



Duckegg Theatre Company ~ Safeguarding Policy

The aim of Duckegg's Policy is to promote good practice by:

- Providing children, young people and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Duckegg employees and freelancers (paid and voluntary).
- Enabling staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific safeguarding issues.

All practitioners (paid and voluntary) and members of Duckegg Theatre Company are expected to adhere to a code of conduct in respect of their contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This code of conduct is set out below.

Child Protection Officer

Haley Muraleedharan is the designated Child Protection Officer for Duckegg Theatre Company HQ and her contact details are made available to all practitioners (paid and voluntary), children and young people and their parents/carers. All concerns or queries with regard to child protection issues should be reported to her.

Haley will undertake relevant development and training in order to be informed about legislation and policies for protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults and to keep up to date with health and safety.

Code of Conduct

Haley Muraleedharan, practitioners (paid and voluntary) and all Duckegg members must conduct themselves in a sensible manner. This relates to the use of language and the way in they move about any of the venues including treating the building and people working in it with respect, and not putting themselves or others at risk of injury.

I. Inappropriate Behaviour

This includes:

- physical and verbal abuse to others, and unacceptable language either towards or in the presence of a child or young person
- the drinking of alcohol, smoking of cigarettes or the taking of any illegal substance while engaged in any activity with children or young people.
- Harmful sexual behaviour, including using sexually explicit words and phrases, inappropriate touching, using sexual violence or threats, full penetrative sex with other children or adults.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institution or community setting; by those known to them, or more rarely by a stranger. 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.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

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 include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. 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 participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), 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.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual 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.

NEGLECT

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 care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

2. Damage to Property

This includes behaviour that could cause damage to any building, furniture, equipment or personal belongings.

Ignoring or encouraging children or young people that are involved in any of the above behaviour is also unacceptable.

The disciplinary procedure will be as follows:

1. A verbal warning will be issued, asking for the behaviour to stop.
2. If the behaviour continues the person responsible will be asked to leave.

Should the offence be from a Duckegg member, a call will be made to their parent/guardian, asking them to collect their child/young person. A record of the incident will be kept on file, and copy given to the person who made the offence.

A further discussion will then take place between the child or young person involved and the Child Protection Officer. The incident will then be referred to the members of Duckegg to discuss whether permanent expulsion from the group and/or project is necessary. Haley Cox will make the final decision on whether permanent expulsion is necessary.

Where the offence is deemed to be serious, involving deliberate injury to person or property, automatic expulsion from the group will occur and the police will be called.

3. Referral process should abuse be suspected:

1. You must report concerns as soon as possible to Haley Muraleedharan who is nominated by Duckegg Theatre Company to act on their behalf in referring allegations of suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities. If it is an emergency, and the designated persons cannot be contacted, then children and family services or the police should be contacted at the numbers given at the end of this document.
2. If the suspicions relate to the designated person, then the deputy or children and family services should be contacted.
3. Suspicions should not be discussed with anyone, other than those named above.
4. It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies. We would hope that an individual would use this procedure. However, if you feel that the organisation has not responded appropriately to your concerns, it is open to you to contact the child protection agencies direct.

Recruitment and Disclosure

Any individual engaged by Duckegg Theatre Company to work with, or have unsupervised contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults will be subjected to all reasonable vetting. This will include undertaking an enhanced DBS check and providing the names of two references, one of which must be from a professional organisation.

For longer residencies, they will also be on a trial period, not exceeding 3 months. During this trial period, the children and young people involved will be consulted on this individual's suitability. These responses will be made in confidence and not disclosed to the individual being engaged.

Equal Opportunities

Duckegg Theatre Company is committed to making its projects accessible to all without discrimination towards race or ability. To ensure this is possible:

- all venues used by Duckegg will be checked for accessibility and access.
- Duckegg will endeavour to employ people who can better accommodate children and young people with additional needs.

If any child or young person feels discriminated against, they should follow the complaints procedure below.

Complaints and Whistleblowing

It is not the responsibility of Duckegg Theatre Company or any employed facilitator to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However, it is their responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure of abuse.

Duckegg takes all complaints seriously and assures all members, employed facilitators and volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports concerns regarding a colleague's behaviour towards a child, young person or vulnerable adult. Any concerns may be shared in confidence with the Child Protection Officer.

Photographs and Video Footage

Duckegg will endeavour to ensure that any photographs or video footage taken will have the permission of the participants, parents/carers as appropriate. Should Duckegg use any photographic or video footage for promotional purposes, written permission from parents or carers, will be obtained.

Health, Safety, Accident and Injury

All staff hold up to date First Aid Training Certificates.

It is the responsibility of those undertaking projects with Duckegg Theatre Company and of all parent/carers to ensure Duckegg is fully informed of any health issues or additional needs they or their child or young person may have.

All reasonable precautions will be taken, including informing members of fire drill procedures and where necessary, additional risk assessments will be carried out for projects undertaken by Duckegg outside of the regular drama sessions.

In situations where parents or carers are not present, Duckegg Theatre Company will hold health, accident and emergency contact forms for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Duckegg is committed to the development and implementation of Safeguarding policies and procedures.

Duckegg believes in the right all children and young people have in being encouraged as artists.

It is the duty of all employed facilitators (paid or voluntary), members of Duckegg and visitors to the group to uphold this policy and safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Duckegg will review its Risk Assessment & Safeguarding Policy for each new project it engages in with children and young people.

This policy was made on behalf of Duckegg Theatre Company by Haley Muraleedharan, 1st February 2020. To be reviewed before 1st February 2023.

Copies of this form will be made available to all facilitators (paid or voluntary), any members of Duckegg Young Company and their parent/carers. This document is available on the staff intranet and must be given in paper form to all parent/guardians on commencement of any Duckegg project or class.

Any questions or concerns regarding this policy should be forwarded to:

Haley Muraleedharan
E: haley@duckegg.org.uk

Definitions

“Children” and “Young People”

Throughout this document we refer to 12 year olds and younger as ‘children’; and thirteen year olds and older as ‘young people’. In general ‘children’ are always accompanied by adults whereas ‘young people’ prefer to be accompanied by their peers in terms of leisure pursuits.

“Vulnerable adults”

Vulnerable adults are people who are, or may be, in need of community care services because of mental disability or other disability, age or illness, and who are, or who may be, unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

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PLEASE CONTACT US FOR THE DETAILS OF YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL EDUCATION WELFARE/SAFEGUARDING DEPARTMENT.