



Administrated by
BINGLEY LITTLE THEATRE

Child and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy

Named Roles

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO): Josh Breeze

BLT Productions: David Ayres (Artistic Director)

Young People's Theatre: Debbie Linton (*Kaleidoscope* Director and Deputy DSO)

Deputy DSO: David Ayres, Brian Morgan, Debbie Linton

Safeguarding Trustee: Jonathan Rookes

Approved by Trustees Dec 2025

Policy Statement

- Bingley Little Theatre (BLT) acknowledges its responsibility for the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount
- BLT recognises that good safeguarding policies and procedures are of benefit to everyone involved in activities at BLT and Bingley Arts Centre, and is committed to providing a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults
- BLT believes that all children and vulnerable adults regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm and/or abuse
- BLT believes working in partnership with children, young people, vulnerable adults, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential to promoting welfare
- A child or young person is defined as a person up to the age of 18 years who has not yet reached their 18th birthday (*The Children's Act 1989*)
- A vulnerable adult is defined as anyone over the age of 18 who is, or may be, in need of safeguarding by reason of neurological impairment, physical impairment, age or illness; or who may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation
- The Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy is provided to all BLT staff and volunteers and is available on request to parents, carers, children, young people and outside organisations. It is also displayed on the BLT website

Aims

The Child, Young People and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy applies to:

- All employees*, volunteers, children, vulnerable adults, their parents, their carers and any other agencies involved in activities with BLT

**BLT employee includes, but is not limited to, full time employees, freelance/casual workers, interns, apprentices, workshop assistants and chaperones*

Objectives

- To ensure that all children and vulnerable adults involved with BLT, whatever their culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual orientation, have the right to protection from harm or abuse
- To ensure that all employees and volunteers understand how to identify, and respond to, safeguarding concerns
- To ensure that all employees and volunteers have a clear understanding of the principles and practices involved in the safeguarding and protection of children and vulnerable adults
- To provide information to children and vulnerable adults participating in BLT activities, outlining the responsibilities of, and approach taken by, BLT in the protection of children and vulnerable adults
- To ensure that employees, volunteers, children and vulnerable adults participating in BLT activities understand that all disclosures of harm and abuse will be reported by BLT to the appropriate agency/authority

Employing and Recruiting Staff

- BLT adheres to *Safer Recruitment* procedures
- BLT ensures that employees and volunteers working routinely with children and vulnerable adults as part of their role at/for BLT, undertake an enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) every three years as recommended by the DBS
- BLT does not require administrative staff or volunteers who do not have routine contact with children and vulnerable adults to undertake a DBS disclosure as recommended by the DBS
- All Duty Managers will be DBS checked by BLT to allow for the processes described in Appendix 4
- All Volunteers will have to undertake basic BLT online safeguarding training and annual self-certification of completion every 2 years
- Named roles in the policy will undertake the Bradford council DSO course every 2 years

Addressing Child, Young Person and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Incidents

- All reported and/or identified child and vulnerable adult safeguarding incidents will be taken seriously by BLT and recorded
- It is the responsibility of all BLT employees and all volunteers to report all incidents relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults to the DSO or, in their absence, the relevant member of the Named Roles
- All BLT employees, volunteers and the Named Roles recognise that collective accounts may highlight trends and all concerns so, no matter how small, should be reported to the DSO or, in their absence, the relevant member of the Named Roles
- In the event of an incident being reported to, or identified by, the DSO, then the DSO, in conjunction with the Named Roles, will convene and identify and agree on the necessary course of action
- All decisions taken by the Named Roles will be recorded and securely retained for a period of 25 years
- All decisions taken by the Named Roles will remain confidential and be communicated only to the child, young person, vulnerable adult, their parent, their carer and the appropriate agency

The Role of the DSO and named roles

- To liaise with, and make referrals to, appropriate agencies where there are concerns/incidents relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults
- To ensure that the Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy is updated annually, and that all relevant staff and volunteers have read and understood the policy
- To ensure that policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults are fully implemented and that implementation is rigorously monitored
- To manage clear, accurate and secure record keeping systems
- To ensure that safeguarding training is up to date for all members of the Named Roles
- To ensure all safeguarding and child protection training is cascaded to other staff
- To ensure that a register is kept of staff and volunteers who have completed child protection training

Anti-Radicalisation

- BLT recognises and understands that children and vulnerable adults 'play out' reality and current topical subject within creative sessions. Within this context BLT promotes democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- BLT recognises the difference between 'playing out' within creative sessions and real life, and is alert to the potential signs and symptoms of radicalisation, which include, but are not limited to, a sudden but continuing change in:
 - Physical appearance or dress code
 - Physical and behavioural attitudes towards others
 - Use of inappropriate, discriminatory and offensive language
 - haring of inappropriate images
 - Encouraging others to use offensive or discriminatory language

Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually and following any major incident.

