

## **Smock Alley Theatre, 1662**

### **Child Protection Policy**

Smock Alley Theatre is committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children and young people. The welfare of any child or young person who is taking part in or observing a workshop undertaken by this company is paramount. We undertake to provide a safe environment and experience, where the welfare of the child/young person is paramount. We will adhere to the recommendations of *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, published by the Department of Health and Children in 2011.

We have implemented the following policies and procedures covering:

- Code of behaviour for all staff
- Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse
- Confidentiality
- Recruitment and selecting staff
- Managing and supervising staff
- Involvement of primary carers
- Allegations of misconduct or abuse by staff
- Complaints and comments
- Incidents and accidents

Signed:

General Manager

Review Date: 15<sup>th</sup> August 2016

## **Codes of Behaviour**

### **For all staff i.e. full or part-time and contracted staff.**

Anyone employed by this company be they, full or part-time administrative staff or staff on limited contracts such as artists, actors, crew members, technical staff, must fully observe the following approach when working with people aged eighteen years or younger:

- Treat children and young people equally and as individuals
- Listen to and respect them
- Involve them in decision making, where appropriate
- Provide encouragement and support regardless of ability
- Use appropriate language (physical and verbal)
- Encourage a positive awareness
- Respect their personal space
- Discuss boundaries on behaviour and related sanctions, where appropriate with them and their primary carers
- Create an atmosphere of trust and encourage group feedback
- Lead by example
- Be aware of limitations i.e. due to medical condition
- Respect differences of culture, religion race and sexual orientation

### **Good Practice**

- Observe appropriate dress and behaviour.
- Maintain awareness around language and comments made.
- Register each child i.e. name, address, phone, emergency contact.
- Make primary carers, young people, facilitators and visitors aware of these procedures.
- Be inclusive of people with special needs.
- Plan and be prepared
- Report any concerns about the well being of the children/young people to the Designated Person and follow reporting procedures.
- Be aware of bullying and encourage children to report and concerns or worries.
- Evaluate work practices on a regular basis.
- Report and record any incidents or accidents.
- Review and update policy and procedures on an annual basis.
- Keep primary carers informed of any issues that concern their children.
- Ensure proper supervision where possible. If a facilitator is left alone with a group of young people while conducting a workshop he/she should make sure that it is in an easily accessible space i.e. leave exit doors open.
- Ensure clear communication between facilitator and group and also with organisation.
- Don't be passive in relation to concerns.
- Don't let a problem get out of control.
- Workshops sessions should be in an open environment.

### **Inappropriate behaviour:**

- Avoid being left alone with a child or young person i.e. giving lift home in car. Notify carers if giving a lift is the only option.
- Do not use or allow offensive or sexually physical and/or verbal language.
- Do not single out a particular person for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule or unwelcome focus or attention.
- Do not allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Do not hit or physically chastise.
- Do not socialise inappropriately with children/young people e.g. outside of structures organisational activities.

#### **Physical Contact:**

- Seek consent in relation to physical contact (except in emergency).
- Avoid horseplay or inappropriate touching.
- Check level of comfort when doing touch and/or physical exercises.

#### **Health and Safety:**

- Don't leave children unattended or unsupervised
- Look after any dangerous materials
- Provide a safe environment
- Be aware of accident procedure and follow accordingly

#### **Reporting Procedures**

Smock Alley Theatre has appointed the General Manager, Clíona Dukes as their Designated Person (DP) to deal with issues related to child protection and welfare and to respond to any concerns that may be identified while the company is working, in any way, with children or young people in a workshop or performance capacity.

The deputy person to cover Clíona's role is the Front of House Manager, Emily Elphinstone.

It is the responsibility of the DP to support and advise staff about policy and procedures in relation to child protection. It is also their responsibility to liaise with the Health Service Executive (HSE) or Gardaí where appropriate.

The DP can be contacted at (work) 01 6770014 or (mobile) on 085 7667021.

The Deputy DP can be contacted at the same work number as above or on her mobile 086 2434229

#### **Reasonable Grounds for Concern include:-**

- Specific indication from a person under 18 that s/he has been abused.
- An account by a person who saw the abuse taking place.
- Evidence, such as an injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused any other way.

