RSC SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

DECEMBER 2024

GUIDE TO ESSENTIAL READING OF THIS POLICY

The RSC Safeguarding Children Policy, by necessity, covers a broad spectrum of issues in relation to promoting the welfare of children and protecting them from the risk of harm. It is essential that you know how to apply this policy, and that you can access this document whenever you need to. Please speak to your line manager or RSC contact if you are unsure about any aspect of this document.

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SAFEGUARDING AT THE ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

At the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) we strive to foster an environment for children which is safe, child-centred, transparent, participatory, and which encourages children to understand their rights, and feel able to voice their worries or concerns. The RSC is committed to ensuring that all children who engage with the company have positive experiences underpinned by kindness, care and respect, and free from abuse or harm.

The RSC strives to uphold the welfare principal in the Children Act (1989): that the welfare of children is paramount, and that all children have the right to protection from abuse or harm, whatever their age, culture, race or ethnicity, disability, gender, language, religious belief, or sexual identity.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. The RSC believes that everybody in contact with children at the RSC has a role to play in safeguarding children. The purpose of this policy is to clearly outline how the RSC safeguards children who interact with the company.

OUR WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Children and young people have contact with the RSC in many ways. They may perform in productions, audition, be members of our audiences, attend or participate in events and workshops, log on to the website, participate online, complete work experience, or have an advisory relationship with us (for example, the Youth Advisory Board).

This policy refers to all children and young people involved with the RSC in any of the above capacities. The work the RSC undertakes is innovative and creative. Therefore, any work undertaken that involves children will require a robust risk assessment to mitigate any risks relating to the activity undertaken.

This policy contains appendices which offer further stipulations on how to safeguard children, including how to work safely with children and young people online.

WHO IS A CHILD?

The term 'child' or 'children and young people' is used to refer to anyone under the age of 18, as defined by the Children Act 1989. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently, is a parent or is married, is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, or is in hospital or custody, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.

WHO IS THIS POLICY FOR?

This policy and related guidance is for all colleagues who are employed by or are volunteering for the RSC, and who interact with children in person or online in any capacity. For the purposes of this policy, the term colleague applies to any member of staff, freelancer or volunteer.

INCLUSION STATEMENT

Any child that comes into contact with the RSC can expect to be treated with dignity and respect. Any disclosure of abuse or harm will be acted upon and will be taken seriously.

The RSC recognises that children are inherently less able to protect themselves from abuse and harm than adults.

All colleagues must follow this policy and related procedures regardless of the child's race or ethnicity, class, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion or beliefs, disability, and marriage or civil partnership status (if they are of an age at which they can legally enter such an arrangement).

Such characteristics may inform the safeguarding process, but the safeguarding process will not be determined by them. All staff and volunteers must endeavour to ensure that actions taken, and decisions made, incorporate the child's voice, wishes, and feelings, and ensure that they are free from bias. To demonstrate commitment to this, the RSC will review safeguarding outcomes as part of an annual safeguarding report to the Board of Trustees.

It is important to remember that some children are more vulnerable to abuse and harm due to their characteristics (including protected characteristics) or circumstances. For example, disabled children, children who are 'Looked After' , or children from households in which parents or other people abuse substances, where there is domestic abuse, or where there are mental or physical health issues for anyone living within the family home. Some children may display challenging behaviour or come from families that do not engage with statutory services, or who are new to the UK. All colleagues should be alert to parent child interactions where there are concerns around abuse and harm.

WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

The NSPCC (2024) describes safeguarding as:

'The action taken to promote the welfare of children and to protect them from harm.'

Safeguarding means:

- Protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- Preventing harm to children's health and development
- Providing support to meet children's needs when problems emerge.
- Ensuring that children grow up with safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focusses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer 'significant harm' This includes child protection procedures detailing how to respond to concerns about a child (NSPCC 2024).

This policy seeks to ensure that all colleagues, children, parents, and carers involved with the RSC understand the steps taken within the RSC to ensure the safeguarding of all children, and that there is an agreed process to follow whenever any concerns are raised about a child.

This policy serves as a point of reference for colleagues at all levels to understand the following 5 Rs of Safeguarding:

1. **Recognise** signs of abuse or harm via reading this policy and accessing training.
2. **Respond** to concerns and potential abuse in a timely manner via RSC reporting process.
3. **Report** any concerns relating to a child using RSC incident reporting and where necessary external bodies.

4. **Record** effectively any concerns relating to a child, capturing the child's voice, wishes, and feelings where possible.
5. **Refer** concerns about a child to external bodies if deemed necessary, such as the police, social care or local authority.

