



## SAFEGUARDING POLICY

### **PURPOSE**

To protect the welfare and well-being of vulnerable individuals, particularly children, young people, and vulnerable adults, from harm, abuse, or neglect. The key purposes of a safeguarding policy are:

1. **Prevention of Harm:** It establishes clear guidelines and procedures for identifying and preventing abuse, harm, or exploitation.
2. **Promoting Safe Practices:** Ensures that organisations, institutions, and individuals working with vulnerable groups follow best practices to create safe environments.
3. **Accountability:** Outlines the responsibilities of staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders in protecting vulnerable people, holding them accountable for following the policy.
4. **Reporting and Action:** Provides clear procedures for reporting concerns, suspicions, or incidents of abuse, ensuring that the appropriate action is taken promptly and effectively.
5. **Compliance with Law and Regulations:** Ensures organisations comply with local laws, regulations, and safeguarding standards required by governing bodies or institutions.
6. **Support and Training:** Educates and trains staff and volunteers to recognise signs of abuse and know how to respond appropriately.
7. **Taking Action:** to enable everybody at CYTO can achieve the best outcomes.

Ultimately, safeguarding policies aim to create a culture of safety and vigilance to ensure everybody at CYTO has a nurturing space to grow.

CYTO recognises that Safeguarding is the responsibility of all adults involved in the organisation and applies to all service users, especially young people, that we interact with.

The CYTO Mission Statement includes the provision of “a safe, inclusive, supportive environment”. To meet this aim, this policy offers specific procedures to efficiently deal with any concerns about young people suffering abuse and other issues which may affect their wellbeing, both in our care and in their lives outside CYTO. It also incorporates advice to staff and other service users to ensure they too feel safe and confident.

Our procedures aim to ensure those children who attend CYTO and any other children who may come to the attention of CYTO, receive the protection and support they need if they are at risk of abuse. This procedure provides clear directions to adults at CYTO if they have concerns that a child is in need of protection. All adults at CYTO have a duty to report concerns of abuse.

## DEFINITIONS

- **Adult** - may include tutors, directors, staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors who are 18 years old and over.
- **Child** - someone who is under the age of 18. Note: CYTO's duty of care applies to all our members, including those over the age of 18 (some of whom may be vulnerable young adults).
- **Abuse** - this includes peer to peer abuse as well as adult on child. Staff are also reminded that abuse can be perpetrated by members of any class, race, belief system, age group, gender and sexual orientation.
- **Contextual-safeguarding** – Staff & volunteers are aware of other risks to our members from environments beyond the home & school. Contextual safeguarding (also known as extra-familial) looks at how we can best understand these risks & engage with children and young people and help to keep them safe. Our members, staff & volunteers understand our local community best, so everyone should be alert for any changes or anything that is potentially concerning, perhaps in local public spaces such as parks, transport hubs, take-aways, cafes, bars and shopping areas.
- **Extra-familial harms** - Young people can be at risk beyond their families & schools. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, sexual abuse, serious youth violence and county lines.
- **Mental Health** - a state of well-being where a child or young person can develop emotionally and handle life's challenges, form and maintain positive relationships with others, feel confident and manage emotions effectively and cope with normal stress and uncertainties in life. The NSPCC emphasises that good mental health allows children and young people to thrive, but they also acknowledge that many factors—including trauma, abuse, or neglect—can negatively impact mental health. They focus on preventing harm and supporting children to recover and build resilience if mental health challenges arise.

## DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

The following definitions are taken from NSPCC guidelines (2017) & updated from the DFE's KCSIE (2021)