- An injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation where there are indicators supporting the concern e.g. a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, dysfunctional behaviour.
- Consistent indication, over a period of time, which a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

### **Recording Procedures**

The Smock Alley Theatre has 'An Incident /Accident Form' which is kept at Box Office in theatre.

The following information needs to be recorded:-

- Suspicions
- Concerns
- Worrying observations
- Behavioural changes
- Actions and Outcomes

### **How to Deal with a Disclosure**

Stay calm and listen allowing the person to say what they need to say.

Do not ask leading questions

Do not prompt for more details

Do not ask them to repeat details unnecessarily

Do not promise to keep anything secret

Reassure the person

Explain that they did the right thing and what will happen next

### **Reporting Procedures**

- Report all details, including date, time and people involved. Keep info factual. Do not make judgements.
- Inform the DP, or Deputy if DP is unavailable.
- The most appropriate person should discuss the concern or consult with the Primary Carers.
- The DP may contact the HSE Duty Social Work Dept. for advice prior to making a report.
- Information is shared on a strictly need-to-know basis.
- Parents/Primary Carers should be made aware of a report to the HSE UNLESS it is likely to put the victim at further risk.

- If there is reasonable grounds for concern as outlined above the DP will contact the Duty Social Worker in the HSE area involved (numbers can be found in the attached contact sheet) using the standard HSE Reporting Form. See sample form at the back.
- Reports can be made verbally initially and then followed up with the Reporting Form.
- If the DP or Deputy are not available contact the Duty Social Worker directly.
- In Emergencies outside the HSE hours contact the Gardaí.
- Reports should be made without delay.
- Actions and outcomes should be noted.
- The person who expressed the concern should be kept informed.

### **Confidentiality Statement**

Smock Alley Theatre is committed to ensuring peoples' rights to confidentiality. All records are stored in a locked filing cabinet in the General Managers Office. Only the DP has access to this. However, in relation to child protection and welfare we undertake that:

- Information will only be forwarded on a 'need-to-know' basis in order to safeguard the child/young person.
- Giving such information to others for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality.
- We cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of a child or young person is at risk.
- Primary carers, children and young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is being made to the HSE, unless doing so could put the child at further risk.
- Images of a child/young person will not be used for any reason without the consent of the parent/carer (however, we cannot guarantee that cameras/videos will not be used at public performances or workshops).
- Procedures will be put in place in relation to the use of images of children/young people.
- Procedures will also be put in place for the recoding and storing of information in line with our confidentiality policy.

### **Recruiting and Selecting Staff**

This policy operates in tandem with Smock Alley Theatre's ordinary recruiting policy. This recruitment process refers to all staff that have, or are likely to have, contact with children or young people.

### **Policy Statement**

Smock Alley Theatre  
Child Protection Policy – Sept 2015

Smock Alley Theatre will ensure that staff are carefully selected, trained and supervised to provide a safe environment for all children and young people, by observing the following principles:-

- Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined for every job
- Posts will be advertised widely
- We will endeavour to select the most suitable qualified personnel
- Candidates will be asked to sign a Declaration Form
- At least 2 written references that are recent, relevant, independent and verbally confirmed will be necessary
- Staff will be selected by a panel or at least two, where possible, through an interview process
- No person who would be deemed to constitute a 'risk' will be employed. A 'risk' is defined as a person who has any child-related convictions, refuses to sign application form and declaration form, if they have insufficient documentary evidence of their identification or who are concealing information on their suitability
- There will be a relevant probation period
- All staff will be required to consent to Garda clearance, where available.

### **Staff Management Policy Statement**

Smock Alley Theatre are making this statement in order to protect both staff (full-time and freelance) and young people. We undertake that all our staff will read and sign aware our Child Protection Policy statement. New full-time staff will receive induction and training in Child Protection.

Part-time or Freelance staff must agree to abide by our Child Protection Policy and Code of Behaviour.

All staff will receive necessary supervision and their work practices will be review on a quarterly basis.

### **Involvement of Primary Carers Policy Statement**

Smock Alley Theatre is committed to being open with all primary carers. We undertake to advise primary carers of our Child Protection Policy and to inform them and schools of all activities including potential activities and ensure that these activities are age-appropriate. We will comply with Health& Safety practices

If we have concerns about the welfare of a child/young person, we will:-

- Respond to the needs of the child
- Inform the primary carers on an on-going basis unless this action puts the child or young person at further risk.
- Where we have child protection or welfare concerns we are obliged to pass these on to the Duty Social worker and, in emergency, the Gardaí.