PREVENTING ABUSE AND HARM

The RSC has a responsibility to take all necessary steps to prevent the risk of abuse or harm to any children that the RSC comes in to contact with. The RSC will do this via the following methods:

SAFER RECRUITMENT

RSC will request a DBS (Disclosure Baring Service) enhanced check on any paid colleagues whose roles mean that they will come into regular contact with children. This will be required to be renewed every three years. In addition, two references will be sought, one of which must be from the last or most recent employer. Reference should explicitly ascertain if the individual is a known risk to children, or if the referee knows of any reason why the applicant should not have contact with children. The RSC has a comprehensive recruitment and selection policy available for further guidance which can be accessed here: Recruitment And Selection Policy

TRAINING AND POLICIES

At the RSC we have a duty to ensure that colleagues recognise their responsibilities to minimise risk, to offer protection to children, and to avoid situations where abuse and harm may occur. All colleagues interacting with children will complete mandatory safeguarding training relevant to their role, which will complement this policy.

All colleagues should be provided with opportunities to understand how to recognise and respond to abuse or harm, whom to contact in the event of a safeguarding concern, and where to record this information.

REPORTING AND ACTION

All safeguarding matters will be taken seriously and will be acted on and managed in accordance with this policy. RSC will refer to external organisations where it is deemed necessary, and work with other organisations such as social care, local authorities and the police if the need arises.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SAFEGUARDING WITHIN THE RSC

Safeguarding is everyone's business. All colleagues must adhere to this policy, and all colleagues have a duty in terms of the 5 Rs as specified above.

RSC is committed to safeguarding, and has therefore created core safeguarding duties within the following roles and functions that are in place at the RSC:

ROLE/ FUNCTION	CORE SAFEGUARDING DUTY
Non-Executive Board	Ensure that the RSC meets all statutory safeguarding responsibilities. An annual report will be produced detailing the effectiveness of child protection arrangements in place, acting on any recommendations from previous years and evaluating the efficiency of these. Certain Safeguarding issues (e.g. those relating to senior members of staff) will be investigated by the board via a nominated representative.
Safeguarding Committee	Lead on the implementation of the safeguarding policy across the RSC. Set annual targets for the safeguarding of children and monitor progress against these targets. Act as an advisory group for the safeguarding of children at the RSC. Act as a point of advice and reference for all designated safeguarding Officers.
Senior Leadership Team	Support in the annual reviewing of the safeguarding policy. Ensure that line managers implement the safeguarding policy across all staff during on boarding and at regular intervals.
Senior Designated Safeguarding Officer	Ensure that all records of safeguarding incidents are stored correctly. Oversee allegations about staff and all safeguarding issues. Refer issues of safeguarding to the safeguarding committee and or board safeguarding lead as appropriate. Be part of the decision-making and risk-assessment process for employment of those with unspent criminal convictions. Monitor safeguarding issues across RSC to identify areas for development and lessons learned. This is to be communicated to the non-executive board to produce the annual report.
Designated Safeguarding Officers	Act as the first point of call for all safeguarding concerns. Share best practice across the organisation in relation to safeguarding. Raise the profile of safeguarding across the RSC

The following diagram demonstrates safeguarding arrangements for the different teams and departments within RSC:

RECOGNITION AND TYPES OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All colleagues working with children should be aware of the definitions and indicators of child abuse and neglect. Child abuse is where anyone under the age of 18 is being harmed, or not looked after properly. An abused child may experience more than one type of abuse. There are four broad categories of abuse and neglect which the Met Police (2024) describe as follows:

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse can involve hitting, slapping, shaking, or throwing, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, choking, pushing, or kicking. It can also involve inappropriate restraint, false imprisonment, the use of physical force to discipline, misusing medication, and fabricating or inducing an illness or ill health.

Signs and symptoms of physical abuse in children can include unexplained recurrent injuries, marks, or burns, covering injuries with clothing even in hot weather, fear of physical contact, and shying away or recoiling if touched.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse is when a child is enticed or forced to take part in sexual activities. This kind of abuse does not always involve a high level of 'violence', and the child may or may not be aware of what is happening. The abuse may be committed by adults, or by other children.

Examples of sexual abuse include causing or inciting a child to watch or engage in sexual activities, encouraging a child to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, involving a child in looking at sexual images or videos, involving a child in the production of sexual images or videos, and grooming a child in preparation for abuse, including via the internet.

Signs and symptoms of sexual abuse in children can include extreme reactions such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, toileting accidents, overdoses, or anorexia. Personality changes can also act as an indicator of sexual abuse, such as becoming insecure, being isolated or withdrawn, and/or medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, or venereal diseases.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse happens in many different ways. It can affect how a young person or child feels about themselves, or how they fit in with friends, at school, or where they live.

Examples of emotional abuse include being made to feel inadequate, worthless, or unloved, or being unfairly blamed. It can also include being bullied, including over the internet (cyber-bullying), being made to feel frightened or in danger, or witnessing the abuse of others.

