



## SAFEGUARDING POLICY (Children & Vulnerable Adults)

BMCDS / BYG recognises its duty of care under the law.

BMCDS / BYG recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. BMCDS / BYG is committed to practice which protects children and vulnerable adults from harm. All members of BMCDS / BYG are encouraged to accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children and vulnerable adults harm.

### BMCDS / BYG believes that:

- The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount.
- All children and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All members of BMCDS / BYG should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

### BMCDS / BYG will endeavour to ensure that:

- All children and vulnerable adults will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.
- The duty of care to children and vulnerable adults will always be put first.
- A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built, which empowers the children and vulnerable adults to share in the decision-making process.
- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given, rather than negative criticism.
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned.
- All adult members of BMCDS / BYG provide a positive role model for dealing with other people.
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
- It will keep up-to-date with Health & Safety legislation.
- It will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children.
- It will undertake relevant development and training.
- It will hold a register of every child and vulnerable adult involved with BMCDS / BYG and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

BMCDS / BYG has child and vulnerable adult protection procedures which accompany this policy.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with:

- BMCDS / BYG's Anti-Bullying Policy
- BMCDS / BYG Equal Opportunities Policy
- Health & Safety Policy and



- GDPR Policy.

BMCDS / BYG has a dedicated child and vulnerable adult Safeguarding Officer who is in charge of ensuring that the child/vulnerable adult safeguarding policy is adhered to:

Safeguarding Officer: Khadine Ruhleman  
Contact: [safeguarding@barnstaplemusicalcomedy.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@barnstaplemusicalcomedy.co.uk)

BMCDS / BYG is committed to regular review of its policies and procedures to ensure they continue to promote the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

## PROCEDURES

### Responsibilities of BMCDS / BYG

At the outset of any production involving children and/or vulnerable adults, BMCDS / BYG will:

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor the risk throughout the production process.
- Identify at the outset, the person with designated responsibility for safeguarding.
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children and/or vulnerable adults.
- Ensure that children and/or vulnerable adults are supervised at all times.
- Produce a rehearsal schedule with dates and times and will notify parents / guardians / carers of any changes to this.
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case it needs to report a concern.

### Parents

- BMCDS / BYG believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents / guardians / carers and BMCDS / BYG. Parents / guardians / carers are encouraged to be involved in the activities of BMCDS / BYG and to share responsibility for the care of children and/or vulnerable adults.
- All parents / guardians / carers will be given a copy of BMCDS / BYG's Safeguarding for Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures.
- All parents/guardians/carers have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children/vulnerable adults after rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of BMCDS / BYG to take children/vulnerable adults home.

### Unsupervised Contact

- BMCDS / BYG will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children/vulnerable adults.

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Issue Number : 1.0  
Issue Date : 2025



- If possible, there will always be two adults in the room when working with children/vulnerable adults.
- If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimise risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area or in a designated room with a door open.

#### Physical Contact

- All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children/vulnerable adults.
- Adults will only touch children/vulnerable adults when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity, e.g., costume measuring or teaching particular choreography/direction. In this instance, there will always be a licenced chaperone in the same room.
- Adults will seek the consent of the child/vulnerable adult prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

#### Managing sensitive information

- BMCDS / BYG has a policy and procedures for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images. (See Data Protection Policy and Photography and Video Guidelines)
- Permission will be sought from the parents / guardians / carers for use of photographic material featuring children/vulnerable adults for promotional or other purposes.
- BMCDS / BYG's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.  
BMCDS / BYG will ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of its members, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such as criminal record disclosures. (See Data Protection Policy)

#### Suspicion of Abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child/vulnerable adult while in the care of BMCDS / BYG, please make this known to the person with responsibility for safeguarding.
  - If you suspect that the person with responsibility for safeguarding is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the Chair or other Committee member if necessary.
- Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed, as well as your response in case there is a follow up in which you are involved.
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of BMCDS / BYG, chaperone, venue staff etc, that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded.
  - The individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms etc, and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children/vulnerable adults in the production.



### Disclosure of Abuse

If a child/vulnerable adult confides in you that abuse has taken place:

- Remain calm and in control but do not delay in taking action.
- Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child/vulnerable adult to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Don't promise to keep it a secret.
- Use the first opportunity you have, to share the information with the person with responsibility for safeguarding.
- Make it clear to the child/vulnerable adult that you will need to share this information with others.
- Make it clear that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help.
- Reassure the child/vulnerable adult that 'they did the right thing' in telling someone.
- Tell the child/vulnerable adult what you are going to do next.
- Speak immediately to the person with responsibility for safeguarding. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually social services or the police.
- As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was said, using the child/vulnerable adult's own words. Note the date, time, any names that were involved or mentioned, and who you gave the information to. Make sure you sign and date your record and inform the Safeguarding or Deputy Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

### Recording

- In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, the details of an allegation or reported incident must be recorded.
- An accurate note shall be made of the date and time of the incident or disclosure, the parties involved, what was said or done and by whom, any action taken to investigate the matter, any further action taken, e.g., suspension of an individual, where relevant, the reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, and the name of the persons reporting and to whom it was reported.
- The record will be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation.

