

## **SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

This policy applies to all permanent and temporary employees, the Board, freelance and sessional workers, trainees, work placements, agency staff or anyone working on behalf of Sherman Youth Theatre.

This document provides the guidelines for all workers to keep themselves and the young people they work with safe when working online and communicating via digital channels. It should be read in partnership with Sherman Theatre's main Safeguarding Policy. While the policy and guidance is more specifically aimed at working with young people under the age of 18, they should also inform practice when working with participants in the 18-25 age bracket.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect children and young people who take part in Sherman Youth Theatre activities online
- Provide employees with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection when working on digital projects and online platforms

## **REMOTE WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

*'Being online is an integral part of children and young people's lives. Social media, online games, websites and applications can be accessed through mobile phones, computers, laptops and tablets – all of which form a part of children and young people's online world. The internet and online technology provide new opportunities for young people's learning and growth but it can also expose them to new types of risks. E-safety should form a fundamental part of schools' and colleges' safeguarding and child protection measures.'*

NSPCC Undertaking Remote teaching safely

## **WORKING FROM HOME**

When working from home, employees will have their own accounts to access emails and a log-in to access files. All files are saved on the company's shared drives in files with access restricted to core employees only to personal and contact details.

- No young people's details or images will be downloaded or saved on employees' computers (unless it is a computer provided for work use only).
- Employees will not share their accounts or log-ins with other members of staff, only logging into their own accounts.
- If young people's images need to be downloaded for photograph or video editing, then they will be deleted once the edit has taken place and the edited film is uploaded to the company's server.
- Artists who need access to creative content including videos are given links which enable them to watch videos online but not download.
- Employees will always lock home computers/laptops or close documents with sensitive information when they are away from their devices.

## **COMMUNICATION VIA EMAIL**

Employees will be required to communicate via emails to young peoples' personal email addresses and should always do so from a company email account. In such cases employees should use clear language to avoid any misunderstanding on the part of the recipient. It may be appropriate to copy in another employee for transparency. Employees who have concerns regarding the content of an email that they send or receive from a young person should consult the Lead Safeguarding Officer as named below.

## **COMMUNICATION VIA SOCIAL MEDIA**

Sherman Theatre may use social media to communicate with young people. Current social media applications employees may use include: Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Contact with young people through such forums should only take place through organisational accounts and should follow guidelines as laid out in the Social Media Policy.

If a Sherman Theatre employee or Freelance Artist receives content from a young person which they believe is inappropriate they will not forward the content or delete it but immediately contact the Lead Safeguarding Officer to report the content and follow the safeguarding incident procedure of the company (see main Safeguarding Policy).

Current organisational accounts are moderated by:

- Executive Director and Lead Safeguarding Officer – Julia Barry
- Head of Marketing and Communications – Ed Newsome
- Marketing Manager – Alice Smith
- Marketing Assistant – Carys Evans

## **COMMUNICATION VIA DIGITAL GROUP PLATFORMS**

When communicating with young people via digital platforms, employees will use official accounts and ensure that the personal numbers of young people and freelancers are not shared.

When using video/call platforms with groups of young people, the following protocols should be followed:

- All platforms should be risk assessed in advance and those deemed appropriate for use should include mitigating measures. Risk assessments should be shared with all employees/freelancers who will be hosting sessions.
- Employees/freelancers should use high security settings and facilities of the selected platform to minimise the risk of third parties gaining access to sessions.
- Employees and freelancers will be the only adults present in digital platform sessions unless there is prior agreement for others to be present.
- There will be a minimum of two adults present at every session or the session will be recorded by the employee/freelancer.
- Employees and freelancers should be in a neutral area where nothing personal or inappropriate can be seen or heard in the background.
- Employees need to be present before young people are invited to join an online meeting.

- When the meeting ends the employees should eject each young person until only the employees remain and then close the call, thus ensuring no-one is left alone with a young person and no young people are left in a shared digital space unsupervised.
- In situations where one to one mentoring or creative development work takes place between a young person and an employee/freelancer, prior permission from parents/carers will be required and the meeting must be recorded.
- All meetings that are recorded require all participants' consent, regardless of their age, prior to the recording taking place. Participants under the age of 18 will require parent/carer permission for this recording. Employees must be specific about the reason for the recording and the way the recording will be used.
- All parents/carers will be informed of the platforms to be used and the dates and times of sessions and the adults who will be in these platforms.
- Employees will set clear rules of engagement for all who are working on digital platforms. These rules will be in line with the rules of the company when working in person.
- Employees will also remind young people that this is not a private space and whatever they share online will be seen by the group and/or employees/freelancers working on the project.
- Any young person who breaks the agreed rules will be removed from the platform by employees and parents/carers will be informed.

## **RECEIVING A DISCLOSURE ONLINE OR VIA MOBILE PHONE**

We recognise that at times, young people might disclose information to employees via calls or digitally.

If an employee receives a message that they think may indicate that the young person communicating with them is at immediate risk, both during or outside of work hours, they should immediately refer it for action to the Lead Safeguarding Officer, ideally by speaking to them in person or by telephone. The Lead Safeguarding Officer will follow Sherman Theatre's safeguarding procedures. If the employee is unable to contact the Lead Safeguarding Officer, they should follow the procedure below:

- Check with the young person – What is happening? Where are you? The employee should not attempt to solve the problem.
- Contact the young person's parent/guardian, or – if applicable – the social worker/key worker associated with that young person. If there is no response, alert the emergency services by calling 999 and provide as much information as possible.
- Write up an incident report on the situation within 24 hours to be sent to the Lead Safeguarding Officer.

## **SHARING WORK CREATED ONLINE**

When sharing work created online Sherman Theatre will take the following steps:

- Gain parent/carer consent for their child to be photographed and videoed for those under 18 years.
- Share the final edits with the young people and their parents/carers before sharing publicly when under 18 or deemed at risk/requiring additional support.
- No use of a child/young person's surname in photography or video content.
- Only use images of children/young people in suitable clothing to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.
- Only share content through official accounts.

If, for whatever reason, a parent/carer or young person under 18 is unhappy with the use of content, then the company will not share the content.

Sherman Theatre is committed to reviewing this policy and good practice annually and at any time when there is a change in the law.

**Contact details**

Safeguarding Lead

Julia Barry

Email/Phone – Julia.barry@shermantheatre.co.uk / 02920 646979 /07887 600081

Safeguarding Deputy

Sally Shepherd

Email/Phone – sally.shepherd@shermantheatre.co.uk / 029020 646949

**Further relevant contact details can be found here:**

<http://www.childreninwales.org.uk/resources/safeguarding/>

We are committed to reviewing our policy annually. The policy was first created on 27 July 2020.

Signed .....J. Barry.....

Next review date: June 2024

Date updated: 12/06/2023