Signs and symptoms of emotional abuse in children can include reduced physical, mental, and emotional development, being withdrawn, continual self-depreciation, e.g. 'I'm stupid', 'I'm ugly', 'I'm worthless', inappropriate response to pain, e.g. 'I deserve this', or neurotic behaviour, such as rocking, hair twisting, or self-mutilation.

NEGLECT

Neglect is when a child or young person's basic needs are persistently not met by their parent or guardian. These basic needs include adequate food, clothing and shelter, protection from physical and emotional harm or danger, adequate supervision appropriate to the age and understanding of the child, and access to appropriate medical care, including dental treatment.

Signs and symptoms of neglect in children can include constant hunger or tiredness, poor personal hygiene, poor condition and cleanliness of clothing, untreated medical problems, differences with behavioural and social development (in comparisons to peers), and difficulties with social relationships.

RECOGNISING ABUSE

It is important to consider that the signs and symptoms of abuse listed above are not exhaustive. Through the comprehensive training offered to colleagues working with children by the RSC, you may learn to identify other signs and symptoms as your knowledge, skills, and experience become more extensive.

Should you ever feel worried about a child, or a group of children, you should discuss and log your concerns with your manager, or your designated safeguarding officer.

You may become aware of actual or alleged harm or abuse of a child in a number of ways:

- The child tells you.
- You notice something about the child's behaviour.
- You notice something about the child's appearance, including interactions between parents, carers, or staff members.
- Someone may tell you that they suspect a child is being abused.
- You may observe harmful behaviour between a child and an adult, or between children.

The RSC recognises that some types of abuse are complex and emerging, meaning that they can be difficult to categorise.

Because of this, the RSC has a commitment to continually engage in safeguarding dialogue. This includes supporting staff to understand trends and classifications through comprehensive training that will support early identification and targeted help.

Some examples of complex or emerging threats include:

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

Female Genital Mutilation refers to the procedure of total or partial removal of the female genitalia. The practice is illegal in the UK.

COUNTY LINES

County Lines involves the exploitation and grooming of children who are forced to store, distribute, and sell drugs around the country. Perpetrators often operate in gangs. County lines is also associated with criminal child exploitation.

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Child sexual exploitation is a type of sexual abuse. It refers to the grooming or manipulation of a child into sexual activity, which can be penetrative or non-penetrative. This can sometimes be in exchange for money or other items.

RADICALISATION

Radicalisation is the process through which a person comes to support or be involved in extremist ideologies. Radicalisation can result in a person being drawn into terrorism.

The process of radicalisation may involve grooming, exploitation, psychological manipulation, and exposure to violent or graphic hate material.

It is recognised that some children are more vulnerable to radicalisation, such as those who are neurodivergent, isolated, have low self-esteem, have experienced bullying, are bereaved, have experiences of abuse or neglect, or have experienced community and racial tensions.

HISTORICAL ABUSE OR NON-RECENT ABUSE

There may be instances whereby someone reports non recent or historical abuse, which may be reported to the police, or directly to the RSC. The Senior Designated Safeguarding Officer should refer all cases of historical or non-recent abuse to the police. If assessment warrants that the disclosure does not meet the threshold for criminal investigation, the RSC shall complete an internal investigation. This should be communicated to the survivor, and all records should be stored securely.

RSC COMMITMENT TO ANTI BULLYING IN RELATION TO CHILDREN

Bullying is repeated deliberately hurtful behaviour whereby is it difficult for those who are bullied to defend themselves. Bullying can take place in many forms, including verbal, physical, and emotional abuse, and can take place both online and face-to-face. The harm caused to children by bullying can be significant.

The RSC is committed to creating an inclusive environment in which children feel safe. The RSC does not condone bullying and recognises the harmful impact that bullying behaviour can have. The RSC will therefore take all necessary steps to prevent peer-on-peer bullying involving children.

All colleagues who are alerted to incidents of bullying must intervene immediately, and must discuss the incident with a line manager, designated safeguarding officer, or superior to agree the action taken. This may also involve discussing the concerns with other supporting adults i.e teachers or youth workers, to agree on the appropriate action.

It must be made clear that adults acting or speaking to children in a detrimental way cannot be described as bullying. This is abuse. It should therefore be reported as a safeguarding matter to determine the appropriate course of action proportionate to the concerns raised.

The RSC has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying. Therefore, the RSC Child Safeguarding Anti-Bullying policy statement should be read in conjunction with this policy.

POSITION OF TRUST

When you are working with children with and on behalf of the RSC, you are acting in a position of trust. A relationship of trust can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by virtue of their work, or the nature of their activity.

It is vital for all those in positions of trust to understand the power this can give them, and the level of conduct they must commit to as a result. The expectation is that all colleagues working with and for the RSC will abide by the Safeguarding Children Code of Conduct.

SAFEGUARDING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

It is crucial that all those working in a paid or voluntary capacity for the RSC understand that abuse and harm can be perpetrated by those in a position of trust. In the case of an allegation made against a staff member or volunteer, the usual safeguarding reporting process should be followed.