### Rights & Confidentiality

- If a complaint is made against a member of BMCDS / BYG, he or she will be made aware of his/her rights under BMCDS / BYG's disciplinary procedures.
- No matter how you may feel about the accusation, both the alleged abuser and the child/vulnerable adult who is thought to have been abused, have the right to



confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998.

- Remember also that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released.
- In criminal law the Crown or other prosecuting authority has to prove guilt, and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

### Accidents

- To avoid accidents, chaperones and children/vulnerable adults will be advised of “house rules” regarding Health and Safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds. Children/vulnerable adults will be advised of the clothing and footwear appropriate to the work that will be undertaken.
- If a child/vulnerable adult is injured while in the care of BMCDS / BYG, a designated first aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in BMCDS / BYG’s accident book. This record will be counter signed by the person with responsibility for safeguarding.
- If a child/vulnerable adult joins the production with an obvious physical injury, a record of this will be made in the accident book.
  - This record will be countersigned by the person with responsibility for safeguarding.
  - This record can be useful if a formal allegation is made later and will also be a record that the child/vulnerable adult did not sustain the injury while participating in the production.

### Criminal Record Disclosures

- If BMCDS / BYG believes it is in its best interests to obtain Criminal Record Disclosures for chaperones or other personnel, it will inform the individual of the necessary procedures and the level of disclosure required. A standard disclosure will apply for anyone with supervised access to children/vulnerable adults. An Enhanced disclosure will be required for anyone with unsupervised access.
- BMCDS / BYG will have a written code of practice for the handling of disclosure information. (See Data Protection Policy)
- BMCDS / BYG will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

### Chaperones

- Only chaperones licenced by the Devon County Council will be appointed by BMCDS / BYG.
- Chaperones will be appointed by BMCDS / BYG, for the care of children/vulnerable adults during the production process.
  - By law, the chaperone is acting in loco parentis and should exercise the care which a good parent / guardian / carer might be reasonably expected to give to a child/vulnerable adult.
  - The maximum number of children/vulnerable adults in the chaperone’s care shall not exceed 12.



- Potential chaperones should be members of BMCDS / BYG or parents / guardians / carers of child/vulnerable adult members.
- Chaperones will be made aware of BMCDS / BYG's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- Chaperones will not usually have unsupervised access to children/vulnerable adults in their care.
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the safeguarding officer.
- If a chaperone considers that a child/vulnerable adult is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the Director/Production Manager and if necessary, the safeguarding officer.
- Under the Dangerous Performances Act, no child/vulnerable adult is permitted to do anything which may endanger life or limb. This could include working on wires or heavy lifting. Chaperones should tell the Director/Production Manager to cease using children/vulnerable adults in this way and should contact the local authority.
- During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children/vulnerable adults at the stage door and getting parent / guardian / carer to sign them into the building.
- Children will be kept together at all times except when using separate dressing rooms.
- Chaperones will be aware of where the children/vulnerable adults are at all times.
- Children/vulnerable adults are not to leave the theatre or rehearsal rooms unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parent / guardian / carer.
- Children/vulnerable adults will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
- Children/vulnerable adults will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms.
- Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures in the venue and will ensure that children/vulnerable adults in their care do not place themselves and others in danger.
- Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by BMCDS / BYG.
- Chaperones should have written arrangements for children/vulnerable adults after performances. If unexpectedly, someone different is to collect the child, a telephone call should be made to the parent / guardian / carer to confirm the arrangements.
- Children/vulnerable adults should be signed out when leaving and a record made of the person/s responsible for collecting.
- If a parent / guardian / carer has not collected the child/vulnerable adult, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child/vulnerable adult, until the parent / guardian / carer makes suitable alternative arrangements for collection by them or their appointed representative.



### Mobile Phones

- Children of chaperone age will not be permitted mobile phones in the theatre for show week, to prevent the unauthorised taking of photographs whilst children may be changing.
- Licenced chaperones will take the fun back-stage photographs that will help the children remember their time during a particular show.
- Before this happens, each parent will sign a permission form to say they are happy for chaperones to take photos of their children in line with the BMCDS / BYG Photography and Video guidelines.
- If a parent disagrees, the child in question will not be included in any back-stage photographs.
- If the child themselves, chooses not to be in a particular photograph, they have the right to opt out.

BMCDS / BYG is committed to regular review of its policies and procedures to ensure they continue to promote the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

Reviewed June 2025

Signed:

Graham Ruhleman, Chairperson