

**GOSFORTH AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY
CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

1. General requirements

- 1.1. General Child Protection legislation (and hence these procedures) apply to all those under the age of 18.
- 1.2. The specific requirements of the “Body of Persons” approval apply to children of compulsory school age (under ~16).
- 1.3. All members and patrons (this includes parents of child members) will be given access to a copy of the GADS Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- 1.4. Children must not be paid for any performance.
- 1.5. Special arrangements will apply if a child is simultaneously involved in any other (non-GADS) performance (excepting school performances) and advice should be sought from any member of the Executive Committee.
- 1.6. Members of the society will not be allowed significant lone contact with children. If this does become necessary, (e.g. director, choreographer) an enhanced DBS check and appropriate safeguarding training is required. This training can be level 1 Safeguarding training or the equivalent – for example that received by a teacher or chaperone.
- 1.7. Children will not be allowed to perform outside the hours permitted by the Regulations – see Appendix 1.
- 1.8. Children will not be allowed to rehearse or perform at any venue, premises or location unless determined suitable by the Local Authority.
- 1.9. Children will not rehearse or perform when they should be receiving education (unless the performance is part of the school curriculum).
- 1.10. Children will not be used in performances that may be dangerous.
- 1.11. Separate boys and girls changing areas will be provided, which will be supervised by the chaperone(s) as described under the Body of Persons Approval (BoP).
- 1.12. Cameras of any kind (including those on mobile phones) are not to be used in any of the changing facilities or toilets.

2. Registration Form for children of compulsory school age (under ~16) (see Appendix 2)

- 2.1. A registration form is required for each child participant in any GADS production or activity.
- 2.2. The registration form will last for one membership year (May to May) and be renewed at the beginning of each membership year.
- 2.3. Parents must inform GADS if any of the information on the form needs to be amended or updated during the year.

3. At the start of any production

- 3.1. The production Director will ensure that a registration form has been completed for each child in the production and that the details are correct if a valid form already exists. 16-17 year olds do not require a registration form, but should join as Junior Members.
- 3.2. The Executive Committee will provide a suitable number of approved chaperones for the performances, taking account of the number of children of compulsory school age involved, as required by the BoP approval.
- 3.3. The details of the children involved will be provided to the Local Authority, using the LA form in Appendix 3. The Director will compile this information and pass it to the Safeguarding Officer for onward transmission to the Local Authority at least 21 days before the first performance.
- 3.4. The Notification of a performance form should be submitted to the Local Authority regardless of the number of nights that the performance takes place. If children are taking part and parents are supervising their own child, this should be stated on the form.

- 3.5. The Director must ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to get any child to or from the venue, for example by checking that parents understand the expectations on them.

4. For each rehearsal or activity involving children U18

- 4.1. A register (in the form of a book, not individual sheets) will be kept of each child's attendance.
- 4.2. The register will be compiled by the adult responsible for the session (e.g. the Director) although individuals can sign themselves in and out.
- 4.3. The register will record the name of the production / activity and the date.
- 4.4. For each child, the register will record the child's name, time of arrival and time of departure.
- 4.5. The names of the adults present will also be recorded, with their time of arrival and departure.
- 4.6. Closed / completed registers will be held by the Secretary.

5. For each performance under a BOPA (involving children of compulsory school age)

Note: The 1963 Act requires a Licence / Body of Persons Approval for public performances and any such performance in connection with which a charge is made (whether for admission or otherwise). When a performance is not open to the public **and** no charge is made for admission (directly or indirectly) the performance does not fall under the BOPA and chaperones are not required. For such a performance, Section 4 should be followed. Otherwise, when chaperones are required:

- 5.1. A child must be under the care and supervision of their parent / guardian or an approved chaperone.
- 5.2. A Daily Record and Register (in the form of Appendix 4) will be kept of each child's attendance.
- 5.3. Since children are not present at GADS performances for more than 4 hours continuously, the times of meal and rest intervals do not need to be recorded.
- 5.4. Completed forms will be retained by the Safeguarding Officer and sent to the LA if requested.
- 5.5. Chaperones will act in accordance with "A guide for Chaperones and Performance Licence Holders" provided by Cumberland Council. The guide can be accessed from <https://gads.org.uk/policies-procedures/>

6. Expectation of parents

- 6.1. The society believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and the society. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the society and to share responsibility for the care of children.
- 6.2. All parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children are delivered safely to and collected from a rehearsal, performance or other GADS event. After considering age, distance and the time of day, parents can give their permission for a child to go home alone or with other children, but children **must** be collected from performances where chaperones are present. It is not the responsibility of the society to take children home
- 6.3. Parents / guardians must inform GADS if any information in the Registration Form changes during the year.
- 6.4. For a production that runs for more than one night (e.g. a pantomime), GADS will provide chaperones to comply with our "Body of Persons" approval from the Local Authority. For a performance that runs for only one night (e.g. Youth Theatre Group show, Summer Youth Workshop show) we expect each participating child to have a parent or guardian present in the audience, to minimise or avoid the need for chaperones.

7. Suspicion / allegation of abuse

- 7.1. If any member or parent sees or suspects abuse of a child while in the care of the society, it should be reported to the society's Safeguarding Officer who will liaise with the relevant authorities and record all subsequent action taken.

8. Disclosure of abuse - if a child confides in you that abuse has taken place (whether at GADS or elsewhere):

- 8.1. Remain calm and in control but do not delay taking action.
- 8.2. Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child to tell you at their own pace and in their own words. Never put your words into their mouth. You can ask a general question like “what happened next?”, but do not ask other questions, especially if they suggest a particular answer.
- 8.3. Don't promise to keep it a secret. Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the society's Safeguarding Officer. Make it clear to the child that you will need to share this information with others. Make it clear that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help.
- 8.4. Reassure the child that 'they did the right thing' in telling someone.
- 8.5. Tell the child what you are going to do next.
- 8.6. As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a record of what was said, using the child's own words. See 10 – Record Keeping.
- 8.7. Speak immediately to the society's Safeguarding Officer. They will liaise with the relevant authorities and record all subsequent action taken.

9. Handling Allegations

- 9.1. If an allegation is against a leader, it must be reported as a matter of urgency to the Safeguarding Officer who will refer it to Children's Services, Social Care – via the Safeguarding Hub for Cumberland Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).
- 9.2. If the allegation is against the Safeguarding Officer then the information should be reported to another member of the Executive Committee or directly to Children's Services, Social Care.
- 9.3. The alleged perpetrator should not be made aware of the allegation at this point.

10. Record Keeping

- 10.1. **In all situations**, the details of allegation or reported incident must be recorded. Make accurate notes of time, dates, incident or disclosure, people involved, what was said and done and by whom, action taken to investigate, further action taken e.g. suspension of individual and, if relevant, reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, name of person reporting and to whom it was reported.
- 10.2. Records must be signed, dated, stored securely and shared only with those who need to know.

11. GADS Safeguarding Officer and contacts

- 11.1. The name and contact details for the Safeguarding Officer can be found on the GADS website (www.gads.org.uk) or with the current list of Committee members.
- 11.2. If the Safeguarding Officer is unavailable, one of the Chaperones can be contacted instead. Alternatively, advice can be sought from the Cumberland LSCB Safeguarding Hub or the NSPCC.
- 11.3. If there is a serious concern that a child is at immediate risk of harm, this should be reported to the Emergency Duty Team, Children's Services; or the Police.

GADS Safeguarding Officers	benita.bf@gmail.com karen.polmear@gmail.com
Emergency Duty Team	0333 240 1727
Police	999