- **Physical Abuse** - violence causing injury or occurring regularly, e.g. a child is hurt or injured by being hit, shaken, squeezed, burned or cut. It also includes someone giving a child poison, alcohol, inappropriate drugs, fabricating symptoms or deliberately inducing illness in a child. Sometimes the injuries are accidental but caused by the child being knowingly put at risk
- **Sexual Abuse** – occurs when someone uses power or control to involve a child in sexual activity in order to gratify the abuser's own sexual, emotional or financial needs or desires. It can include forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, showing children pornographic material or involving them in the production of such material, children watching other people's sexual activity or involving children in inappropriate discussions about sexual matters. Abuse can be the result of grooming which is a conscious, purposeful and carefully planned approach used by the offender to gain access to the child, gain a child's trust and compliance and maintain the child's secrecy to avoid disclosure.
- **Child sexual exploitation (CSE)** - is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence, and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship. Under 13s cannot consent to sexual activity.
- **Emotional Abuse** – persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment of a child that is likely to cause serious harm to development. It may include: persistent denial of love and affection, regularly making the child feel frightened e.g. by threats, hurting another person or pet in order to distress a child, being so over-protective towards the child that they are unable to develop or lead a normal life, exploiting or corrupting a child e.g. by involvement in illegal behaviour, conveying to a child that they are worthless, unlovable, inadequate, or their only value is to meet the needs of another person. This could include racist, homophobic, transphobic or other forms of abuse.
- **Neglect** – persistently failing to meet a child's physical, psychological or emotional needs. It may include failing to ensure that a child's basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, health care, hygiene and education are met and also failure to provide appropriate supervision to keep a child out of danger.
- **Honour based Violence** - so-called 'honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of

preserving “honour” often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

- **Sexual Harassment** - causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party. Sexual Harassment can also include:
  1. Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
  2. Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
  3. Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

It is worth noting that children with learning differences are three times more likely to be abused than their peers.

- **Self-harm** - when someone deliberately hurts themselves as a way of coping with difficult feelings, painful memories, or overwhelming situations. Common forms of self-harm include cutting, burning, or hitting oneself. While the behaviour itself is not always a suicide attempt, it is often a signal of deep emotional distress and can put young people at risk for more serious harm.

## **AWARENESS AND DISCLOSURES**

### **Ways that abuse might be brought to your attention:**

- A child might make a direct disclosure about themselves or about another child
- They might offer information that is worrying but not a direct disclosure
- A member of staff might be concerned about a child’s appearance or behaviour or the behaviour of a parent/carer/guardian towards a child,
- A parent/carer/guardian might make the disclosure about abuse that a child is suffering or at risk of suffering or might offer information about a child that is worrying but not a direct disclosure.
- A school or alternative youth provision may contact you to pay particular attention to the wellbeing of a young person following a disclosure or safeguarding concern.

### **Guidelines to remember during a disclosure:**

- Invite the young person to an appropriate semi-private space to have the conversation, ensure that the door remains open and that you are not blocking the exit point of the space
- Remain calm
- Take what the child says seriously

- Listen carefully without interrupting or prompting
- Reassure them that they are not to blame and that telling someone about it is the right thing to do
- Let them know what you are going to do to help and who else needs to know
- Let the child tell their whole story
- Take mental notes of what is being said, with a view to completing a safeguarding report
- Don't try to investigate or quiz the child but make sure that you are clear what they are saying
- It can be helpful to repeat back the words the child has spoken to ensure that these reflect accurately what has been said
- Ask the child what they would like to happen as a result of what has been said but don't make or imply promises you can't keep
- When deciding how to respond, it's important to consider the experience of the victim

#### **Things to avoid during a disclosure:**

- Asking the child to repeat the disclosure to someone else
- Probing for more information
- Criticising the abuser
- Promising to keep information secret
- Expressing disbelief
- Asking leading questions or inflammatory language (i.e. can you describe the terrible things this person did...?)

#### **How to structure the discussion:**

Disclosures can be a distressing event for both the young person and the listener, having an understanding of the ALGEE action plan can help structure the conversation.

The **ALGEE action plan** is:

- **Approach**, assess and assist with any crisis - assess the risk of suicide or harm and look for signs of trauma and high anxiety.
- **Listen** to the person non-judgmentally.

- **Give** the person reassurance, support and information.
- **Encourage** the person to seek appropriate professional help.
- **Encourage** the person to seek self-help and other support strategies.

## RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE

- If you consider the child to be at immediate risk or needs immediate protection - call 999.
- If the child is not in immediate danger, fill in the **Record of Concern form** which available to download from the footer of the website ([www.cyto.org.uk](http://www.cyto.org.uk)). Then discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL): Sheril Chase and Adrienne Cluer ([safeguarding@cyto.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@cyto.org.uk))
- Alternatively, you can consult Croydon Social Services ([0208 255 2888](tel:02082552888)) or the NSPCC Helpline ([0800 800 5000](tel:08008005000)) without disclosing the identity of the child.
- The DSLs may decide to discuss concerns with the member themselves or the child's family unless a family member might be responsible for the abuse or someone may be endangered by the family being informed.
- If the abuse involves an adult working at CYTO call the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for advice ([020 8726 6000](tel:02087266000) Ext 24817)
- If the DSLs are not available contact Artistic Director, Andrew McPherson at [andrewmcpherson@cyto.org.uk](mailto:andrewmcpherson@cyto.org.uk)

## REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE OR CONCERN

Record keeping is vital - Serious Case Reviews repeatedly reveal that aspects of a child's abuse are common knowledge but that no one has recorded, monitored or reported concerns. Confidentiality is also vital. Discussion of concerns should only be with the DSL or deputy not with other volunteers or staff, unless they need to know or are witnesses.

Staff/volunteers should fill in the **Record of Concern Form** (which can be downloaded from the footer of any page of [www.cyto.org.uk](http://www.cyto.org.uk) & email it to: [safeguarding@cyto.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@cyto.org.uk)

The DSLs will discuss the issue & decide on appropriate action. They must refer cases of suspected abuse to the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub), who receive and deal with all safeguarding referrals in local authority area/LADO, offer support to the staff who make referrals & refer cases, where a crime may have been committed, to the Police. It is their responsibility to monitor concerns, report back to the reporter, alert leaders & volunteers appropriately, while respecting confidentiality, and keep the Chair updated. It is also their responsibility to follow up referrals & progress.

## PROMOTING WELLBEING

Children face many issues which may not constitute abuse but still require our support. Recording concerns, confidentiality and discussion with parent/carer/guardians and possibly signposting are still appropriate. Issues include:

- **Bullying** - deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. It can be:
  - Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding kit or equipment, repeating threatening gestures)
  - Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence,
  - Prejudice-based - taunts, graffiti, gestures because of, or focussing on, the issue of sexuality, race, religion, gender or age
  - Verbal name-calling
  - Shouting
  - Excessive sarcasm
  - Spreading rumours
  - Teasing

Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, trans and/or queer (LGBTQ+) can be targeted by their peers. In some cases, a child who is perceived by their peers to be LGBTQ+ (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBTQ+.

- **Cyber-abuse** - refers to a range of on-line activity. It includes bullying and harassment through the use of electronic devices such as laptops, tablets and mobile phones – using email, texting, video game platforms and social media. Cyber Bullying is deliberate and involves recurring or repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic devices and is meant to cause emotional distress. Sexting is a form of cyber-abuse. Grooming often begins as cyber abuse e.g. invitations to parties that are inappropriate for young people to attend, sending links to inappropriate online material, sending links to sites that could lead to radicalisation and initiations into drug, weapon or human trafficking circles.
- **Self Harm** - In the event of self-harm, staff must follow a clear protocol: ensure the immediate safety of the young person, provide appropriate medical assistance if necessary, and offer a calm, non-judgmental environment. All incidents should be documented and reported to the DSL. A risk assessment should be conducted, and the young person should be referred to appropriate mental health support. Confidentiality will be maintained unless there is a significant risk of harm, at which point parents, guardians, or relevant authorities must be informed. If marks, wounds or scars are noticed, take the initiative to directly address it with the young person, ensuring they recognise that the discussion will be judgement free, supportive and solutions based. Do not promise to keep your discussion secret and inform them that you will have to contact a parent/carer/guardian.
- **Domestic Abuse** – The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduces the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in

their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are involved, including ex-partners and family members. The definition captures a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour. Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender identity, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Risks for children living in a household where there is domestic abuse include – being caught up in the violence, neglect (as parents are focused on their own relationship), distress while witnessing or being aware of the physical and emotional suffering of a parent and feelings of helplessness and being unable to intervene.

## **PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR STAFF**

Awareness, vigilance and peer support are key in providing a secure environment, both in relation to drama practice and the general welfare of young people. Our awareness and vigilance in relation to suspected abuse extends to the young people's lives beyond the time they spend in our care.

The management committee follows safer recruitment practice. **Safer Recruitment** is designed to protect children's welfare at every point where they come into contact with adults. The overall purpose of **Safer Recruitment** is to help identify and deter or reject individuals who are deemed to be at risk of abusing children.

