

MONTGOMERYSHIRE YOUTH THEATRE**Charity No 516040****Safeguarding Policy for the Protection of Children and Young People****Section 1 : Introductory Guidelines**

Montgomeryshire Youth Theatre is committed to protecting children and young people from physical, emotional or sexual abuse. We will adhere to The All Wales Child Protection Procedures. This policy document applies to work with all children and young people under the age of 18, and its provisions also serve as guidelines for work with young adults over that age. To adopt a Protection Policy we have implemented the following procedures:

This policy is assessed annually, the most recent assessment and updating by the Trustees having taken place at the AGM held on 23rd October 2023.

1. We have adopted a policy statement for the safeguarding of the welfare of children and young people (see section 2).
2. We have appointed the following as Safeguarding Officer:

Rebecca Williams
Redholme
Salop Road
Welshpool
Powys
SY21 7EA
Telephone: 07813 989176
3. The work of Montgomeryshire Youth Theatre is well planned so as to minimise and virtually eliminate the situations where the abuse of children or young people may take place.
4. Children or young people who come into contact with Montgomeryshire Youth Theatre workers on a one-to-one basis are introduced, whenever possible, to a second person, whom they could also contact if necessary. Closed relationships are forbidden.
5. All paid and volunteer workers for Montgomeryshire Youth Theatre, who have contact with children or young people, have copies of these guidelines and understand the procedures for protecting children or young people.

6. Paid workers, volunteers and artists working on an occasional basis are accountable to a project or line manager, and should expect to be challenged if they have not worked within these guidelines.
7. We treat all paid workers, artists and volunteers as job applicants if they are to work with Montgomeryshire Youth Theatre in positions where they will have contact with children or young people.
8. Whenever possible, we gain at least one reference from a person who has experience of the applicant's paid or volunteer work with children or young people.
9. Whenever possible, we explore all applicants' experience of working with children or young people in an interview before appointment.
10. We implement DBS procedures to find out if an applicant has any conviction for criminal offences against children or young people in cases where the work will be unsupervised and/or long-term.
11. We make all long-term paid or voluntary appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period and DBS check.
12. We issue guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse (see section 4).

Section 2 : Policy Statement

- Montgomeryshire Youth Theatre is committed to the care, protection and safekeeping of all the children and young people who participate in its activities.
- It is the responsibility of each person involved with Montgomeryshire Youth Theatre to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children or young people, and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.
- Montgomeryshire Youth Theatre recognises that the work with children and young people is the responsibility of the whole organisation.
- Montgomeryshire Youth Theatre is committed to supporting, resourcing and (where appropriate) training all of its paid and volunteer workers.

- Every worker will be given a full copy of Montgomeryshire Youth Theatre's Child Protection Policy. They will know the guidelines and undertake to observe them. They will be fully committed to these procedures, and will sign a document confirming that they have read them.
- As part of Montgomeryshire Youth Theatre's commitment to children or young people, close links will be maintained with relevant outside organisations such as the Youth Service, and local schools. Appropriate organisations and agencies will be consulted on any review of this policy, and their advice taken on any necessary changes.

Powys Front Door Service

To make a referral to **Children's Services** or to request information, advice and assistance: Phone - 01597 827666 (Option 1, Option 1) to speak to a member of staff.

Section 3 : Good practice guidelines for the prevention of abuse

1. Montgomeryshire Youth Theatre should ensure that as far as possible, a worker should not be alone with an individual child or young person, where their activity cannot be seen. When the nature of the work requires a one-to-one situation, a responsible third party should be aware of this possibility (e.g. parent, project leader).
 2. You, the worker should treat all children or young people with respect, with awareness of appropriate language, tone of voice and physical contact. You should not engage in the following :
 - invasion of privacy when young people are changing clothes, showering or toileting;
 - rough, physical or sexually provocative games;
 - games or activities which in any way humiliate an individual or group;
 - sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or young person, even in "fun";
 - any ridiculing or rejection of a child or young person.
 3. You are expected to apply appropriate methods of controlling groups and/or individuals, which respect the physical, emotional and psychological needs and well-being of children and young persons.
- You should :
- not let children or young people involve him/herself in excessive attention seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature;
 - not invite a child or young person to your home alone except with the parent's knowledge and permission;

- if working with a young person, or a group, in your own home, ensure wherever possible that there is another responsible person in the house
- except in emergencies, avoid giving lifts to children or young people on their own, other than for short journeys (5/10 minutes): if alone, ask him/her to sit in the rear of the vehicle, and, whenever possible, ensure that a responsible person knows that you are doing so;
- if staying away from home with the group, avoid sharing sleeping accommodation with children or young people where possible.

