

# BIG Bubble Theatre Company Child Protection Policy

* The welfare of the child is paramount.
* All children, 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 will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
* All staff working for Big Bubble have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate staff member.

## **Child Protection Policy Statement**

* **Pals ProductionsBig Bubble** has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in company activities.
* All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.
* **Big Bubble** will ensure the safety and protection of all children whilst in their care.
* **Big Bubble** through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by **the company** A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).
* Company directors Laura Clark and Alan Parker are the trained members of staff.

## **Policy aims**

The aim of Big Bubble Theatre Company Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

* Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of **Big Bubble Theatre Company.**
* Allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

## **Promoting good practice**

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home and at school. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

## **Good practice guidelines**

### **Good practice means:**

* Always working in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication.
* Treating all young people/disabled adults equally with respect and dignity.
* Always putting the welfare of each young person first.
* Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with students (eg it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
* Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering children to share in decision making.
* Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
* Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
* Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults.
* Never use physical punishment against a child.
* If a child is being physically abusive towards yourself, please remain calm and ask for a member of staff from the schools to assist in the matter. Please record all the details in an incident report immediately after the situation.
* Securing parental consent in writing if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
* Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

### **Practices never to be sanctioned**

You should never:

* Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games with a child.
* Share a room with a child.
* Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
* Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
* Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
* Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
* Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
* Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves.
* Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

**Staff Training and Child protection Procedures**

* For all staff working for Big Bubble, we ensure all appropriate checks are made to ensure suitability to work with children.
* All workshop leaders who are left unattended with young people will have to complete an enhanced DBS check.
* For our actors performing in schools the actors will have a basic DBS
* All staff members are to be made aware of Big Bubble Child Protection policies and procedures.
* Ensure we have at least one staff member fully trained in Big Bubble Child Protection policies and procedures.
* Ensure all staff members have a copy of Big Bubble Child Protection policies and procedures and make them aware that a copy is also available on the website.
* Ensure all staff members are aware of their responsibilities in being able to alert any forms of abuse to the trained member of staff.
* Report to trained member of staff and follow company procedures if an allegation is made against a staff member.
* Any staff member who ignores Big Bubble Child Protection policies and procedures will face disciplinary action.

**What to do if abuse is disclosed to you**

* Listen and stay calm.
* Allow them to feel in control and talk at their own pace.
* Allow them to openly express their feelings.
* Avoid pushing for details and asking direct questions.
* Accept what happened and the way they feel.
* Do not dispute what they tell you.
* Devote your full attention to the individual.
* Avoid viewing the victim’s character and actions negatively.
* Avoid judging the perpetrator negatively as they may be known and viewed positively by the victim, which will contradict the victim’s judgement.
* Recognise they have coped in whatever ways were available to them.
* Make sure you follow all procedures highlighted in this document.
* Do not offer support that you are not qualified or confident to provide.
* Do not make promises you cannot keep.
* Do not promise confidentiality.
* Report it immediately to the trained staff member and to company directors.
* Write a full written report on what the victim has disclosed to you.
* Do not keep it to yourself.
* Report to the appropriate member of staff at the school or venue as soon as possible.