

Stevenage Lytton Players

Safeguarding Policy



Document:	Stevenage Lytton Players Safeguarding Policy		
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Introduction

Safeguarding is defined as protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of health and/or development, ensuring that children grow up in the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

Purpose of policy

- To inform parents, volunteers and chaperones about the Stevenage Lytton Player's responsibilities for safeguarding children.
- Volunteers and chaperones have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for children to take part in workshops, shows and social events.
- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to when they have a worry or concern.
- Establish and maintain an environment where volunteers and chaperones feel safe, are encouraged to talk and are listened to when they have concerns about the safety and well-being of a child.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the society whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Ensure that children, who have additional/unmet needs are supported appropriately. Volunteers will seek advice from relevant sources when required.

Volunteers/ chaperones working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, volunteers and chaperones should always act in the interests of the child.

Implementation, Monitoring and Review of the Child Protection Policy

The Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person (DDSP) will review the policy annually and when required by a change in government policy. It will be implemented through required training of new volunteers or chaperones, and as part of day-to-day practice. The DSP and DDSP will monitor compliance with the policy.

Statutory Framework

To safeguard and promote the welfare of children, the Stevenage Lytton Players will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 statutory guidance
- Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Inter-agency Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Procedures (Electronic)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (Section 74, Serious Crime Act 2015)
- Prevent Duty guidance: England and Wales (2023) under section 29 of the counterterrorism and security act 2015
- SEND Code of Practice 0-25 (DfE 2019)

The society is also expected to ensure that they have appropriate procedures in place for responding to situations in which:

- a) a child may have been abused or neglected or is at risk of abuse or neglect.
- b) a volunteer has behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child or that indicates they would pose a risk of harm.

Designated Safeguarding Person

The Executive committee should designate an appropriate volunteer to take the lead responsibility for child protection. This person should have the knowledge and authority to take on this post and this includes an understanding of the documents above.

- The Designated Safeguarding Person for Child Protection in the society is:

Louise Edwards - dsp@lyttonplayers.co.uk

There should be a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person (DDSP) in the absence of the lead DSP.

- The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person for Child Protection in the society is:

David Slade - ddsp@lyttonplayers.co.uk

Responsibilities

The broad areas of responsibility for the Designated Safeguarding Person are to:

- Manage referrals and cases
- Refer all cases of suspected abuse or neglect to the Local Authority Children's Services (Safeguarding and Specialist Services), Police (cases where a crime may have been committed) and to Channel where there is a radicalisation concern
- Monitor any ongoing enquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to volunteers on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies
- Support volunteers and chaperones who make referrals
- Help organise sufficient training in relation to safeguarding for all volunteers and/or chaperones

When to be concerned

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all volunteers and chaperones should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, always, what is in the best interests of the child.

Volunteers and chaperones form part of the wider safeguarding system for children.

Children who may require early help

Families First is Hertfordshire's programme of early help services for families.

A directory of early help services is available at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst and will help practitioners and families find information and support to prevent escalation of needs and crisis.

The DSP and DDSP should be aware of the **Early Help Process**, and understand their role in identifying emerging problems, sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment of a child's needs. It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating.

Volunteers working within the society should be alert to the potential need for early help for children also who are more vulnerable. For example:

- Children with a disability and/or specific additional needs

- Children with special educational needs
- Children who are acting as a young carer
- Children who are showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour
- Children whose family circumstances present challenges, such as substance abuse, adult mental health or learning disability, domestic violence
- Children who are showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect

Volunteers and chaperones should be aware of the main categories of maltreatment: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. They should also be aware of the indicators of maltreatment and specific safeguarding issues so that they are able to identify cases of children who may need help or protection.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities

Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. This can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's impairment without further exploration
- Assumptions that children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying- without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties
- Reluctance to challenge carers, (professionals may over empathise with carers because of the perceived stress of caring for a disabled child)
- Disabled children often rely on a wide network of carers to meet their basic needs and therefore the potential risk of exposure to abusive behaviour can be increased.
- A disabled child's understanding of abuse
- Lack of choice/participation
- Isolation