- All staff, tutors and volunteers are subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. DBS checks will be considered valid for 2 years. CYTO will accept DBS checks undertaken at other organisations if they were undertaken within 2 years prior to the end of the contracted project. CYTO will pay for worker and volunteer DBS checks and will facilitate the application process through an online system. Volunteers & staff who have not yet had their DBS verified can work with members but only under supervision (i.e. not left alone with groups or individuals). All staff, tutors and volunteers will be encouraged to join the update service which provides an up to date reflection of their criminal record.
- All young people participating at CYTO fill in a digital registration form, including any particular needs they may have, emergency contact names and numbers. CYTO promotes high expectations of all members in relation to their respect for others, commitment and punctuality.
- Members must not bring alcohol and drugs on to the premises nor may they attend CYTO under the influence of either. If they are suspected to be under the influence, a parent/carer/guardian will be called and instructed to collect them from the premises.



Alcohol is sometimes present in the building as production show gifts (for staff members) and occasionally on sale for audience members. It must be supervised at all times, and locked away when unsupervised.

- Members and Staff are expected to act in accordance with CYTO's Behaviour Policy, avoiding physical or verbal abuse. All staff & volunteers should understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, many of which are listed below, that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse. This can lead to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it. However, staff & volunteers should be aware that mutual consensual relationships are a normal part of young people's lives & should assess each situation on a case by case basis.
- Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. A useful umbrella term is "harmful sexual behaviour" (HSB). The term has been widely adopted in child protection and is used in this advice. HSB can occur online and/or face to face and can also occur simultaneously between the two. HSB should be considered in a child protection context. When considering HSB, ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors.
- Examples of Peer on Peer Abuse:-
  - Bullying - including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
  - Abuse - in intimate personal relationships between peers;
  - Physical abuse - such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
  - Sexual violence - such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
  - Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- In cases of suspected peer-on-peer abuse, CYTO staff and volunteers should follow the general safeguarding principles set out throughout this guidance. Immediate consideration should be given as to how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator (and any other children involved/impacted). All staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- All directors, tutors and volunteers must familiarise themselves with this Safeguarding Policy, along with the CYTO Prevent & Radicalisation Policy, Behaviour Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Data Protection Policy plus Fire evacuation and Health and Safety

procedures to ensure they are equipped in case of emergency, and able to do a risk assessment if considered necessary.

- Directors and tutors should ensure they have access to a telephone, emergency numbers and the CYTO contact information for the young people for whom they are responsible. They should be aware of who the first aiders in the building as well as where all emergency exits and escapes are.
- All staff, tutors and volunteers are covered under CYTO's Public Liability Insurance.
- CYTO aims for staff, tutors and volunteers not to be left alone with individuals or small groups of young people. However, there may be times when one director must work with a small group in a separate space. In these instances, the following procedures should be followed by tutors/volunteers. Work within sight or hearing distance of other adults, ensure that other adults are present in the foyer or nearby in the building and tell other adults present where they will be working and for how long. It is never the case that a staff member would be asked to work one-to-one with a young person.
- Younger staff/volunteers, especially ex-members, are advised to be aware of their responsibilities in relation to members under the age of 18 and to ensure that all contact is appropriate to their leadership roles.

#### **Other situations to avoid:**

- Spending excessive time with any individual or small group.
- Being left alone with a young person while waiting for parents/carers to collect the child. If this does occur the tutor/volunteer must telephone their line manager to notify them about the situation. When the child is collected, the tutor must report that the child is no longer in their care to the line manager and make a note of the time of collection.
- Taking or dropping off a child in a car.
- Long interactions with CYTO members outside of CYTO (i.e. in local cafes, or on the tram).

## **CHANGING ROOMS**

### **Child protection**

Some signs of abuse may become apparent while children are getting changed e.g. changes in behaviour, children being uncomfortable getting changed or unusual marks and bruises. Directors, tutors and volunteers should be trained to recognise signs of abuse and know what procedures to follow if they have any concerns about a child.

Directors, tutors and volunteers should also be made aware that changing areas may be places where children are more vulnerable to peer-on-peer abuse such as bullying or harmful sexual behaviour but in keeping children safe they should also be aware of giving children privacy.

