, provided they have the ability to understand the choices and their consequences relating to the proposed lines of action. Where consent had not been obtained the law permits disclosure of confidential information necessary to safe guard a child where s/he is considered to be at risk. All child protection information will be stored securely and will only be shared with authorised personnel and appropriate authorities.

Managing Information from the Criminal Records Bureau

The Grit is committed to the development of best practice in relation to the safeguarding of children and young people and will ensure the following practice:

- Disclosures will only be requested when necessary and relevant to a particular post/role and the information provided on a Disclosure certificate will only be used for these purposes.
- Disclosure information will only be shared with the Safeguarding Officer and Directors who are authorised to see it in the course of their duties
- Where additional disclosure information is provided to the Grit this be discussed with the individual should the Disclosure information have an impact on the outcome on the employment/ continued volunteering of the individual.