Peer on peer abuse

If one child or young person causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as abuse. When considering whether behaviour is abusive, it is important to consider:

- Whether there is a large difference in power (for example age, size, ability, development) between the young people concerned
- Whether the perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children

- Whether there are concerns about the intention of the alleged perpetrator

Peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways and different gender issues can be prevalent. Severe harm may be caused to children by abusive and bullying behaviour of other children, which may be physical, sexual or emotional and can include gender-based violence/ sexual assaults, sexting, teenage relationship abuse, peer-on-peer exploitation, serious youth violence, sexual bullying or harmful sexual behaviour.

Hertfordshire County Council recommends that education settings use The Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool by the Brook Advisory Service to help professionals assess and respond appropriately to sexualised behaviour. The traffic light tool can be found at www.brook.org.uk/our-work/the-sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool

Guidance on responding to and managing sexting incidents can be found at

http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/reference/index.shtml#sex

Dealing with a disclosure

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the volunteer or chaperone should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is being said
- Allow the child to talk freely and do not pre-empt what they are going to say
- Reassure the child, but not make promises which it might not be possible to keep
- Never promise a child that they will not tell anyone - as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child
- Reassure him or her that what has happened is not his or her fault
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell
- Listen, only asking questions when necessary to clarify
- Not criticise the alleged perpetrator
- Explain what must be done next and who must be told
- Make a written record (see Record Keeping)
- Pass the information to the Designated Safeguarding Person without delay
- Always implement an open-door policy when dealing with disclosure

Support

Dealing with a disclosure from a child, and safeguarding issues can be stressful. The volunteer or chaperone should, therefore, consider seeking support for him/herself and discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Person.

Record keeping

All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded in writing. If in doubt about recording requirements volunteers and chaperones should discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Person. When a child has made a disclosure, the volunteer or chaperone should:

- Record as soon as possible after the conversation. Use the society record of concern sheet wherever possible. Transfer information from notes as soon as possible.
- Do not destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child.
- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any injuries
- Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions.

All records need to be given to the Designated Safeguarding Person promptly. No copies should be retained by the volunteer.

Confidentiality

Volunteers and chaperones who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only with the DSP and DDSP.

Any issues or concerns should be discussed in private and not in front of any third parties.

Chaperones

Inappropriate behaviour during shows should be brought to the attention of the DSP and DDSP and not discussed with any third parties.

Communication with parents

Parents should be informed prior to referral, unless it is considered to do so might place the child at increased risk of significant harm by:

- The behavioural response it prompts e.g. a child being subjected to abuse, maltreatment or threats / forced to remain silent if alleged abuser informed

- Leading to an unreasonable delay
- Leading to the risk of loss of evidential material

Ensure that parents understand the responsibilities placed on the volunteers and chaperones for safeguarding children.

This policy will be made available to all parents and will be displayed on the youth notice board in the bar area. If any parent or chaperone wishes to discuss this policy or have any other queries regarding The Youth Group they can contact the DSP and DDSP through relevant channels.

Allegations involving volunteers and chaperones

An allegation is any information which indicates that a volunteer or chaperone may have:

- Behaved in a way that has, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against/related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way which indicates s/he would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children

All volunteers, chaperones and parents should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the running of the youth group.

If anyone has a concern about any adult that has contact with a youth member in any context, for example in shows and social events they should talk to the DSP or DDSP.

If this concern is not appropriate to take to the DSP or DDSP then they should contact:

- The Chair of The Stevenage Lytton Players:

Ross Edwards - chair@lyttonplayers.co.uk

If the DSP, DDSP or the Chair are not available then you can call this number, 24/7:

- Children's Services – 0300 1234043

Other relevant documents

- Record of concern forms
- Communication sheet