CHILDREN ATTENDING PERFORMANCES

Children can attend performances as part of a group, or with their family and friends. The responsibility for their safety and wellbeing while they are attending a performance remains with the adult accompanying them.

Children over the age of 14 may wish to attend a performance without adult supervision.

It is important to ensure that there is an adequate level of supervision appropriate to the age group and needs of the children attending. The minimum staffing ratios advised for performances should be 1:10.

The adult to child ratios for events run by the RSC will differ depending on the specific nature of the activity. For further information please refer to 'Guidance for Managing In Person Workshops.'

The RSC reserves the right to request any ticket holder to leave the theatre in cases of unsuitable or dangerous behaviour. Where a child or children are attending a performance as part of a school group, any concern about their behaviour or safety should be reported to the teacher accompanying them in the first instance, and followed up with the Head Teacher of the relevant school(s).

CHILDREN WHO PERFORM IN RSC PRODUCTIONS

The RSC is committed to ensuring that the wellbeing and safety of children who perform in RSC productions is promoted at all times. Children who perform are in a unique and complex role. It is recognised that the environment in which they perform and rehearse can bring additional risks to their physical and emotional wellbeing. This is why comprehensive risk assessments are in place to ensure the health and safety of children who perform. In addition, this policy, alongside the RSC Safeguarding Children Code of Conduct, serves to promote the emotional and social welfare of children who perform for and with the RSC.

CHAPERONES

The RSC employs chaperones to support children who perform or work with the RSC in an advisory capacity. The role of a chaperone is to champion the best interests and ensure the wellbeing of children. This involves close supervision of children who perform or who are in the care of the RSC through residentials (for example as part of the Youth Advisory Board).

Chaperones should supervise children during all fittings, rehearsals, and break periods in a way which upholds their personal privacy and dignity. The exception to this level of supervision is when the child is performing, is with their parent or carer, or in the event of the child being under direct supervision of another professional person known to the child, such as a schoolteacher or youth worker.

Details of our approach to safer recruitment for chaperones can also be found in the RSC Safeguarding procedure.

RECRUITMENT OF CHAPERONES

Chaperones are required to have a licence, which can be issued by a local authority. To obtain a licence, the minimum expectation is that a prospective chaperone will undertake an enhanced DBS via their own local authority. It is recognised that there is no national standard to become a chaperone, other than the requirement to obtain an enhanced DBS, and Local Authorities differ widely in mandatory training. It is for this reason that RSC offers ongoing training to chaperones and strives to be on a continuous journey to improve safeguarding standards set by the Safeguarding Committee.

FEEDBACK

The RSC is committed to ensuring the welfare of the children that participate in RSC activities and performances. Therefore, child and parent/carer surveys will be distributed after performance cycles are completed. Parents, carers, and children should feel free to make suggestions to RSC at any time to support and further enhance their experiences.

APPENDICES

There are various Appendices that must be read and understood in conjunction with this policy:

Appendix One:	Images/Film of Children in Publications and the Media
Appendix Two:	Unaccompanied and lost/missing children during performances or while using other RSC premises.
Appendix Three:	Membership of the RSC Safeguarding Committee.
Appendix Four:	Guidelines for online safeguarding with children and young people.

REFERENCES

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APPENDIX ONE

Images/Film of Children in Publications and the Media

This section provides an overview of the safeguarding measures that will need to be in place when children are involved in the RSC. This is of paramount importance, as photographic and film images can be misused through modification or distribution via the internet.

Several issues must be considered before decisions are made to take such images. Images of people are defined as personal data, so the Data Protection Act 1998 and GDPR both apply to the processing of images. This includes capturing images, holding images, storing images, sharing images, and destroying images.

Gaining Consent

Any images of children under the age of 18 taken and used by the RSC require prior permission from a parent/carer or teacher using the 'Photography, Film & Interview Permission' form, which can be found on the RSC intranet.

Parents or carers of children in RSC productions are required to sign a specific parental consent form giving permission for the use of images for press and marketing purposes. A copy is available from the Press and Communications Department, or from the lead Chaperone.

Images held on video tape, CDs, DVDs, and Other Forms of Digital Media/Device

Such Images may be used in promotional material such as advertisements, leaflets, information packs, flyers, on the website, or on social media. Once given, consent lasts indefinitely, but people should always be given the option to withdraw their consent at any time in line with principle 7 of the Data Protection Act (2018).

The RSC stores images of children for public use for 5 years. Certain images may also be archived. Consequently, there is potential for a child's image to be used many times. It is important that parents, carers and children are aware that the RSC may want to securely store and use the images for a 5 year period.