### **Changing areas**

The following need to be considered when organising changing facilities for young people:

- Mixed gender changing areas are less appropriate as children get older. Sensitivity should be shown to those who physically mature at a much earlier or later age than their peers. Children usually begin puberty at any point between the ages of 8 and 14 (NHS, 2021) We recognise that the average age which children are hitting puberty is reducing on a yearly basis.
- All children should be treated fairly and with respect for their privacy and dignity
- Adequate and sensitive arrangements should be made for changing which take into account the needs of all children. This should include those with disabilities, those who are transgender, non-binary or questioning their gender identity and those from different religions, beliefs and cultural backgrounds.
- Adults must always change privately; never in the same space as children.

### **Transgender, non-binary or gender non-conforming children**

Using gendered changing facilities can be a source of stress for transgender and non-binary children. So as far as reasonably possible the organisation should strive to meet children's wishes on a case-by-case basis and in a considered and mindful way.

### **Supervision by directors/tutors**

The organisation should decide what is appropriate supervision based on the age and developmental needs of the children and young people getting changed.

It is only in extreme circumstance that an adult should be in a changing room, while children are changing.

Directors and tutors should also consider the following principles of best practice:

- A clear code of behaviour should be established and children should be made to understand the director's/tutor's/volunteer's expectations about their behaviour while they are unsupervised.
- If an adult needs to enter the room they should alert children in advance and give children the opportunity to cover up.
- Children and young people should know who to talk to if they have concerns about the behaviour of a director/tutor/volunteer or other young people. If concerns are raised these should be taken seriously, and the DSLs should take appropriate action.

### **Children and young people who need help getting changed or during costume fittings**

When organising changing areas for children who need extra support to get changed, the organisation should:

- encourage children of all ages to be as independent as possible - consider prompting and giving verbal help and encouragement before offering physical assistance.
- encourage another trusted child to help them.
- Where a child is incapable of getting into their costume, consider asking a parent/ carer/ guardian to assist them.
- As a last resort, discuss the requirements of the costume change with a parent/ carer/guardian and ensure an agreed licensed chaperone is the person involved in

the changing of the child, in this case we would ask that a child is wearing appropriate undergarments.

If quick costume changes are required:

- a quick change space will be offered that is of the appropriate size for the required change and is discreet enough that the child can change with sufficient privacy.
- considerations in the costume design should be taken into account to minimise the need for full costume changes.

### **Using off-site changing rooms**

The organisation should think about what safeguards need to be put in place to protect children when visiting other sites. As well as the guidance above, the following principles may be helpful.

- It is not appropriate for children to share changing facilities with members of the public.
- If sessions are before or after public sessions, enough time should be booked either side of the session to allow children to get changed before the public are allowed in.
- If changing areas are shared with children from another organisation whose members are children, particularly those who are older/younger, all organisations involved should collaborate to conduct a thorough risk assessment.

## **DRAMA WORKSHOPS AND PRODUCTIONS**

### **Physical Contact**

Theatre exercises may require physical contact. These exercises must only be conducted after a discussion about appropriate physical contact and consent. A child must maintain their right to refuse their consent to physical contact without rebuke. Tutors are responsible for adapting exercises to work without the need for physical contact where necessary. Where exercises involve changing partners throughout, new consent must be sought in each new grouping.

Where demonstrations of exercises involving physical contact are required, the tutor should aim to use another adult in the space. Should they be working independently with a group of young people, they should verbally describe the exercise for consenting children to explore together.

In rare circumstances where physical contact between an adult and a child is required consent must first be sought and another adult must be present in the space.

If physical contact is required in a production or play, the children must be made aware of this prior to casting the play. If the child changes their mind during the process, every reasonable adaptation should be made to ensure they are comfortable. Only when adaptations have been thoroughly thought through and no solution found, should a recasting take place.

Directors should consider the group they will be working with ahead of programming shows containing physical contact to ensure the group are comfortable with working with such material.

### **Curse words**

It is not appropriate for any one under the age of twelve to use or be exposed to curse words at CYTO. Those aged twelve and up must be made aware that there are curse words in the show ahead of agreeing to participate. Audiences must be made aware of strong language ahead of

purchasing tickets and be warned via signage ahead of entering the auditorium. If a participant changes their mind about using curse words, directors should work with the young person to find adaptations to ensure they are comfortable. If no solution can be found and only as a last resort, a recasting may take place.

Directors should consider the group they will be working with ahead of programming shows containing curse words to ensure the group are comfortable working with such material.

### **Racist, homophobic, transphobic or any other prejudice-based language or actions.**

It is not appropriate for any one under the age of twelve to use or be exposed to racist, homophobic, transphobic or any other prejudice-based language or actions at CYTO.

