

Northenden Players Theatre Club Safeguarding Policy for Vulnerable Persons

Created: 30th August 2022

Reviewed: 19th April 2025

This policy is addressed to: Charity Trustees, Volunteers, public, parents, funders

Date for renewal/updates/reviews: 31 July 2024, annually thereafter

Board level lead for safeguarding:

TBC

Safeguarding Officer (SO)



James Robinson
afeguardingnptcs@gmail.com
07917 633983

Deputy Safeguarding Officer (DSO)



Freya Fennell (nee Fulton)
safeguardingnptc@gmail.com
07890 609404

Location of safeguarding information and main policy documents: Theatre & website

This Policy is accompanied by

Appendix A: **Safeguarding Concern Form** Appendix

B: **Definitions of Abuse.**

POLICY STATEMENT

Northenden Players Theatre Club (NPTC) is committed to a practice which protects vulnerable people, including under 18s, from harm including physical, emotional and sexual abuse. The main legislation and guidance that supports the policy statement:

Children Act 1989

Children Act 2004

UNCRC

Working Together to Safeguard

Children (2018)

What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is
Being Abused (2015)

Information Sharing: practitioners'
guide (2018)

Keeping Children Safe in Education
(2025)

ADULTS

Care Act 2014

Mental Capacity Act 2005

Human Rights Act 1998

Legislation

Data Protection Act 2018

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act
2006

This Policy details organisational behaviour and best practice which is applicable to all NPTC 'Volunteers' - those who work with NPTC on a freelance basis and /or voluntary basis, to include NPTC's Board of Trustees.

NPTC will do all we can to limit risk, whilst maximising the engagement of our Volunteers.

NPTC members and volunteers may have contact with children or vulnerable persons (U18/VP).

If a play requires a U18/VP to be cast then refer to the Safeguarding team for advice.

For the purposes of safeguarding decision-making, a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18. According to the Department of Health, a Vulnerable Person can be anyone who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation. And also anyone who is detained by Her Majesty's Government or in contact with probation services.

We will safeguard Under 18s/Vulnerable Persons (U18/VP) by:

- Making this Policy readily available to all Volunteers, Parents/carers in the theatre, via email where possible and accessible on the NPTC website.
- Communicating the CODE FOR NPTC VOLUNTEERS and the CODE FOR U18/VP AND THEIR PARENT/CARER to Volunteers and other relevant persons, e.g. carers, parents, guardians, etc.
- Sharing information about concerns with relevant agencies who need to know, and involving related persons appropriately and doing so in a swift and appropriate manner.
- Reviewing this Policy annually and reflecting on any reports made.
- The Policy has been agreed with the Board and is fully supported by the Executive Committee and all NPTC Volunteers.

It is imperative that each NPTC volunteer is aware of their responsibilities under current safeguarding legislation and has a working knowledge of NPTC procedures. Each volunteer can access this policy via the website.

Procedures for safer recruitment

Due to the fact that we are not a youth organisation we do not require any of our volunteers to be DBS checked on a regular basis.

ROLE OF THE SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS FOR CHILD AND VULNERABLE PERSON PROTECTION

The Safeguarding Officers are responsible for:

- Providing the 'first port of call' and offering advice and support to all Volunteers regarding safeguarding issues.
- Making referrals as necessary.
- Keeping up to date with changes and developments in safeguarding.
- Disseminating policy and good practice to all Volunteers, in particular:

- Encouraging all Volunteers to read, and be aware of the specific NPTC Policies and Procedures
- Encouraging Volunteers to understand their responsibilities for being alert to the signs of abuse and for referring any concerns to the Safeguarding Officers.
- Organising information relating to safeguarding so that this is accessible to all Volunteers.
- Reviewing the Safeguarding Policy annually

In the absence of the Safeguarding Officer, the Deputy Safeguarding Officer will assume the responsibilities of this role. In the absence of all of these people, or in respect to a complaint about either of these persons, the Board Safeguarding Lead will assume responsibility for this role.

The Safeguarding Officer and the Deputy Safeguarding Officer should attain Level 3 Safeguarding Training at least every 3 years.

CODE FOR UNDER 18s/VULNERABLE PERSONS AND THEIR PARENT/CARER

Every U18/VP must be accompanied by a Responsible Person whilst on the theatre premises. A Responsible Person is defined as the child's parent/carer or an adult nominated by the parent/carer. Refer to Key Points for Parents/Carers.

Should the parent/carer nominate an NPTC volunteer/member to be the Responsible Person for their U18/VP, then the nominated person must never be alone with the U18/VP whilst on the theatre premises.

- Prior to any involvement with NPTC, the parent/carer must communicate to the committee their permission for photos/videos of the U18/VP to be taken and shared (or not).
- Children are expected to behave sensibly and without disrupting anyone undertaking theatre business.
- The parent/carer or the nominated Responsible Person is wholly responsible for that U18/VP while on the premises. The theatre will not be liable for any misfortune which may occur whilst the U18/VP is on the premises.
- NPTC advises that children should stay in the auditorium whilst at the theatre. During rehearsals, U18/VP must remain in the auditorium with their Responsible Person.
- Children are not allowed back stage unless accompanied by their Responsible Person at all times and the privacy of those using dressing rooms must be respected.
- If the child is already the subject of a Child Protection Plan, the parent/carer must inform the SO and provide them with any relevant information. This information will be shared with other NPTC Volunteers on a need-to-know basis.