Gaining Consent for Taking and Using Images

It is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding officer (data) to ensure that images of children are securely stored in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR regulations*. Images will not be used outside of the RSC and will not be shared with any other party. However, images that are used on the internet may be publicly available for some time. Any consent form will need to make this explicitly clear to the subject.

Storage, Retention and Destruction of Children's Images and Data

Images or video recordings of children must be kept securely. Images should not be stored on unencrypted equipment such as unencrypted laptops, computers, memory sticks, and mobile phones.

Long Term Use

For long term use, all images must be stored securely by the commissioner in the Asset Bank (also known as MAB), along with essential data such as consent information, clearly flagged within the metadata. Images should be used responsibly and will only be shared with other organisations with the appropriate documented consent. Completed permission forms must be uploaded to MAB by the commissioner, within the appropriate departmental legal access level. Images without permission forms should not be uploaded to MAB and cannot be used by the RSC.

Short Term Use

For short term use of images within a department or team, the images can be stored on the department H: drive or a team S: drive, SharePoint or Teams. Here images are securely held and accessible to the department or team. No consent information is stored here, and images must not be shared. At the end of the period of use the images must be deleted. Parents and/or children are made aware of these factors and the possible implications so that they can give informed consent from the outset.

It is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding officer, responsible for children's data, to ensure images of children are securely stored in line with the Data Protection Act (2018) and the GDPR regulations*. However, given the nature of current and possible future technology, it is not possible to guarantee that images will not be used outside of the RSC at some point in the future, particularly if uploaded to a webpage. The above issue will be detailed in consent forms so that subjects are aware. If RSC staff choose to store photos of their own children on a work device, or use them as a screen saver, they should take responsibility for ensuring the security of these images, such as through storing them in their personal drive and using a password to protect files.

Work With Schools and Other Organisations

When working with schools and other organisations, at the planning stage of any project it is important to discuss this policy appendix with the school. The school must ensure that parents, carers, and children, where appropriate, are aware of this policy appendix prior to the event taking place. The RSC will require confirmation from the school that they have addressed this issue with parents, carers, and children. The RSC designated safeguarding lead (participation) is responsible for ensuring that this is carried out.

Images and personal contact details of children should not be stored on computer or laptop hard drives. They must be stored on the H: drive, S: drive, on Teams or SharePoint, or within MAB depending on the purpose and duration of storage (see 14.3 above). For temporary purposes, such as presentations, they must be stored on encrypted devices. Images in the public domain, or those used for identification purposes, such as head shot documents, may be stored and shared on computers. But these should be password protected and deleted when no longer required, or within six months, whichever is soonest.

If staff take images of children on work or personal phones or other devices, these must be transferred to MAB and then **deleted** from the individual device.

Where informal images of a child are taken, such as a head shot for use by costume or company managers, these images must be deleted within six months after the child's contract of employment has ceased. All information that is personally identifiable to the child must be removed. Where possible, use group photographs where it may not be obvious which child is being referred to.

Identifying Children and Young People in Media Work and Publications

Do not use the surnames of children in any media work or publications without the consent of parents, carers, or their school, and without consulting with the department involved in commissioning. Without consent, first names and surnames should not be published alongside photos or any other information that could aid in locating the child or young person. There will be exceptions to this rule, where surnames are required for programmes or online cast photo galleries, or for legal or credibility purposes.

In any photographs in which children are clearly visible, whether they are published offline or online, ensure that only the children's first names are used while limiting any additional information that could be used for grooming purposes.

There may be occasions when the full names for child actors are displayed alongside their photographs, such as in RSC programmes, or in marketing and promotional material in print or online. On such occasions, the casting department is responsible for advising and gaining consent from parents and responsible adults on how these details will be used. The casting department is also responsible for explaining to them that it is not normal practice to display full names in accordance with the RSC safeguarding policy, and therefore we require their express permission to do so.

Existing Photographs of Children Stored on MAB

If existing photographs are to be used for another purpose than that for which they were originally taken, as defined in metadata on MAB, or if original uses granted are unknown, the user is responsible for confirming permissions with the commissioning department.

The commissioning department will check the existing permissions and confirm usage. Without this, the photos must not be used. Where original permissions cannot be traced, the image must be flagged to the RSC Image Manager so it can be marked appropriately on MAB.

Images of Large Crowds

An event attended by a large crowd is regarded as a public area. When taking crowd images at such events, it is not necessary to obtain consent from everyone featured in a crowd shot.

Competitions for Children

The RSC occasionally runs competitions for children. There are usually two types of competitions:

- Competitions for individuals
- Competitions for schools

Competitions for Individual Children

When running a competition for individual children, a minimum entry age of 12 is normally required. The entry form must state that the consent of a parent or guardian is required prior to entry. It is also important to contact the Legal Department for advice in relation to the terms and conditions, as there are legal requirements that need to be addressed.

The RSC may sometimes wish to run a competition for children under the age of 12, for example, in relation to a family show. In these circumstances, the Director of Brand and Audiences and Legal advisor must be informed, and they must give their approval before the competition can launch.