Section 4 : Procedures if abuse is disclosed or discovered

Types of abuse

Physical	Where a child or young person's body is hurt or injured
Emotional	Where children or young people do not receive love and affection, may be frightened by threats or taunts, or are given responsibilities beyond their years
Sexual	Where adults (and sometimes other young people) use children or young people to satisfy sexual desires
Neglect	Where adults fail to care for children or young people and protect them from danger, seriously impairing health and development

Signs of abuse

The following may indicate abuse, but do not jump to conclusions. There could be other explanations.

Physical	Unexplained or hidden injuries, lack of medical attention
Emotional	Reverting to younger behaviour, nervousness, sudden under-achievement, attention-seeking, running away, stealing, lying

Sexual	Preoccupation with sexual matters evident in words, play, drawings, being sexually provocative with adults, disturbed sleep, nightmares, bed-wetting, secretive relationships with adults or other young people, stomach pains without apparent cause
Neglect	Looking ill-cared-for and unhappy, being withdrawn or aggressive, having lingering injuries or health problems

If abuse is disclosed or discovered

- do not delay
- do not act alone
- do not start an investigation
- consult with the person to whom you are responsible
- if it is impossible to contact your line/project manager immediately, and if it
- is appropriate, contact the social services: contact numbers are attached to this document

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IF A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER CALL THE POLICE**SECTION 5 : AS THE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON TALKS**

It is not possible to write down exactly what to do when a child or young person tells you about abuse. The following points are offered as guidelines.

IMPORTANT - A child or young person may ask you to keep a secret, not tell anyone or even enquire if what they say is confidential. What do you say? Remember

Everything a child or young person tells you is confidential but

- This does not mean you keep it to yourself. You will be requested to share information with at least your project/line manager, and possibly a designated member of the management committee, but not normally with any other co-worker. We still consider this to be confidential.
- If a child or young person is considered to be in danger we will act accordingly, in the best interest of the individual. We will have to talk with social services.

Therefore you should reassure the child or young person that what you discuss is

“confidential/ I respect your desire to talk to me in confidence/but if I think you are in danger and need extra help I will have to talk to someone else/whatever I do is in your best interest”

GENERAL POINTS

- look at the child or young person directly
- try to keep your eye level equal to or lower than the child or young person
- tell the truth
- let them know if, and why, you are going to tell anyone else
- assume that the child has been threatened not to tell anyone
- try to find out what they are afraid of, so that you will know how best to help
- make notes within 24 hours of the interview - try to write exactly what the child or young person said

HELPFUL THINGS TO SAY

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| • I believe you | • I am sorry that it happened |
| • I am glad you told me | • It is not your fault |
| • I care, and I will help | • You were right to tell – it is OK to tell |
| • You were brave to tell | • The abuser was wrong (do not say bad) |
| • Even if you have broken a rule, you are not to blame for the abuse | |

TRY TO AVOID SAYING ...

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| • Why? How? When? Who? | • Are you sure? |
| • Why didn't you say this before? | • I can't believe it |
| • Statement of false promises, such as “This is really serious”, “Don't tell anyone else”, “I am shocked” | |

IN SUMMARY

- Tell the child or young person that you believe them
- Let the child or young person know what you are going to do and, as far as is possible, what is going to happen next
- Praise the child or young person for telling and surviving the abuse
- Always finish on a positive note

IMMEDIATE ACTION

Contact your line/project manager (or the designated member of the management committee) for an urgent and confidential discussion.

If this is not possible or you are dissatisfied with your Line Managers decision, please call:

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CHILD PROTECTION ACTION - WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

- The Senior member of management may take the decision to call the appropriate professional services, which could take this course:
- A strategy discussion involving Social Services, Police Child Protection Team, other significant professionals and the person suspecting abuse or to whom the child or young person has talked.
- A decision will be taken as to whether an investigation is warranted. If it is, a joint investigation by Social Services/Police will always take place first.

- The investigation may include:
 - An informal talk with the child or young person;
 - A formal Police/Social Services video recorded interview following disclosure
 - A medical examination
 - Preliminary family assessment

Any internal disciplinary measures required will follow after this investigation.

- If there is sufficient concern, a child protection conference will be held to decide the best course of action to protect the child or young person and help the family. There may be a criminal prosecution of the abuser.

The contents of this document are formal Montgomeryshire Youth Theatre policy as authorised by the Management Committee at our AGM on 24th October 2023. This document will be reviewed every 12 months, when progress in implementing it will be monitored.

Print Name: Rebecca Williams (Chairperson and Safeguarding Officer)

Signed: Beki Williams (Chairperson and Safeguarding Officer)

Date: 24.10.2023