Prejudice based language or actions in productions, i.e. a derogatory insult or opinion expressed by a character or an insulting gesture or imitation, must be discussed with the children ahead of their use. Discussion should revolve around the context of the insult or phrase ensuring that there is a common understanding of what is intended. Children should be able to opt out of their involvement should it make them feel uncomfortable.

To ensure thorough understanding of the context of the offensive language or action and to provide support for children from communities who the phrase is directed at, we would expect that a member of the staff or volunteer who is part of the community that the insult is aimed at should be an active part of the process.

Directors should consider the group they will be working with ahead of programming shows containing Racist, homophobic, transphobic or any other prejudice-based language or actions to ensure the group are comfortable working with such material.

### **Sexual or Violent Actions**

It is not appropriate for any one under the age of sixteen to use or be exposed to naturalistic sexual or violent actions at CYTO.

Directors should consider the group they will be working with ahead of programming shows containing sexual or violent action to ensure the group are comfortable working with such material.

We recognise that theatre offers many opportunities to suggest sexual acts or violence without naturalistic simulations. These options should be explored with a view to safeguarding young people and audiences from trauma.

Where requested, the director should be prepared to hire qualified intimacy directors and/or fight coordinators to ensure the safety of the young people. Any simulation of sex or violence must be discussed with the management committee and the DSL ahead of rehearsal, who may deem it necessary to consult with parents/carers/guardians ahead of making a decision. Alternative plans must be made should any concerned party deny permission.

Should an actor change their mind during the process, directors are responsible for making adaptations to ensure the young people are comfortable.

Audiences should be warned of staged sexual or violent actions ahead of purchasing ticket and via signage prior to entering the performance space.

## **MOBILE PHONES & CAMERAS**

Mobile phones are only to be used during rehearsals/workshops/sessions under the instruction of the director/tutor. This would typically be for the purposes of research or documenting part of the project.

Young people photographing or videoing rehearsals/workshops is only allowed if permitted by the tutor/director and once consent from those that appear in the photo/video is sought.

Only designated staff members and volunteers are permitted to take videos or photographs and only with the consent of the young people. They would immediately transfer those images to the Artistic director before deleting them from their devices. Photographs of rehearsals are stored on CYTO's drive, where they are protected with two-factor password authentication.

Prior to sharing on the website or to social media, staff must first check the photo/video permissions for each member that appears in the image to ensure parents/carers/guardians are additionally consenting.

If a member's parent/carer/guardian has denied permission for photographs/videos to be taken at all or if the parent/carer/guardian is yet to fully complete a registration form, the permitted director/tutor must be notified and no photos or videos of that child should be taken.

## **WORKING ONLINE**

Working online on platforms like Zoom or Teams can be used by youth organisations as a valuable educational medium which can connect members with the community and each other, particularly when young people are isolated.

To create a safe environment for children and young people when watching or engaging on these platforms, there are several things you should consider.

Before starting any livestream, remind participants:

- not to share private information.
- not to respond to contact requests from people they don't know.
- who they should tell if they see or hear anything upsetting or inappropriate.
- Whether hosting or joining a stream, you must get consent from parents/carers/guardians and children if any images or identifying information about the child may be used.

## **HOSTING A LIVESTREAM**

Tutors should be in a neutral area where nothing personal or inappropriate can be seen or heard in the background.

- consider which platform to use since free platforms such as YouTube or Facebook Live do not allow you to restrict the audience.

- invite your audience to register to watch the stream and issue a log in and password.
- familiarise yourself with the privacy settings and know how to report any offensive or abusive content.
- the stream should take place in at appropriate times e.g. no later than normal workshops or rehearsals and must be supervised by appropriate adults at all times.
- be sensitive to the needs of individual students, including children with learning differences, d/Deaf and disabled children, children who may be sensitive to certain topics or issues that may arise during the livestream.
- appropriate staff should supervise and be on hand to handle any sudden changes or upsetting developments that may occur during the livestream.
- It is important to note that the expectations of behaviour remain the same whether in person or online.

## **TOILET FACILITIES**

CYTO is currently equipped with one female toilet (four cubicles), one boys toilet (three cubicles) and one accessible toilet (one cubicle).

All adults, staff and volunteers should use the accessible toilet while children are in the building. Only in emergency situations should a staff member or volunteer enter the other toilets.