Should an U18/VP be involved in a theatre production then this code must be adhered to without exception. Should the VP/U18 be in the Technical booth at the back of the theatre

then the Responsible Person, if not in the Technical booth, must be seated on the back row of the auditorium within sight and earshot of their U18/VP.

CODE FOR NPTC VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers should, at all times, show respect and understanding for individual's rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the ethos and principles of NPTC.

Volunteers should be committed to:

- Endeavour to provide an example which NPTC would wish others to follow
- Treating vulnerable persons with respect and dignity.
- Always listening to what a participant is saying
- Valuing each participant
- Recognising the unique contribution each individual can make
- Encouraging and praising each participant

Also refer to the NPTC Code of Conduct for volunteer members.

Volunteers should:

- Use appropriate language with U18s/vulnerable persons and challenge any inappropriate language used by any U18/vulnerable person or any individual working with U18/VP.
- Understand that "banter" may be taken personally and is not acceptable.
- Always respect people's personal space.
- Be aware that someone might misinterpret our actions no matter how well intentioned.
- Never draw any conclusions about others without checking the facts.
- Never allow themselves to enter or become embroiled in inappropriate situations
- Never exaggerate or trivialise abuse issues or make suggestive remarks or gestures about, or to an U18/vulnerable person.

CONTACT WITH Under 18s/VULNERABLE PERSONS

Whilst on NPTC premises, volunteers should ensure that:

- they never spend any time alone with any U18/VP
- they never engage in any type of physical contact with any U18/vulnerable persons without first asking permission.
- they never allow inappropriate touching of any kind.

Communications/Media

- NPTC Volunteers will never communicate directly with an U18/vulnerable person other than as detailed below.
- When contacting a vulnerable person in reference to NPTC theatre business via email or social media messaging e.g. WhatsApp, the vulnerable person's parent/carer must always be copied in.
- If an U18/vulnerable person makes direct contact with a Volunteer via social media, the volunteer should not respond, and should report it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will ensure it is followed up and the appropriate action taken.
- NPTC Volunteers will not take or share photos or video footage of an U18/vulnerable person without confirmation from the Committee that the appropriate permissions have been sought and received.
- Confidential data that is collected on vulnerable persons, is held in accordance with GDPR regulations.

PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

In any case where a Volunteer at Northenden Players Theatre Club has concerns or an allegation is made, a record will be made using the NPTC Safeguarding Concern Form. The form must then be signed by the completing person and the Safeguarding Officer.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS MADE BY A CHILD / VULNERABLE PERSON OF SUSPECTED ABUSE

- Get verbal account of incident from vulnerable person
- Record Concern on Safeguarding Concern Form as soon as possible
- Report concerns to Safeguarding Officer immediately
- Contact the responsible person for the vulnerable person if not already present and if appropriate
- Never guarantee absolute confidentiality, as the protection of vulnerable persons will always have precedence over any other issues.
- Ensure you never use closed questioning or leading questions
- Offer them reassurance without making promises, and take what is said seriously.
- Allow the vulnerable persons to speak without interruption, accept what is said it is not your role to investigate or question.
- Do not overreact or respond with emotive language, or pass judgement.
- Advise that you will offer support, but that you must pass the information on.
- Explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell.
- Record the discussion accurately, as soon as possible after the event, use the vulnerable person's words or explanations – do not translate into your own words, in case you have misconstrued what the vulnerable persons was trying to say.
- Contact the NPTC Safeguarding Officers for advice / guidance.
- The Safeguarding Officer may then discuss the concern / suspicion with the relevant organisation, and, if appropriate, make a direct referral. The SO will keep records of all discussions and actions.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

The NPTC referral procedure for identified suspicion or concern will be followed at all times.

- All safeguarding concerns should immediately be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Leads. No Volunteer should act alone.
- The Safeguarding Officer will follow up the concern in a timely and appropriate manner.
- If the concern is deemed of a serious nature, the Safeguarding Officer will inform the Social Services and Police if appropriate.
- Information sharing needs to be proportional to the level of concern. Relevant NPTC Volunteers and other agencies involved with the vulnerable person will only be given information on a need to know basis.

APPENDIX B WHAT IS ABUSE?

The following definitions are informed by The Department for Children Schools and Families (2013) Working Together to Safeguard Children document. NPTC considers the same definitions relevant to all vulnerable persons.

Abuse can be categorised in 4 ways:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect

ABUSE: Somebody may abuse or neglect a vulnerable person by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Vulnerable persons 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 which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a vulnerable person. Physical harm may also be caused when a responsible person fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a vulnerable person.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE: The persistent emotional maltreatment of a vulnerable person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the vulnerable person's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child 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 vulnerable persons. These may include interactions that are beyond a vulnerable person's developmental capability, as

well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the vulnerable person 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 vulnerable persons frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of vulnerable persons.

SEXUAL ABUSE: Involves forcing or enticing a vulnerable person or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the vulnerable person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving vulnerable persons in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging vulnerable persons in to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a vulnerable person 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 vulnerable persons.

NEGLECT: The persistent failure to meet a vulnerable person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious Impairment of the vulnerable person's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Neglect may involve a responsible person failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- Protect a vulnerable person 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 vulnerable person's basic emotional needs