Reviewed December 2025

Appendix 1

Child and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Code of Conduct

BLT requires all employees and volunteers to adhere to safe conduct and understand the position of responsibility, influence and trust they hold in working with children and vulnerable adults. BLT therefore expects all employees, volunteers and visitors to adhere to the following guidelines:

Reporting & Safeguarding Responsibilities

- Report any concern about the safety of children and vulnerable adults to the DSO, or relevant member of the Named Roles, as soon as practicable
- Never to enter into an agreement with a child or vulnerable adult about keeping disclosed information about their personal life secret; rather to inform the young person that they are obliged to inform the DSO or, in their absence, a member of the Named Roles if a disclosure is made. It is then the responsibility of the DSO to contact the relevant agencies

Access, Security & Site Awareness

- Be aware of the possibility that some individuals may seek to obtain unauthorised access to the BLT or Bingley Arts Centre, and to politely challenge strangers without a form of identification
- Any BLT activity involving children and vulnerable adults may only take place at a venue agreed in advance and appropriately risk assessed
- Never to meet a child, young person or vulnerable adult outside of hours or at a non-BLT approved venue

Supervision & Staffing Requirements

- Ensure a minimum of two adults or a DBS checked volunteer / employee are present during all activities with children and vulnerable adults
- Recognise that employees/volunteers may, on occasion, be required to interact one-to-one with children or vulnerable adults, so to insist on the presence of an additional adult in the form of a volunteer or parent/carer of the child or vulnerable adult. In the event of finding yourself alone with a child or vulnerable adult to move as soon as practicable into the view of others
- Employees and volunteers working with children, young people, and vulnerable adults are expected to arrive a minimum of 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start time of the activity.
- Employees and volunteers working with children, young people, and vulnerable adults must ensure adequate supervision as outlined in appendix 3

Conduct, Behaviour & Professional Boundaries

- Treat all children and vulnerable adults with respect at all times. The use of racist, sectarian, sexist, suggestive or inappropriate language is unacceptable
- Never use physical punishments
- Never develop social or personal relationships with children or adults who participate in BLT activities. A breach of this will result in disciplinary procedure
- BLT recognises that, due to the nature of its activities, employees and/or volunteers may come into contact with a child, young person or vulnerable adult (who participates in a BLT activity) in a social setting. BLT strongly advises maintaining a professional distance and paying attention to their own behaviour in such a setting
- Employees, volunteers, children and vulnerable adults are prohibited from smoking, drinking alcohol and taking illegal drugs while actively engaged in BLT activities

Communication, Inclusion & Participation

- Communicate clearly with all children and vulnerable adults working within the theatre, and work to be inclusive at all times

- Ensure that children and vulnerable adults understand fully any instructions given to them and that they consider the child and vulnerable adult's limitations, of which they themselves may not be aware
 - Employees and volunteers should encourage participation but not force any child, young person or vulnerable adult to undertake an activity they feel uncomfortable with for reasons of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief or sexual orientation
 - Whatsapp Groups for under 16's should only be used where deemed ABSOLUTELY necessary – the preferred and first approach should be a group with parents only. (see appendix 5)
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Physical Contact & Personal Care

- Physical interaction with children and vulnerable adults is acceptable due to the practical nature of some activities. However, employees and volunteers should only touch participants when it is necessary to the particular arts activity. Agreement must be sought from participants prior to any physical contact. All employees and volunteers should refrain from any other action that may be construed as inappropriate touch
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Social Media, Photography & Recording

- Never use personal social media accounts to contact a child or vulnerable adult who participates in a BLT activity online. In the event a social media account is judged to be the best form of communication, this should be recorded, together with the rationale for such communication
 - The use of any cameras or recording equipment is not permitted on the BLT/BAC sites where children and vulnerable adults are present, unless agreed in advance in accordance with the (BLT) GDPR policy. This includes the use of mobile phone cameras by cast members and otherwise.
 - Photographs, films or web-based materials of children, young people or vulnerable adults participating in any BLT project will only be taken with the consent of the parent / guardian / carer and in consultation with the child, young person or vulnerable adult involved. Where permission is sought, BLT permissions forms will follow data protection guidelines
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Financial Conduct & Gifts

- Avoid buying goods or services from a child or vulnerable adult who participates in a BLT activity unless in a clear and transparent manner
 - Decline financial gifts from children or vulnerable adults who participate in BLT activities, informing them how they can make a transparent donation to BLT
 - Never to lend money to children or vulnerable adults who participate in BLT activities. In the event that a participant is stranded, money to cover the cost of travel may be lent with the transaction clearly recorded and witnessed
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Changing Facilities & Welfare Arrangements

