SCOTTISH YOUTH THEATRE
POLICY DOCUMENT

Name of policy	**SAFEGUARDING POLICY**
Date of Board approval	**7 September 2026**
Effective from	**8 September 2026**
Frequency of review	**Annually**
Date of next review	**September 2027**

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Children, Young People & Protected Adults

- A child is anyone under the age of 18.
- A young person is more generally considered to be 14-28 and therefore different legislation applies for under 18s.
- Disclosure Scotland's definition of a protected adult is someone who is 16 or older who receives a type of care, support or welfare service either regularly or for a short period of time. The definition of protected adult is service-based and avoids labelling adults based on their having a specific condition or disability.

Types of Abuse

Statutory safeguarding and child protection legislation across the UK defines abuse and neglect as forms of harm. This can include inflicting harm or failing to prevent it. Although not exhaustive, there are four main types of abuse:

- Physical abuse is deliberately hurting a child, young person or vulnerable adult causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.
- Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet the basic needs of a child, young person or vulnerable adult and is the most common form of abuse. A child, young person or vulnerable adult may be left hungry or dirty, without adequate clothing, shelter, supervision, medical or health care.
- Sexual abuse is when a child, young person or vulnerable adult is forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities. This doesn't have to be physical contact and it can happen online.
- Emotional abuse is the ongoing emotional maltreatment of a child, young person or vulnerable adult. It is sometimes called psychological abuse. It can involve deliberately trying to scare or humiliate a child, young person or vulnerable adult by isolating or ignoring them.

It is important to note that while abuse may occur and be witnessed during an SYT project, SYT staff, trainees and freelancers (our 'workforce') should be aware of signs of abuse that have occurred elsewhere. These may be signs of abuse from home or in a peer group. They may manifest as injuries, clear signs of neglect or unusual behaviours and should be sensitively managed and reported in the same way as abuse occurring within the scope of SYT's work.

SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

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

While the safety of children and young people is paramount, the measures and procedures within this policy can be applied to any situation where there is a suspicion of abuse, regardless of the age or protected status of the person involved. Even though relevant legislation may not cover young people age 18 and over and there may be few circumstances where Scottish Youth Theatre works with protected adults, our workforce should apply the same principles of care for everyone involved in the company's work.

Everyone in the scope of this policy should also adhere to Scottish Youth Theatre's separate Code of Conduct. The policy should be included in all inductions for new personnel within the scope. Training, awareness-raising and refreshers should be completed at regular intervals and times of policy changes.

There are contexts where SYT works with partner organisations and other external agencies (third parties) who will have their own safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures. SYT should always exchange policies and procedures with third parties and agreement should be made about the primary procedure to follow according to the circumstances of each project or programme. Where the third party relates to mental health support, the provider's policy should always take precedence.

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect children and young people who take part in Scottish Youth Theatre activities
- Provide staff with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection

Scottish Youth Theatre believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- All children and young people should be treated fairly and with dignity and respect
- All children and young people, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, socio-economic background have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children and young people are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children/young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of everyone involved with SYT
- All children and young people have the right to express their views on matters that affect them

We seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for children and young people, a deputy and a lead board member for safeguarding
- Clearly defining the responsibilities of the DSO, Deputy DSO, CEO and lead Board member and lines of reporting according to the nature and subject of any disclosure or complaint
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff
- Developing and implementing an effective Digital Safeguarding Policy and related procedures
- Providing effective management for staff through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures
- Recruiting staff safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made. Scottish Youth Theatre is a registered body with Disclosure Scotland. We will administer and pay for registration with the PVG Scheme for new employees, Board Members, trainees, volunteers and freelance contractors undertaking regulated work. Scottish Youth Theatre will pay for PVG Scheme registration and record checks when they are required.
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely and sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, young people, their families and employees
- 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
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against our workforce
- Creating and maintaining safe learning environments and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that may arise
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- Ensure that we provide a safe physical environment for children, young people and staff by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- Providing appropriate sign-posting or support for children and young people in areas of mental health

FILMING, PHOTOGRAPHY AND CONSENT

The documentation of activity is an important aspect of our work to celebrate participants' achievements, to have a record of our work, for reporting purposes and for the marketing and profiling of projects and the organisation.

To ensure the safety of participants and parents/carers, Scottish Youth Theatre will:

- Gain consent from all participants for them to be photographed and videoed as part of a project
- In addition, gain parent/carer consent for their child to be photographed and videoed for those under 18 years
- Gain consent for the use of images/film for different uses (reports, printed marketing and digital material)
- Gain additional consent for lead artists, project partners and funders to use images and films in their own reports, printed marketing and websites
- Gain consent to use a child's or young person's full name in photography or video content (including parental consent for those under 18)
- Reserve the right to withhold a young person's name from content or change or remove the name retrospectively
- Only use images of children/young people in suitable clothing to reduce the risk of inappropriate use
- Only share content through official company accounts
- Participants (and their parents/carers for those under 18 years), can withhold or withdraw consent at any time