Competition at Schools

Sometimes, rather than targeting individual children, the RSC runs competitions for children at schools. This may make it easier to involve younger children. In these circumstances, the Director of Brand and Audiences and legal advisor must be informed, and they must give their approval before the competition can launch.

For legal reasons, it is only possible for the RSC to accept entries from children resident in the UK, unless we take external legal advice in any other countries of interest, for example, a country in which we are touring. The law relating to competitions varies from country to country, and across the European Union.

It is also important to ensure that any prizes are appropriate for children. Where this involves attending an RSC performance or event, it should make it clear that the child will need to be accompanied by an adult if under age 14.

All entry forms should make it clear how the child's contact details will be used. The consent of a parent or guardian is required for this. For example, it may be that contact details will only be used for administering the competition. However, if personal contact details are used to contact the child or parent/guardian about other RSC activities, consent for this will need to be specific.

All data needs to be held securely and separately on Tessitura with restricted access. Please refer to the designated safeguarding officer: children's data for further guidance.

APPENDIX TWO

Unaccompanied and lost/missing children during performances or using other RSC premises

Children are the legal responsibility of their parents or guardians. Children under the age of 14 should be accompanied to RSC performances, workshops, and events (unless permission has been granted by the parent/carer, for example if the child is attending an RSC event for children under the age of 14). A notice to this effect should be displayed prominently to remind parents and guardians of their responsibility.

If a member of staff discovers an unaccompanied child on RSC premises who appears to be under the age of 14, and who appears to be lost or distressed, the following steps should be taken, which are also outlined in the RSC's Major Incident Plan:

- If possible, approach the child with a colleague. Call for a colleague to join you if you are alone. It is preferred if staff are a uniform to identify themselves as staff.
- Reassure them, introducing yourself and your intention to help.
- Seek to establish identifying details – name, age, address, school, carer's name etc.
- Remain in a public area, especially if you approached/were approached by the child alone.
- Establish the reason for their visit and determine the appropriate adult to contact – teacher/ parent/carer.
- Alert the Duty Manager or Person in Charge (PIC) immediately with details and other information that could support the child to be reunited with their adult.
- Remain with the child until the Duty Manager/PIC/HOD arrives.
- The Duty Manager/PIC/HOD will then follow the detailed procedure outlined in section 2.5 of the Major Incident Plan

What to do at the end of a performance or at closing time

Follow the same steps as above.

The Duty Manager/PIC/HOD will find out if they are waiting for a parent/carer to collect them. If the Duty Manager/PIC/HOD cannot contact the parent/carer, they must ring the local police and provide:

- Name of child
- Age of child
- Address/name of school/group.
- Physical description of child (height, colour of hair, clothing etc.)
- Where the child was last seen
- The time the child was last seen.
- Nature of any disabilities
- First language of child

The Duty Manager/PIC/HOD will then follow the detailed procedure set out in the Major Incident Plan section 2.5.

Lost/missing child

If a child is reported missing during a performance or while visiting RSC premises, inform the Duty Manager, Person in Charge or HOD immediately with the following information, giving as much detail as possible:

- The name and age of the child
- Physical description of child (height, colour of hair, clothing etc.)
- Where the child was last seen
- The time the child was last seen.

- Nature of any disabilities
- First language of child
- The Duty Manager/PIC/HOD will then follow the detailed procedure set out in the Major Incident Plan section 2.5.
- Once a sufficient check is made, if the child is not found, the line manager or relevant designated safeguarding officer should inform the police. The member of staff who took the initial report should reassure the parent/carer/teacher/group leader that action is being taken to locate the child and explain that contact will be maintained with them until the child is found.

If a member of staff is approached by a child who is lost, they should:

- Reassure the child and enlist the support of a colleague to establish identifying details - name, age, school, parents name etc.
- Contact the Duty Manager/PIC/HOD with identifying details and other information that might help reunite the child with their parents/carers
- The Duty Manager/PIC/HOD will then follow the detailed procedure set out in the Major Incident Plan section 2.5: Unaccompanied, Lost or Missing Child or Vulnerable Adult

APPENDIX THREE

Membership of the RSC Safeguarding Committee

RSC is on a continuous journey to improve safeguarding standards and practices. The safeguarding committee leads on the implementation of safeguarding practice and policy across the RSC advisory group for the safeguarding of children at the RSC. The committee acts as a point of advice and reference for all designated safeguarding officers. Details of the staff designations within the safeguarding committee are below.