- Employees and volunteers working with children, young people, and vulnerable adults must ensure dressing rooms are split into single sex spaces where possible and appropriate
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Registration, Responsibility & Parental Roles

- On arrival children, and vulnerable adults will be registered by the relevant member of staff/volunteer and are then the responsibility of BLT

- It is the parent / guardian / carer's responsibility to equip their child, young person or vulnerable adult for the activity taking place as detailed by the BLT
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Data Protection & Information Sharing

- BLT will not pass on details of children, young people or vulnerable adults, to external organisations in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, the Children Act 2004 and The Safety of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Appendix 2

Reporting - What to do if a Child, Young Person or Vulnerable Adult Makes a Disclosure

- Perform a dynamic risk assessment, considering if the current location is safe and appropriate for a disclosure. Offer first aid if appropriate
- Do not promise to keep the information the child or vulnerable adult has disclosed a secret
- Look at the child or vulnerable adult directly
- Accept what the child or young person says
- Do not adopt a critical approach
- Do not press for information or ask leading questions, use open questions e.g. tell me, explain, describe
- Reassure them that they are doing the right thing by telling you, and that you will take what they say seriously
- Let them know what you are going to do next, who you are going to tell, and why, and describe next steps in an age-appropriate manner
- Finish on a positive note

How to report a disclosure

- As soon as practicable make written notes of exactly what was disclosed.
- Inform the DSO or, in their absence, the relevant member of the Named Roles, as soon as practicable
- Do not delay but do not act alone to start an investigation.
- The DSO Named Roles member will then consult with others relevant to the incident and take a written record of the facts.

Recording disclosures

In the event of a disclosure the DSO Named Roles member will ensure that the following information is recorded:

- *Name of the child*
- *Parent's/Carer's details*
- *The child's/vulnerable adult's address*
- *Relevant phone numbers*
- *What is said to have happened, or what was seen*
- *When it occurred. Who else was there?*
- *What was said by those involved?*
- *Whether there is any actual evidence e.g. bruises, bleeding, changed behaviour*
- *Who has been told about it?*
- *Who was concerned?*
- *Was the child/vulnerable adult able to say what happened?*
- *Whether the parents/guardians/carers have been advised*

Appendix 3

Legislation

The Child, Young People and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy is supported by the following legislation:

- *The Children Act 1989*
- *The Police Act 1997*
- *The Data Protection Acts 1988/1998*
- *The Human Rights Act 1998*
- *The Protection of Children Act 1999*
- *The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000*
- *The Children Act 2004*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019*

Ratios & Staffing

BLT follows the NSPCC recommended guidelines for adult to child ratios where reasonable practicable:

- *Aged 4 – 8 years: 1 adult to every 6 children*
- *Aged 9 – 12 years: 1 adult to every 8 children or young people*
- *Aged 13 – 18 years: 1 adult to every 10 young people*

Where the group is of mixed gender, BLT follows the NSPCC recommendation that supervising staff should also include both male and female workers wherever practicable.

Appendix 4: Child Becomes Unwell or Loses Contact with Parent/Guardian

Purpose

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children visiting or participating in activities at the theatre/community arts centre, and to provide a clear process for staff and volunteers to follow if a child becomes unwell or is separated from their parent or guardian.

If a Child Becomes Unwell

Step 1: Stay with the Child

- The duty manager stays with the child at all times.
- Move the child to a **quiet, safe area** such as the first aid room or office, away from public view.

Step 2: Notify a Supervisor / Duty Manager

- Inform the **Duty Manager** or **Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)** immediately.
- Assess the child's condition (first aid trained staff should assist if available).

Step 3: Contact the Parent/Guardian

- Use the contact details on the sign-in sheet, ticketing system, or youth theatre register.
- If contact is not immediate, continue to try regularly (every 5 minutes if possible).
- If part of an organised group, inform the **group leader**.

Step 4: Administer First Aid (if appropriate)

- Only trained first aiders may provide medical assistance.
- Record all treatment in the **Accident book** via www.bingleyartscentre.co.uk/reportaccident (to be included in first aid boxes)

Step 5: If the Illness Appears Serious

- Call **999** for an ambulance immediately.
 - Inform the parent/guardian of the situation and where the child is being taken.
 - The Duty Manager or DSO should accompany the child until a parent/guardian arrives or the emergency services take over.
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5. If a Child Becomes Separated from Their Parent/Guardian

Step 1: Reassure and Stay with the Child

- Remain calm and the Duty Manager must stay with the child at all times.
- Move them to a **designated safe space** (e.g. foyer, box office area, or front-of-house office).
- Do **not** take the child outside the building or into isolated areas.