- In the event of a complaint against a member of staff, we will immediately ensure the safety of the child/young person and inform primary carers as appropriate.

**Smock Alley Theatre is committed to putting the interest of the child first.**

To this end we will:

- Contact local HSE and Gardaí where there is a child protection welfare concern
- Encourage primary carers to work in partnership with us under the guidelines set out by Smock Alley Theatre in order to ensure the safety of their children.
- Have a Designated Contact Person available for consultation with primary carers in the case of any concern over a child or young person's welfare.

**Dealing with Allegations against Staff**

In the event of allegations made against an employee of Smock Alley Theatre, the protection of the child/young person is the first and paramount consideration.

Smock Alley Theatre has a DUAL responsibility in respect of both the child and the employee. The same person must not have responsibility for dealing with the child's welfare issues and the staff member's issues.

An allegation against an employee should be assessed promptly and carefully. If reasonable grounds for concern exist, a formal report to the HSE should be made. The reporting procedures outlined in these Guidelines should be followed. This organisation should maintain a close liaison with the HSE and the Gardaí. Smock Alley Theatre should ensure that their actions do not undermine or frustrate any assessment or investigation by the HSE and the Gardaí.

Agreed procedures should be followed in the context of the applicable employment contract and the rules of natural justice. The employee has a right to know of any allegation made and of their right to respond. Smock Alley Theatre should take protective measures appropriate to the level of risk while not unreasonably penalising the worker – unless necessary to protect the child. Protective measures might mean increased supervision or assignment to different duties. The employees may be suspended pending assessment and investigation. Seek legal advice on procedures or protocol if in doubt.

Two separate procedures must be followed:

1. In respect of the child/young person Cliona Dukes will deal with issues related to the child/young person.
2. In respect of the person against whom the allegation is made Patrick Sutton (Director) will deal with issues related to the staff member.

- First priority is to ensure that no child/young person is exposed to unnecessary risk.
- If allegations are made against the DP, then the Deputy DP should be contacted.
- The reporting procedures outlined above should be followed. Both primary carers and the child/young person should be informed of actions planned and taken. The child/young person should be dealt with in an age-appropriate manner.
- The staff member will be informed as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation.
- The staff member should be given the opportunity to respond.
- Any action following an allegation of abuse against an employee should be taken in consultation with the HSE and Gardaí.
- After consultation, the Chairperson should advise the person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.

### **Complaints and Comments procedures**

Minor complaints or comments should be resolved at source.

In the event of a more serious complaint or a comment, Smock Alley Theatre will respond within one week

The DP has responsibility for directing complaints/comments to the appropriate person.

Verbal complaints will be logged with an Incident Form and responded to.

### **Accidents Procedure**

In the event of an accident the following procedures should be followed:

- An up-to-date register of the contact details of all children/young people involved in the organisation
- External organisations with whom we are dealing with must provide proof of their public liability insurance
- First aid boxes are available and regularly re-stocked
- First Aid Kits can be found in the Box Office, the Bar, the Kitchen and back stage in the Technical Managers Office
- There are 14 qualified first aiders at Smock Alley Theatre. There is always a minimum of 1 first aiders on duty at any given time.

Cliona Dukes	General Manager
David Halpin	Technical Manager
Donnie O'Meara	Technical Assistant
Paul Clune	Catering Manager
Osgar Dukes	Box Office
Emily Elphinstone	Duty Manager

Alisun Fox	Box Office / Front of House
Katie McCann	Front of House
Lorcan Strain	Front of House
Clodagh Mooney Duggan	Front of House
Gemma Kane	Front of House
Olga Criado Monleon	Front of House
Shane O'Regan	Front of House
Grace Corry	Front of House

- Children and young people must be advised of the risks of dangerous material
- Record details of risky equipment used and take steps to minimise risk
- Take cognisance of responsibility for first-aid on off-site trips.

**Declaration Form**

To be filled in by any employee who will be working with or in regular contact with children or young people.

**This form is confidential.**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Birth** \_\_\_\_\_ **Place of Birth** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Any other name(s) previously known as: \_\_\_\_\_

Is there any reason that you would be considered unsuitable to work with children and young people?

Yes                  No

If 'yes', please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_