When adult hirers are sharing the building while CYTO members are in the building, they should be made aware that they too must only use the accessible toilet.

During performances, CYTO members who are performing must be offered to use the toilets between thirty and forty minutes prior to a show. Audience must be instructed that the doors to the building open only thirty minutes before the performance. Should a child need the toilet after 30 minutes prior to the show or during it, they should be escorted to the accessible toilet, where the staff member stands outside, before escorting them back.

Only in an emergency situation should a CYTO member and an adult be in the toilets together at the same time.

## **ACCIDENTS**

If an accident occurs, we ask tutors to:

- Seek the attention of a first aider.
- Seek further medical attention if necessary.
- Record the accident in the accident book.
- Inform the parent or carer unless there is concern for the safety of the young person.

The effects of any accident or incidence of abuse on the rest of the young people in the group should not be underestimated, and appropriate explanations given, bearing in mind the importance of confidentiality.

## **RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

CYTO recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children or young people in some way and that all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from access to young and vulnerable people and their data.

We prioritise recruiting staff and volunteers that have a comprehensive understanding of Child protection and safeguarding. We provide certified training via London Youth where understanding is lacking.

### **Pre-selection checks must include the following:**

All volunteers and staff must complete an application form. In addition to DBS disclosures, they must provide proof of identity (as required by DBS) and two referees, which CYTO must contact before confirming appointments.

### **INTERVIEW AND INDUCTION**

All employees (and volunteers) will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. Following a successful interview recruiters will perform google searches of the candidates name and checks of their social media presence. This will allow those involved in the recruitment to gauge a better sense of who they are and their appropriateness to working with young people.

All employees and volunteers should receive formal induction, during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).
- Qualifications should be substantiated.
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- Child protection and safeguarding vulnerable children/young people procedures are explained
- Training needs are identified and actions are implemented.

### **TRAINING**

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Be alert to members' needs & concerns.
- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young/vulnerable person.
- Work safely and effectively with children or young people.
- Challenge behaviour such as inappropriate touching, sexual language or harassment between peers so as not to normalise low-level abuse.



## **PARTNERS**

Where CYTO or staff are working in partnership with other organisations and the work involves children and young people, CYTO should use the Policy and Guidelines as the basis for discussion and, where appropriate include explicit conditions relating to child protection and safeguarding vulnerable adults in the partnership agreement. This may be achieved by a simple reference to our Policy and Guidelines and/or those of our partners. Copies of the Policy and Guidelines may be shared with other organisations to assist this process.

## **REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE: CYTO CONTACTS**

Sheril Chase CYTO Designated Safeguarding Lead  
Adrienne Cluer CYTO Deputy DSL  
Email: [safeguarding@cyto.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@cyto.org.uk)

David Page (Chair, Board of Trustees)  
Tel: 020 8686 1550  
Email: [david@davidpage.com](mailto:david@davidpage.com)

## **CROYDON SERVICES:**

Croydon Safeguarding Consultation Line & MASH  
Tel: 020 8726 6464

Croydon Child Protection  
Tel: 020 8726 6400 /0208 726 6000 (24 hours)  
Email: [childreferrals@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:childreferrals@croydon.gov.uk)

Croydon Safeguarding Children Board  
Tel: 020 8726 6400 ext 63358

Local Authority Designated Officer (Steven Hall)  
Tel: 020 8726 6000 Ext 84322 / Mob: 07825 830 328  
Email: [steve.hall@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:steve.hall@croydon.gov.uk) / [lado@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:lado@croydon.gov.uk)  
4th Floor, Zone F, Bernard Weatherill House  
8 Mint Walk, Croydon, CR0 1EA

Hate Crime & Prevent Duty Coordinator - Carl Parker  
Tel: 020 8726 6000 ex. 88974  
[carl.parker@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:carl.parker@croydon.gov.uk)

### **Other Contacts:**

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000  
Whistleblowing Advice Line: 0800 028 0285  
Email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

Childline  
Tel: 0800 1111

Text: 0800 400 2222  
www.childline.org.uk

**Legal & Policy Framework**

The Children Act 1989 & 2004

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

The London Child Protection Procedures 2016

This policy was revised by Andrew McPherson on 22nd September 2024

Reviewed by the DSL and Deputy DSL on 23rd September 2024

To be reviewed: August 2025