Director of Creative Learning & Engagement (committee chair and Designated Senior Safeguarding Officer)	**Jacqui O'Hanlon**
Director of People (Designated Safeguarding Officer - Workforce)	**Kate Sirdifield**
General Manager, *Matilda The Musical*	**Henry Bays**
Head of Occupational Safety and Health	**TBC**
Head of Co-Curation	**Rachel Sharpe**
Designated Safeguarding Officer – RSC Nursery	**Kate Robinson**
Designated Safeguarding Officer – Children's Data	**Chris O'Brien**
Designated Safeguarding Officer – Participatory Work	**Fiona Ingram**
Designated Safeguarding Officer – Front Facing	**Bobbie Stokes**
Designated Safeguarding Officer – Performance	**Pip Horobin** **Roger Penhale** **Rachael Tyagi**
Board Representative	**Geoff Barton**

YOUR SAFEGUARDING CONTACTS

RSC Designated Senior Safeguarding Officer	Jacqui O'Hanlon	jacqui.ohanlon@rsc.org.uk	07747 876788
RSC Designated Safeguarding Officers			
RSC Nursery	Kate Robinson	kate.robinson@rsc.org.uk	07796 337809
Children's Data	Chris O'Brien	chris.obrien@rsc.org.uk	07980 272419
Front Facing	Bobbie Stokes	bobbie.stokes@rsc.org.uk	07557 486797
Workforce	Kate Sirdifield	kate.sirdifield@rsc.org.uk	07884 547737
Frequent Contact	Fiona Ingram	fiona.ingram@rsc.org.uk	07919 276379
Company Managers	Pip Horobin	pip.horobin@rsc.org.uk	07889 646518
	Roger Penhale	roger.penhale@rsc.org.uk	07976 274978
Deputy Company Manager	Rachael Tyagi	rachael.tyagi@rsc.org.uk	07970 841943

APPENDIX FOUR

Policy Guidelines for Online Safeguarding of Children and Young people

Some RSC activities with children are delivered online. These activities might include training and rehearsals, live streaming, or facilitated activities.

It is important to note that 7% of households have no internet access, and many people – often those with existing vulnerabilities – are unable to access or are unfamiliar with digital technologies. We also recognise that social media can have positive and negative impacts on mental health.

In planning online engagement with children and young people, we encourage colleagues to consider how online work might connect with 'real world' activity and relationships as they read the guidelines below.

Contents

1. Hosting and participating in online meeting with Children

Where RSC staff are leading projects with direct, regular, and ongoing online contact with young people, a project email address will be set up (e.g. [project name] @rsc.org.uk] and used for all communication with children and parents/guardians.

A project specific email signature will also be used that excludes personal mobile numbers, email addresses, or other personal details. Members of staff requiring access to one of the project email accounts must follow the guidelines set out in **Appendix one**.

RSC colleagues running live online sessions with children and young people will adopt and maintain the following safeguarding measures:

- Written permission (including via email) from parents/carers is required for all online participatory sessions. Where permission is not given by the parent/carer, the child cannot participate in the online sessions.
- All parents/carers will be informed of the platform/s to be used in the session, along with the dates and times of sessions and the names of the authorised adults who will be participating in these sessions.
- RSC colleagues, artists, and authorised personnel will be the only adults present during RSC online sessions with young people.
- When communicating with young people via online platforms, RSC staff will only use RSC accounts.
- Email correspondence with children and young people must always include their parent or guardian. Where emails are being sent to multiple young people in different families, the bcc function will be used.

2. Undertaking Online Sessions - Guidance

All online sessions will be password protected. The staff member hosting the session will use the waiting room function, ensuring no access is given to anyone other than authorised staff and young people. If a participant enters the waiting room using a name that is not recognised, this individual will be invited into the main room before any other young person and asked to identify themselves and change their name.

Before the session commences, the responsible RSC staff member will send the following advice to the children and young people participating in the session:

- Make sure that people you live with know you are on a live video session. Please do not include them in the session.
- Please wear appropriate clothing, even on parts of you that you think cannot be seen.
- Please consider the background of the room you will be speaking from to ensure it is appropriate (for example, a bedroom may not be suitable).

During all online, participatory sessions, RSC staff will ensure that:

- There is an appropriate number of DBS checked adults in the online session, proportionate to the number of young people participating and the work they will be participating in. There should be a minimum of two adults present (at least one of whom is DBS checked), but appropriate risk assessments will define the total numbers of adults required, including DBS checked adults.
- The host will always turn off any chat function that enables members to contact each other individually during the session.
- The host will be the only user able to share their screen.
- The host will remind young people that this is not a private space and whatever they share online will be seen by the group.
- At the end of each session, the host may choose to share a final plate/whiteboard that signposts participants to further wellbeing support.

At the start of each online participatory session with young people, RSC staff will establish a code of conduct or group contract for the session including:

- Reminding participants about respecting others and to not do anything online that they would not do if the group were together.
- Introducing the platform technology to the group, explaining that everyone will have their microphones on mute when they are not speaking. Any 'raise your hand' or other response features will also be introduced.
- Reminding participants that they must not record or take photos of anything during the session.
- Reminding participants that any chat function is turned off and there will be no private chat between group members.

