

Gearshift Theatre Child Protection/ Safeguarding policy.

Gearshift Theatre works with children and young people and could work with vulnerable adults. It has in place a number of policies to protect these groups when they engage with, or are in contact with Gearshift Theatre.

The potential hazards for children, young people or vulnerable adults engaged with Gearshift Theatre include

- A) Injury in a drama or storytelling workshop by themselves or others.
- B) Injury on equipment.
- C) Viewing age- inappropriate play/ theatre.
- D) Abuse by workshop leader or other adult (e.g. volunteers or other adults in the building)
- E) Unauthorised photographs or other recording.
- F) Misuse of images

This policy sets out our procedures for ensuring that the risks of these hazards are minimised. Where it relates to each of the categories above, we will refer to a particular letter.

Risk assessments will be completed for all activities including workshops and performances. These will be intended to protect children, young people and vulnerable people as well as the public generally. **(A), (B)**

When there is a drama workshop or storytelling workshop, health and safety rules will be explained to children so that they do not damage their own health or each other's health. (Examples of this could include protecting their voices and hearing, not standing on chairs, safe ways to represent violence etc) **(A)**

All adults –employees and regular volunteers who will be in contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults - will have a current Disclosure and Barring Service report (DBS) (previously a CRB disclosure). **(D)**

Gearshift Theatre will require volunteers and casual helpers who have not had a DBS to provide two references from independent and suitably qualified referees. References will be checked. Gearshift Theatre considers it best practice to avoid one-to-one contact with children and adults **(D)**

Gearshift Theatre also has put in place a number of measures that will help to create a culture of communication, openness and clarity which reduces the risks to safeguarding. In line with advice following *Protection of Freedoms Act 2012* Gearshift uses the following measures to reduce risk from adults:

- Using recruitment forms for volunteers; asking why the adult wants to be involved with the organisation and asking about prior voluntary work experience
- Use references and interviews appropriate to the nature of the task as part of the selection process of regular volunteers
- Include induction and training for all volunteers.
- Produce simple job description so that volunteers are clear about their roles and the parameters of their role (what they should and should not do) **(D)**

Gearshift Theatre will issue clear guidance on the age suitability of any performance where it considers the material not to be suitable for all ages (C). This guidance will be included on all publicity material, as well as being clearly announced prior to any performance. Any concerns regarding age suitability of any performance should be addressed to the Safeguarding trustee, or to the Chair of trustees.

Anyone who witnesses an incident or has concerns or suspicions about the behaviour of a person connected to Gearshift Theatre should contact the Chair of Trustees via the Chair of Trustee's contact box on the website.

It is not the role of that person to judge the guilt or innocence of the person named but to contact police or social services as appropriate.

At events involving children, young people and vulnerable adults the following phone numbers will be included (e.g. on programmes)

NSPCC – T:0808 800 5000; Childline – T:0800 1111; Crimestoppers – T:0800 555 111 **(D)**

Gearshift Theatre will not take or use photographs of children unless they receive written permission of parents or guardians and will take appropriate measures to ensure that photographs and/or recordings are not taken by others.

Gearshift Theatre will take all reasonable steps to keep all images securely and ensure their appropriate use.. **(E)**

This policy will be reviewed annually. It will also reviewed in accordance with any legislative changes and/or when there is a significant new development and change in our work practices.

Agreed by Gearshift Trustees April 7th 2014

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