

Arts Council of Wales

Guidelines for Arts Organisations

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Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru
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Guidelines for Arts Organisations

Arts organisations funded by Arts Council of Wales are required to have a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures as a condition of grant. As a minimum, a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure should contain the following:

- the organisation's position statement on safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults
- evidence that the Policy complies with current legislation
- recruitment Procedures and staff training
- information on who the designated Child Protection person and the Board member is within the organisation for dealing with Child Protection issues
- clear procedures for dealing with and reporting allegations of child abuse issues

Funded arts organisations should review their Policy and Procedures annually. They should be approved by the Board of Management, documented in the minutes of the meeting and a record taken of this decision.

1. Appropriate Behaviour

There is much concern currently about what is and is not acceptable when working directly with children and young people. Some things are clearly unacceptable, but it is also clear that we cannot make rules in a "one size fits all" way. Each of us will have different levels of comfort around what is appropriate or inappropriate. However, situations to avoid will include:

- lone working with children, young people and vulnerable adults
- initiating touch with children and young people where they are uncomfortable and good practice suggests that touch should be initiated by them - this should be left to public spaces only. In some organisations appropriate physical contact when initiated by children and young people in terms of hugs etc is also frowned upon. If contact is initiated by children and young people and is in an open space this is not a child protection issue though of course if a worker is not comfortable with this behaviour then they are entitled to say so to the child/young person or raise it with their line manager
- sharing dressing rooms where adults and children are in the same space
- using foul or abusive language in front of children and young people

Good practitioners will constantly monitor any situation they find themselves in so that they can create the safest and most positive environment for children and young people to work within.

Other things to consider:

- should I be aware of any religious or cultural sensitivity about this activity?
- are our activities accessible to all children and young people who want to be involved?
- do I have an adequate number of staff to provide support and supervision?

One of the more obvious ways of reducing risks to children and young people is by having the correct staff to child ratio as this avoids the need for lone working and ensures that the activities take place with lots of people present. If your ratios are too low, an activity should be cancelled and rearranged rather than take place when it would be dangerous to do so. Certain activities, because of their nature, will need higher ratios.

2. Recruiting Safely

Any organisation that is serious about the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults will ensure that it fosters an active culture of protection throughout the organisation. This is especially important in terms of effective recruitment and selection. Organisations should consider taking the following actions so that their culture is as protective as possible:

- make statements about how seriously they take child protection in all official publications
- announce that all relevant staff will have DBS checks in their advertisements
- send potential applicants a copy of the child protection policy
- ask an appropriate child protection question at interview
- list a specific competency on child protection if using a competency based approach
- ensure that the child protection policy, recruitment and selection policy and health and safety policy are clearly linked

Recruitment and selection procedures should be applied to all personnel, whether paid or unpaid, where the post involves direct contact with children and young people.

Applicants should be asked to provide, amongst other things:

- details of previous experience, voluntary or paid, of working with children
- permission to contact at least one person who has experience of their work or contact with children
- details of any convictions for criminal offences against children including any spent conviction under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. It should be made clear to applicants that the position involves work with children and is therefore exempt from the Exceptions Order of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which means that all convictions, however old, must be declared applicants must be assured that this information will be dealt with confidentially.
- all applicants should be interviewed and this should be seen as an opportunity to assess their experience of working with children
- at least two references should be sought, at least one of which should comment on the applicants experience of paid or voluntary work with children and young people

All applicants should be asked at some point to produce evidence of their identity.

3. Disclosure and Barring Service

Organisations can make safer recruitment decisions by accessing the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The Disclosure and Barring Service enables organisations to identify candidates who may be unsuitable to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

There are three types of check:

The Standard check - this checks for spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings.

The Enhanced check - this includes the same as the standard check plus any additional information held by local police that's reasonably considered relevant to the role being applied for.

The Enhanced with list check - This is like the enhanced check, but includes a check of the DBS [barred lists](#).

Further information and details on how to access the disclosure service can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/.../disclosure-and-barring-service>

4. Photographic Images/Video Evidence

It is important that children, young people and their families who participate in arts activities are given the opportunity to have their achievements recognised and recorded appropriately. However, the advice to any arts organisation taking photographs of children and young people taking part in arts activities is that they should seek permission from the parents or carers before doing so.

5. Venues/Galleries

It is the responsibility of any venue or gallery to have a current Safeguarding and Child Protection policy. Any visiting arts organisations, any organisation hiring a venue or individual artists working specifically with young people within the venue will need to take responsibility for their own Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and work within their own guidelines. It is the responsibility of the visiting arts organisation, or individual artist, to safeguard the children, young people and vulnerable adults in their care. They should also be aware of the venue's or gallery's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

The visiting organisations will need to undertake risk assessments so that their child protection responsibilities are clear and deliverable. If the venue is being used overnight additional safeguards should be built in so that effective protection arrangements are in place.

Organisations or individual artists who are using venues/galleries for arts activities with children, young people and vulnerable adults will need to ensure that the necessary protection arrangements are put in place. Organisations will need to consider the following:

- designating an individual to manage the safeguarding process
- ensuring that the children and young people are aware of how they need to protect themselves at the venue/gallery – not going away from an agreed area
- ensuring that children and young people do not wander off on their own
- a clear policy on the use and taking of photographs

It is the responsibility of the venue/gallery to inform visitors of their own Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures for visitors to make sure that they are aware of them. Venues should make sure that when visiting organisations and artists are using their venue, child protection issues are written into the contract.

6. Appropriate use of behaviour when dealing with children, young people and vulnerable adults in an arts environment.

Following the production of the Clywch Report by the Office of the Children's Commissioner in 2004 the Welsh Government issued a guidance document in relation to the relationship between child protection and the Arts, especially drama. This is a significant report and although it relates specifically to drama the principles of the report should be applied across all art forms. Key issues include:

- create a safe environment for children and young people and the practitioners
- all arts practitioners must follow their organisations policy and procedures for safeguarding
- all arts practitioners should be encouraged to report any signs of inappropriate behaviour
- all arts practitioners should take responsibility for safeguarding young people in lessons and activities
- practitioners should engage openly with other members of staff and managers and make sure that there is an open environment for teaching
- practitioners must select appropriate texts and adapt any texts to safeguard children and young people
- practitioners must protect vulnerable learners when teaching mixed age ranges and be sensitive to the children and young people who may feel uncomfortable with an activity
- practitioners and managers should never allow any nudity and intimate sexual contact in lessons or performances
- the use of strong offensive language should be limited (in drama productions)
- parental consent should be obtained before the taking of photographs and video recordings of children, young people and vulnerable adults

The issues raised in the Clywch report apply throughout the arts sector.

The full document Teaching Drama : guidance on safeguarding children and child protection for managers and drama practitioners can be downloaded from the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills section on the Welsh Assembly Government website at <http://www.wales.gov.uk>