Step 2: Attempt to locate the Parent/Guardian

- Use the PA system or discreet announcement if appropriate:

"Could the parent or guardian of a missing child please make themselves known to a member of staff at the foyer."

(Avoid stating the child's name or details publicly.)

- Check with front-of-house staff, box office, and bar areas.

- If the child arrived as part of a workshop or youth group, contact the group leader.

Step 4: If the Parent/Guardian Cannot Be Found Within 15 Minutes

- Escalate to the DSO or Deputy DSO.
- Contact the local police **on 101** (or **999** if you believe the child may be at immediate risk).
- Continue to care for and reassure the child until resolved.

Step 5: When the Parent/Guardian is Found

- Verify the adult's identity (ask security question, ticket, or other confirmation if needed).
 - Reunite the child in a **public area**, observed by another staff member if possible.
 - Record the incident in the **Safeguarding/Incident Log** with time, actions taken, and who was present.
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6. Recording and Reporting

After any incident:

- Complete a **Safeguarding or Incident Report Form** within 24 hours.
 - Report to the DSO (and trustees if significant).
 - If the event raises wider concerns (e.g. neglect, supervision issues), the DSL must follow safeguarding reporting procedures to the local authority.
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7. Prevention Measures

- Ensure all children attending workshops or rehearsals **sign in/out** with a parent or guardian.
 - Keep **emergency contact details** up to date.
 - Staff and volunteers must **wear identifiable badges or uniforms**.
 - Ensure all front-of-house and workshop staff know the **location of the safe space (duty manager location during event)** and **who the DSO is**.
 - Display signage stating that children must be accompanied by an adult at all times unless part of an organised, supervised activity.
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8. Suggested "Quick Reference" Poster (for FOH & Volunteers)

We should display a short version backstage or in FOH areas:

If a child becomes unwell or lost:

- 1** Stay with the child – never leave them alone.
- 2** Alert the Duty Manager or Safeguarding Lead.
- 3** Move to the safe space (e.g. foyer/office).
- 4** Contact parent/guardian using records.
- 5** Record the incident and report to DSO.

Appendix 5

WhatsApp Group Policy for Under 18's

Purpose

WhatsApp may be used by Bingley Little Theatre as a limited, optional tool for closed-group communication where appropriate. Its use must always comply with BLT's safeguarding responsibilities, UK GDPR, and best practice for working with children and young people.

Age Restrictions

WhatsApp must never be used with children under the age of 13 under any circumstances.

WhatsApp should not be used with young people aged 13–15 unless its use is deemed critical. Where required, communication should take place via a parent or carer group as the preferred option. WhatsApp groups with 13-15 must only be used with explicit written parental or carer permission, and only when deemed critical. Consent must acknowledge:

- The use of WhatsApp as a communication tool
- That phone numbers will be visible to other group members
- That WhatsApp is operated by a US-based company operating under the UK GDPR via the US Data Privacy Framework

Young people aged 16–17 may participate in WhatsApp groups where appropriate, but safeguarding controls must still apply.

Safeguarding Controls

To protect children, young people, volunteers, and staff, the following rules must always be followed:

No 1:1 messaging

There must never be one-to-one communication between an adult and a child or young person.

Any 1:1 message initiated by a young person must not be responded to.

The message must be reported to a parent/carers and the relevant BLT safeguarding lead.

Multiple adults required

All WhatsApp groups involving young people must include a minimum of two DBS approved BLT adults.

Consent and choice

Individuals must give permission before being added to a WhatsApp group.

Participation is entirely optional; no individual should feel pressured to use WhatsApp or be disadvantaged if they choose not to.

Data Protection and Privacy

WhatsApp must not be used as a file store.

Only the minimum necessary information should be shared.

No personal, sensitive, or safeguarding-related information about children, young people, or volunteers should be shared.

No photos should be shared or distributed other than those required for a show or performance e.g. dance routine, costumes for approval etc.

WhatsApp's encryption provides a level of security, but it is not a BLT-controlled system.

Group Management

Group administrators should be limited to those who are essential.

Individuals must be removed from groups when they no longer need access, particularly when roles or involvement end.

When a group is no longer required all members must be removed and the group must then be deleted by the admin

Appropriate Use

WhatsApp should only be used for practical, operational communication (e.g. reminders, schedules).

It must not be used to:

- Discuss Personal matters
- Discuss Safeguarding concerns
- Discuss Sensitive or confidential issues
- Share any photos

Inappropriate, offensive, or discriminatory content must never be shared.

All communication must reflect BLT's values of respect, integrity, care, inclusion, and cooperation.

Review and Compliance

Staff and volunteers using WhatsApp on behalf of BLT are responsible for keeping themselves informed of WhatsApp's privacy and security updates.

Any breach of this policy must be reported to the BLT Safeguarding Lead and may result in disciplinary action.