



The Polka Theatre Safeguarding Policy (for children and adults at risk)

Overall Statement

The key guidance for child protection is Working together to safeguard children (Department for Education, 2018). This states:

- everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe
- everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play in sharing information and identifying concerns.

As a venue dedicated to children, the safety and protection of children is paramount. Our Board of Trustees and all staff employed by Polka Theatre have a duty of care to children and young people who visit our theatre and attend our activities. We recognise our commitment to safeguard and promote children's welfare and follow a policy of best practice that protects them. This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, freelancers, volunteers, students and anyone else working on behalf of Polka.

The purpose of this policy is:

- to provide protection for the children and young people who visit our theatre and take part in our activities
- to provide staff and third parties who support our work (whether as actors, directors or otherwise) with a set of principles to adopt to protect children and to provide guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

Polka recognises that:

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- all children and young people, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religious belief, sex, sexual orientation or identity have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their levels of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for children and young people, deputies and lead board member for safeguarding

- adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for all staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures
- safe recruitment of staff and volunteers, ensuring all necessary checks are made recording and storing information professionally and securely, and sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, their families, staff and volunteers via posters and discussions
- using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.

This document has been drawn up with guidance from the NSPCC and is based on the laws that seek to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2021

Michael Bradley, Trustee at Polka Theatre has overall responsibility for Child Protection at Polka Theatre. The Head of Creative Learning is the Designated Safeguarding Officer. If you have any concerns or queries about child protection or this policy you should direct them to Polly Simmonds, Head of Creative Learning.
polly@polkatheatre.com / 020 8545 8326

This policy should be read alongside our policies and procedures on:

1. Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead
2. Safer recruitment of staff and training
3. Code of conduct for staff and volunteers
4. Child Protection Procedures
5. Responding to disclosures and concerns both off and on site
6. Storage of personal information
7. E-safety
8. Photographic permission and social media
9. General visits to Polka Theatre & Hires
10. Practice in working directly with Children and Young People
11. Anti-bullying policy
12. Mental Health & Wellbeing

- Appendix 1 Definitions of abuse (Physical, Emotional, Sexual, Neglect, Peer on Peer)
Appendix 2 Radicalisation and Extremism
Appendix 3 Photo Consent Templates



- Appendix 4 Child Protection Reporting Form
- Appendix 5 Safeguarding Concern Form
- Appendix 6 Anti-bullying Reporting Form
- Appendix 7 Safe Touch guidelines

Key contacts

The Head of Creative Learning is the Designated Safeguarding Lead. All incidents concerning child protection and safeguarding should be reported to the DSL. If this person is unavailable, you should report to the Deputies.

Polly Simmonds
Head of Creative Learning
020 8545 8326 polly@polkatheatre.com

Deputies:

Lynette Shanbury
Executive Director
lynette@polkatheatre.com

Hilary O'Connor
Head of Operations and Front of House
hilary@polkatheatre.com

Chris Hoare
Duty Manager
Chris@polkatheatre.com

Dominic Hedges
Freefalling Youth Theatre Director
dominic@polkatheatre.com

Trustee Lead for Safeguarding: Michael Bradley Head Teacher, Merton Abbey Primary School. Michael Bradley has overall responsibility for Child Protection at Polka Theatre.

Support Services:

Merton's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden
SM4 5DX 020 8545 4226 and 020 8545 4227
mash@merton.gov.uk

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Merton's LADO Margaret Doe (interim LADO)
020 8545 3633/ 020 8545 4993.

Police Station – Wimbledon

Hillside Team
Wimbledon Police Station, 15 Queens Road, Wimbledon, SW19 8NN
020 8721 2458 or 07920 233901



NSPCC help line for adults - 0808 800 5000

Child Line - 0800 1111

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice every two years. This policy was last reviewed on 3rd December 2021

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Polly Simmonds". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Signed:

Polly Simmonds, Head of Creative Learning (Designated Child Protection Officer)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lynette Shanbury". The signature is cursive and flows from left to right, ending in a large, elegant loop.

Signed:

Lynette Shanbury, Executive Director