SAFEGUARDING KEY ROLES

Key roles in Scottish Youth Theatre are as follows:	
• Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO):	Vanessa Bunn
• Deputy Safeguarding Officers (DepSO):	Annie Lowry Thomas; Jamie Steedman
• Lead Board Member for Safeguarding:	Keira Smith
• Chief Executive	Jacky Hardacre

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children; namely:

- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991
- UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024
- Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968
- Equality Act (2010)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual offences (Scotland) Act 2009
- Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007
- Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011
- Digital Economy Act 2017
- Children and Families Act 2014
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014)
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

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

• Safeguarding Code of Good Practice	• Digital Safeguarding	• Working Environments & Safe Space Guidance
• Code of Conduct	• Health & Safety	• Managing challenging artistic content
• Social Media	• Equity & Justice	• Recruitment, PVG checks, induction & training
• Data Protection	• Complaints	• Travel & staying away from home with participants

Policy Review: Scottish Youth Theatre is committed to reviewing this policy and practice annually, at points of changes to legislation and following safeguarding incidents of medium or high severity.

SAFEGUARDING CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

WORKFORCE BEHAVIOURS

As someone working with children and, young people on behalf of the company-

YOU SHOULD:

- ✓ Treat all children and young people fairly, with respect, dignity and as an individual
- ✓ Create positive, safe and supportive working environments that enable participants to thrive and where their contributions are valued
- ✓ Be aware of any additional vulnerabilities that some children/young people may face particularly when working with marginalised individuals or groups
- ✓ Be risk aware, not risk averse, maximising the benefits of participation and minimising the risks for participants
- ✓ Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report any concerns or allegations using the standard reporting procedure
- ✓ Demonstrate a good example of acceptable behaviour
- ✓ Plan activities which involve more than one person being present or ensure that other adults are within sight or hearing wherever possible
- ✓ Carefully consider the appropriateness of material in relation to the children and young people you are working with; if in doubt, consult with the Designated Safeguarding Officer or the Deputy Safeguarding Officer
- ✓ Respect everyone's right to personal privacy
- ✓ Be available to listen to the concerns and needs of participants and to refer them to other sources of help where appropriate
- ✓ Try to ensure that your actions cannot be misunderstood or cause offence
- ✓ Encourage participants to feel comfortable enough to point out attitudes and behaviour they do not like
- ✓ Show understanding when dealing with sensitive issues and recognise that caution is required when discussing such issues
- ✓ Ensure children or young people give consent for physical contact, either between each other or between the practitioner and the participant
- ✓ Understand when physical contact is appropriate and be aware that even caring physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted
- ✓ At the start of a project or activity, politely request that participants do not seek to connect with you on social media

YOU SHOULD NOT:

- ✗ Ignore, exaggerate or trivialise any issues or concerns raised about the safety and wellbeing of a participant
- ✗ Permit abusive or discriminatory language or behaviour e.g. bullying, taunting, racism
- ✗ Act in a way that could be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- ✗ Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children and young people
- ✗ Share your personal contact details with young people
- ✗ Connect with participants under 18 on social media (for those aged 18 and above you are advised to consider carefully the merits of connecting with participants on social media and the risks you may be placing yourself under). See specific guidance in the Social Media Policy.
- ✗ Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- ✗ Promise confidentiality to a child, young person who is reporting abuse
- ✗ Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour
- ✗ Show favouritism to any individual
- ✗ Make sarcastic, offensive or suggestive remarks or actions (even in jest) directly to, or in front of, participants
- ✗ Take unnecessary risks when risk assessments or policy suggests a different approach
- ✗ Deliberately place yourself or others in a potentially compromising situation
- ✗ Develop inappropriate relationships with children, young people or their families, such as contact outside of work
- ✗ Conduct a sexual relationship with any participant
- ✗ Believe "it could never happen to me"

REPORTING ABUSE

If you have a concern that a child or young person in a Scottish Youth Theatre activity or event is being abused or is in need of mental health support, follow this procedure taking account of these lines of reporting:

Incident or allegation relating to ↓	Incident or allegation relating to ↓	Incident or allegation relating to ↓	Incident or allegation relating to ↓
SYT staff (apart from DSO or CEO), freelance contractor, participant or person external to an SYT activity ↓	Designated Safeguarding Officer ↓	Chief Executive or Board Member ↓	Lead Board Member for Safeguarding ↓
Report to ↓	**Report to ↓**	**Report to ↓**	**Report to ↓**
Designated Safeguarding Officer, Vanessa Bunn vanessa@scottishyouththeatre.org (or Deputy Safeguarding Officers if DSO is unavailable, *Annie Lowry Thomas annie@scottishyouththeatre.org *Jamie Steedman jamie@scottishyouththeatre.org)	Chief Executive jacky@scottishyouththeatre.org	Lead Board Member for Safeguarding	Chair of the Board or Chief Executive jacky@scottishyouththeatre.org

- Inform the relevant person (as listed above) of your concerns
- For concerns of abuse, use the Scottish Youth Theatre Incident Report Form to make a written record with relevant dates of all details of the facts known to you and give a confidential copy to the relevant person

If a child or young person tells you about abuse by someone else:

- Stay calm, do not be shocked, try to act normally
- Allow the individual to speak freely, without interruption, but do not question them or attempt to investigate yourself
- If possible, take notes while the person is speaking or immediately afterwards, adhering to the facts of the reported abuse
- Offer support and reassurance; assure them that you believe what they say. Explain that you cannot keep it a secret and that you will speak to the Designated Safeguarding Officer about it
- Report the matter as detailed above

If you receive an allegation of abuse against a Scottish Youth Theatre worker (including freelance contractors), a participant or about yourself:

- Immediately inform the relevant person (as listed above) and keep a written record of all the facts as you know them including relevant dates
- Try to ensure that no-one is placed in a position which could lead to further compromise or harm
- In all cases you **MUST** refer the matter to the **relevant person** – do not try to deal with any possible cases of abuse yourself.

WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY:

If you are concerned about the immediate safety of a child or young person, alert the emergency services by calling 999 and provide as much information as possible.

Useful guidance and information:

1. The **NSPCC** have useful resources and online courses on safeguarding issues:
   https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/
   https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/training/child-protection-scotland-course
   https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/for-performing-arts

2. **Creating Safety:** Creative Scotland Guidelines for Child Protection, a useful resource for freelance practitioners as well as cultural organisations: Creating Safety

3. CPSU Guide 'Physical Contact & Young People in Sport' has useful guidance relevant to drama and dance activities with children and young people

4. Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service Respectme

SCOTTISH YOUTH THEATRE
POLICY DOCUMENT

Name of policy	**DIGITAL SAFEGUARDING POLICY**
Date of Board approval	**7 September 2026**
Effective from	**8 September 2026**
Frequency of review	**Annually**
Date of next review	**September 2027**

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 Scottish 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 Scottish Youth 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 18-28 age bracket.

Designated Safeguarding Officer:	Vanessa Bunn
Deputy Safeguarding Officers:	Annie Lowry Thomas; Jamie Steedman
Board Member for Digital Safeguarding:	Keira Smith
Chief Executive:	Jacky Hardacre

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect children and young people who take part in Scottish 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

Scottish Youth Theatre believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all participants and to keep them safe. We are committed to practise in a way that protects them.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- United Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991
- UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual offences (Scotland) Act 2009
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007
- Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011
- Digital Economy Act 2017
- Children and Families Act 2014
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
- NSCPCC Undertaking Remote teaching safely
- Company 3 Safeguarding Policy for remote working

This policy should be read alongside Scottish Youth Theatre policies and procedures on:

- Safeguarding
- Data Protection
- Social Media
- Dignity at Work
- Health & Safety
- Recruitment, induction and training
- Equity & Justice
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints
- Managing challenging artistic content

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' (institutions) safeguarding and child protection measures.'

NSPCC Undertaking Remote teaching safely

WORKING REMOTELY

When working remotely, SYT employees and freelancers on durational projects will have their own accounts to access emails and a log-in to access files. All files are saved on the company's cloud-based drives with access to personal data restricted to relevant core employees only.

- Employees will not share their accounts or log-ins with other members of staff, only logging into their own accounts, unless approved by Scottish Youth Theatre 's Chief Executive.
- Young people's details or images should only be stored in company files, nothing should be stored on employees' personal devices.
- If young people's images need to be downloaded to a non-company device 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 computers/laptops when they are away from their devices.

COMMUNICATION VIA TELEPHONE

When a company telephone system can be used for employees to make contact with children and young people, employees will not use their personal mobile phone for this purpose. Where possible staff should use the phone system provided by the company. This avoids their personal mobile number being shared with young people or their families.

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 Designated Safeguarding Officer as named above.

COMMUNICATION VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

Scottish Youth Theatre may use social media to communicate with young people in agreement with the Chief Executive and Designated Safeguarding Officer. Current social media platforms employees may use include Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. 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 Scottish Youth 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 Designated 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:

- Digital Producer – Jamie Steedman
- Digital Media Coordinator – Josie Young

COMMUNICATION VIA DIGITAL 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 and safe space guidelines 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 (non-participant) adults present in digital platform sessions unless there is prior agreement for others to be present.
- Where appropriate, 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 when under 18.
- All meetings that are recorded require all participants' consent, regardless of their age, prior to the recording taking place. Employees must be specific about the reason for the recording and the way the recording will be used.
- All parents/carers of under 18s will be informed of the platforms to be used and the dates and times of sessions and the adults who will be present.
- 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 Designated Safeguarding Officer, ideally by speaking to them in person or by telephone. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will follow Scottish Youth Theatre's safeguarding procedures. If the employee is unable to contact the Designated 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 (ambulance) 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 Designated Safeguarding Officer.

SHARING WORK CREATED ONLINE

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

- Gain parent/carer consent for their child to be photographed and videoed for those under 18 years
- Gain consent to use a child's or young person's full name in photography or video content
- Reserve the right to withhold a young person's name from content or change or remove the name retrospectively
- Only use images of children/young people in suitable clothing to reduce the risk of inappropriate use
- Only share content through official company accounts

If, for whatever reason, a parent/carer or young person is unhappy with the use of content, then the company will not share the content. Permission to share content online can be removed at any time and the company will remove the content from the relevant channels.

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