Young people and parents/responsible adults will be advised about the process for reporting online abuse via CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection): www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/

A. Where it is submitted by a parent or child via our open social media channels.

B. Where it is submitted via email or on other platforms as part of an RSC curated creative project. We will take a different approach in each context.

3. Video Content Including Children and Young People.

There are two ways in which the images of children and young people may appear in online RSC content.

Content submitted via our open social media channels

Where it is deemed that a child or young person has submitted content on RSC social media channels, and where the content includes the child or other children, the RSC will not retweet or respond to the content. Where content containing children has been submitted on RSC channels by an adult who refers to themselves as the parent of the child, the RSC may choose to retweet and/or respond to the parent.

Where a child has submitted content that does not feature any children or adults, the RSC may subsequently share that content, redacting anything that could identify the child, including their online username.

Content submitted via email as part of an RSC curated creative project.

Where the RSC has asked young people to submit content as part of a creative project, the following protocols will be used:

- The content will be submitted to an email address that contains the project name, as opposed to the name of an individual staff member.
- The person/s accessing the email address will be DBS checked adult/s

Young people will be advised:

- Not to submit material that uses or discloses their full name.
- Not to film or submit things that might reveal their exact address, school or somewhere they go regularly (e.g. a sports club).
- Not to film anyone else under the age of 18.
- To wear appropriate clothing.
- To keep themselves safe i.e. not to share content that feels too personal, complicated, or sad.

4. Sharing work made by young people online

Where the RSC has invited young people to create work online, for example in response to a digital challenge, RSC staff will:

- Use the RSC parental consent form to gain consent from the parent/guardian for their child to participate in the project, making clear that it involves the submission of photos or video content made by the child or young person.
- Not use any child's surname in photography or video content.

Protocols for streaming live or as live content

For all live or as-live streamed content at the RSC, the comments and chat functions will be turned off by default.

Any commissioners of RSC content to be streamed live or as-live on any platforms will complete the Safeguarding section of the Video Unit briefing form. This contains a risk assessment checklist where the content commissioner is required to consider the audiences for the content.

Where children and young people will access the content, we recommend that comment functions continue to be deactivated, and that chat functions are only used where necessary, and with a risk assessment in place.

5. Wellbeing and Content Choices

The National Centre for Social Research (2024) suggests that 1 in 5 children and young people aged 8 to 25 has a mental disorder. Young people who belong to groups that are already marginalised or disadvantaged, as well as those who have experienced trauma, may be particularly at risk of experiencing mental health difficulties.

The choice of text extracts used for engaging with young people should therefore be given careful consideration. For example, extracts that focus on death, dying, suicide, or abuse may be less appropriate.

Practitioners should also consider the choice of passages used. All artists and practitioners working directly with young people or adults at risk online should be briefed to ensure that they are aware that the mental wellbeing of participants is paramount.

6. Receiving a Disclosure Online or Via a Mobile Phone

This guidance should be read alongside the RSC Safeguarding Policy. We recognise that at times young people might disclose information to RSC staff members digitally. If a staff member receives a message that they think may indicate that the young person communicating with them is at immediate risk, either during or outside of work hours, they should immediately follow the safeguarding reporting actions which are detailed in the RSC Safeguarding Children procedure.

Planning and Evaluation

For every session or event that is conducted online, RSC colleagues must complete a learning report. The report should highlight if there were any safeguarding concerns during the session, and clarify that in this instance the RSC colleague applied the process stipulated in the 'raising a concern' section of the RSC safeguarding policy.

The reporting process should be regularly quality assured by designated safeguarding officers and the safeguarding committee to inform any RSC guidance and training.

Useful Links and Further Information

The following link provides up to date information about the terms, conditions and safety features of the most popular video conferencing sites, including minimum age requirements (e.g. Zoom, Teams, Adobe Connect, Google Hangout):

www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/video-conferencing-children-safeguarding-and-privacy-overview

In addition, the UK Safer Internet Centre, Co-funded by the European Commission, runs The Professionals Online Safety Helpline (POSH). This was set up in 2011 to help all members of the community working with or for children in the UK with any online safety issues they, or children and young people in their care, may face.

The phone line operates Monday – Friday, 10.00 am – 4.00pm:

0344 381 4772

This helpline can assist with any online safety issues or concerns any professional working with children and young people may have.

For help and support, you can also email helpline@safeinternet.org.uk

The following sites can provide practical support for young people or adults who are experiencing mental health issues:

- www.headstogether.org.uk/
- www.themix.org.uk
- www.youngminds.org.uk/

References

National Centre for Social Research. (2023). Children and Young people's Mental Health in 2023. [Online]. National Centre for Social Research. Last Updated: 2024.
Available at: natcen.ac.uk/publications/children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-2023
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