



## Limelight Theatricals Safeguarding Policy

Updated 22/05/2023

### **Our organisation**

Limelight Theatricals is a performing arts youth group running musical theatre performances for teenagers between the ages of 14 and 19. We have two artistic directors employed, and may have additional volunteers and experts involved in the group's activities.

Anyone who comes in contact with our students must abide by this Safeguarding Policy. It will be available to all via our website, hardcopy at rehearsals, and emailed to anyone who comes to work with us. This policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis by both artistic directors, who will in consultation with the legislation and Tusla best practice guidelines update the policy accordingly.

### **The purpose of this policy and associated procedures is:**

- to facilitate protection for children and vulnerable persons under the age of 18 years during any activity provided by Limelight Theatricals
- to provide employees / volunteers with procedures to follow in the event that they suspect a child or adult at risk may be experiencing abuse or be at risk of abuse or harm
- to protect children where there is a concern about the behaviour of an adult, including a Limelight Theatricals employee / volunteer
- to assist all individuals at Limelight Theatricals to meet their duty of care to safeguard all children at risk who take part in Limelight Theatricals activities;
- to ensure that where Limelight Theatricals employees, students, or visitors have concerns about the welfare of children or adults at risk, they are in a position to take appropriate steps to address them.



**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:**

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing the impairment of children’s health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

**Mandate**

We, at Limelight Theatricals, understand that we have a legal requirement to safeguard the children that are partaking in our shows. Limelight Theatricals believes that the welfare of the child is paramount, and that all children regardless of age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation or identity, or religious belief have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse. We understand that for the purposes of safeguarding, ‘a child’ is deemed by law any person under the age of 18. We understand that we are bound by the Children First Act 2015 and the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children. We understand that we must provide a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for the purposes of reporting any incidents that we feel will cause harm to any child in our care.

We understand that our staff / volunteers have a duty to do no harm to any child that is in our care.

We promise to maintain clear communication with our participants, to take time to listen to the views, wishes and feelings of our students, and to create a safe and supporting environment for all of our students

**Mandated Person & Designated Liaison Person**

Our Mandated Person is Therese Maher. Therese has completed the Barnardo’s Child Protection and Safeguarding training. Emily Matthews is our DLP. Both will be present for most of the group’s activities and are the direct contact points for all of the parents/guardians of the participants.



### **Staff / volunteer awareness**

At the beginning of each project our staff / volunteers will read and sign a copy of our Safeguarding policies.

They will be required to do the online Tusla Children First E-Learning Programme, or provide proof of other safeguarding training.

They will be required to go through Garda Vetting

### **Duties and responsibilities of Limelight Theatricals staff / facilitators / volunteers**

- To do no harm to any child in the care of Limelight Theatricals
- To keep up to date with child protection laws
- To keep Garda vetting up to date
- To report any incidents that breach our safeguarding policy, or concerns about a student to the DLP
- To maintain strict confidence about any situation regarding any situation with a child in the care of Limelight Theatricals
- Not to disclose any personal or sensitive information regarding a child in the care of Limelight Theatricals
- To teach / work correctly and maintain a safe environment at all times
- To follow the Limelight Theatricals Safe Touch policy

### **Allegations against Staff / Volunteers**

We will take very seriously any and all allegations against our staff / volunteers. In light of any allegations we will

- Send the staff member / volunteer home immediately for their own protection as well as that of the child



- Report the incident immediately to the relevant authorities
- Let the authorities investigate without interference, and provide all relevant information to them.
- Not allow the staff member / volunteer in question to have any part of the investigation

### **Reporting Procedure**

If a Limelight Theatricals staff member / volunteer suspects or witnesses abuse or neglect, they must

- stop other activity and focus on what they are being told or seeing – responding to the incident being reported should take immediate priority
- react in a calm and considered way but show concern
- tell the child, adult at risk, or third party that it is right for them to share this information
- take what the child, adult at risk, or third party has said seriously and allow extra time where there is a speech or language difficulty
- keep questions to an absolute minimum necessary to gain a clear and accurate understanding of what is being said, and do not interrogate the child, adult at risk, or third party
- listen and do not interrupt if they are recounting significant events
- offer reassurance
- do not give assurances of confidentiality, but explain you will need to pass on this information to those that need to know
- consider whether immediate action is needed to protect a child or adult at risk who may have been harmed or be at risk of harm – think about the child or adult at risk



who is the immediate concern and any others who may have been harmed or be at risk of harm, in light of what you have been told or seen.

- Keep a detailed log of the incident using the incident report form.
- Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors that occur outside of Limelight Theatricals (such as family matters, and/or issues between children or adults at risk outside of Limelight Theatricals) and so when dealing with a concern the full context should be considered. These can include potential wider environmental factors and influences that are present in a child or adult at risk's life which are a threat or pose a risk to the safety and welfare of a child or adult at risk.
- In cases where there is an immediate risk of harm to a child or adult at risk and it is unsafe to wait until the next working day, either the person raising the concern should immediately call the DLP
- If the DLP is not immediately available and a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm they should alert the appropriate authority and stay with those they think are at immediate risk until they can be transferred to safe care, where practical.
- If the DLP is the person accused or involved in an allegation then the relevant authorities should be notified without reporting to the DLP.

### **Safe Touch Policy**

In the role of teaching at Limelight Theatricals, teachers may have occasion to physically correct a student's posture. With this in mind staff / volunteers

- Must always seek consent before touching a student. That may be verbal or physical, ie nodding.
- Will only touch the relevant part of the body that needs to be corrected.
- May not touch the student in any way that is inappropriate or that is not with the sole purpose of correcting the student's posture



## Photography and Video Policy

- No filming or photography of children will take place without gaining written permission from the appropriate parent, guardian or carer. All permission will be filed appropriately
- Photography and recording of classes and performances will only be used as promotional material for Limelight Theatricals and in no other context.

## Reporting Procedure to Parents / Guardians

It is the responsibility of the DLP to inform the parents / guardians if there has been a safeguarding incident during a Limelight activity, unless the incident involves the DLP, therefore it will be the responsibility of the Mandated Person.

Such meetings will be held in person, to allow for full disclosure. The content of the meeting will be kept confidential.

## Definitions

**Abuse:** A form of maltreatment of a child. 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 institutional or community setting by those known to them, or more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

**Physical abuse:** A form of abuse that 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:** 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 development capability, as well as over-protection 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 cyber bullying), 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. It is important to recognise that many children will be living (or may have lived) in families where domestic abuse is a factor and that these situations have a harmful impact on children emotionally, as well as placing them at risk of physical harm.

**Sexual abuse:** This 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, 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 images, 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:** 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.

### **Guiding Policies**

Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice 2nd Edition

Children First Act 2015

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

### **Statutory Agencies and Reporting Contact Details**

[www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

Thurles Garda Station, Slievenamon Road – 0504 21500