

Calderdale Theatre School

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

1. Introduction

Calderdale Theatre School (CTS) provides skills-based drama workshops and performance opportunities for young people aged 11 to 19.

CTS is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young children who take part in our activities by taking all reasonable steps to protect them from neglect, physical, sexual or emotional harm. Safeguarding children and young people is at the centre of CTS's activities and beliefs and is the responsibility of everyone.

2. Policy Statement

In implementing this child protection policy CTS will:

- Ensure that all staff, volunteers and trustees understand their child protection and safeguarding responsibilities.
- Ensure that appropriate training, advice and guidance are in place and that all staff and volunteers working with young people undertake safeguarding training. This will be completed as part of the induction, with a commitment to staff/volunteers undertaking refresher training as appropriate. We recognise that recommended good practice is for refresher training to take place every 3 years.
- Maintain a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Follow safer recruitment and vetting of staff procedures, including volunteers and anyone who comes into direct contact with the young people we work with.
- Work within current legislation and statutory guidance to safeguard children, including [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#), [Section 11 Children's Act 2004](#) and guidance from [Calderdale Safeguarding Children Board](#) and [Working Together online](#) and ensure that this policy is kept up to date with any local and national safeguarding developments.
- Act appropriately in response to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. This may involve sharing concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and young people appropriately.

We recognise:

- The importance of the safety of the young people who take part in our activities.
- That some young people are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.

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- That all young people have equal rights to protection, regardless of age, ability, culture, language, gender, race, religion or sexual identity. We believe that no child or young person should ever experience abuse of any kind.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers and to anyone working on behalf of our organisation, such as trustees.

3. Designated Safeguarding Lead

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Alison Field.

In the event of their absence, our Deputy Safeguarding Lead is Jennifer Birch.

They are responsible for dealing with any child protection or safeguarding concerns.

The responsibilities of the DSL are as follows:

- To ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they are concerned that a young person is subject to abuse or neglect.
- To provide advice and support to staff and volunteers who have concerns that a young person may be at risk of or is currently suffering from abuse.
- To ensure any concerns about a young person are acted on immediately and clearly recorded.
- If abuse or neglect is suspected, decide whether to make a referral to the Multi Agency Screening Team (MAST) then ensure the referral is acted upon and issues are addressed in a timely manner.
- Record any reported incidents in relation to a young person or breach of Child Protection policies and procedures. This will be stored in the safeguarding file and its contents will be kept confidential and secure.
- Refer any cases to the Local Authority Designated team about any child protection concerns which relate to a staff member or volunteer.
- Refer any persons who have their contract terminated or are dismissed due to risk or harm to a young person to the [Disclosure and Barring Service](#).
- Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.
- Contribute to the assessment of young people by working with all appropriate agencies and the local authority, including attendance at strategy discussions and multi-agency meetings.
- Ensure safeguarding policies are known, understood and used appropriately by staff and volunteers and parents where relevant, review them annually with the CTS's Board of Trustees; and ensure policies are available publicly.

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4. Definitions and Signs of Abuse

This information is taken from the NSPCC briefing on [Definitions and Signs of Child Abuse](#) (July 2020).

What is child abuse?

Child abuse happens when a person harms a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can also involve neglect. Children may be abused by:

- family members
- friends
- people working or volunteering in organisational or community settings
- people they know
- strangers

General signs of abuse

Children experiencing abuse often experience more than one type of abuse over a period of time. They may be afraid to tell anybody about the abuse. They may struggle with feelings of guilt, shame or confusion – particularly if the abuser is a parent, caregiver or other close family member or friend. Many of the signs that a child is being abused are the same regardless of the type of abuse. Anyone working with children or young people needs to be able to recognise the signs.

These include a child:

- being afraid of particular places or making excuses to avoid particular people
- knowing about or being involved in 'adult issues' which are inappropriate for their age or stage of development, for example alcohol, drugs and/or sexual behaviour
- having angry outbursts or behaving aggressively towards others
- becoming withdrawn or appearing anxious, clingy or depressed
- self-harming or having thoughts about suicide
- showing changes in eating habits or developing eating disorders
- regularly experiencing nightmares or sleep problems
- regularly wetting the bed or soiling their clothes
- running away or regularly going missing from home or care
- not receiving adequate medical attention after injuries

These signs do not necessarily mean that a child is being abused. There may well be other reasons for changes in a child's behaviour such as a bereavement or relationship problems between parents or carers.

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Types of Abuse

- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Child sexual exploitation
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Emotional abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Child trafficking
- Female genital mutilation

A detailed explanation about each of these forms of abuse and how to spot the signs is in the NSPCC briefing.

5. How concerns about a child or young person's safety can come to light

We recognise that concerns about a young person's safety can come to light in a variety of ways. We are receptive to picking up information in the following ways:

- A young person alleges abuse has taken place or they feel unsafe
- A third party or anonymous allegation is received
- A young person's appearance, behaviour, play, or statements cause suspicion of abuse and/or neglect
- A young person reports an incident(s) of alleged abuse which occurred some time ago
- A report is made regarding the serious misconduct of a worker towards a child or young person.

6. What we will do if we are concerned about a young person

CTS will treat any allegations extremely seriously. If we receive information that a young person may be at risk of, or experiencing, harm we will follow the processes below:

Stage 1

RECEIVE: Listen to the young person and accept what they are telling you. Encourage the young person to allow another person to be present. It is okay to ask questions e.g. 'I notice you don't appear to be yourself today', 'Can you tell me how you are feeling?' and you can ask them to clarify what they have said. You can ask questions such as: 'Tell me a bit more...', 'Can you explain that...' or 'Can you describe' ... (TED – Tell, Explain and Describe).

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But *never* ask leading (investigative) questions e.g. 'Was his hair brown? What was her name?' (This conversation could be deemed as the 'interview' and a child can only be 'interviewed' once with regards to a disclosure and this should be left to a professionally qualified person at Calderdale Children's Social Care).

REASSURE: Stay calm and reassure them they have done the right thing. Do not promise confidentiality. Explain you may need to share what they are telling so you can help them. Reassure them they are not to blame or in trouble for what they have told you.

REACT: Explain what you have to do next. Do not pass judgement or show shock or disquiet.

RECORD: Record what was said as soon as possible after any disclosure (it is important to record the same language/words used by the young person). Make a note of any signs or injuries and any behaviour. Where possible draw a picture to indicate location of injuries. The person who receives the allegation or has a concern should complete the organisation pro-forma (see Appendix 3 for the template and *ensure it is signed and dated on each page*). Respect confidentiality and file documents securely.

SUPPORT: Offer support to the young person throughout any process that may happen to them. Make sure the young person will be safe. Get support for yourself through your DSL.

Notify the nominated Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or their Deputy (DDSL) of the disclosure immediately or contact Initial Contact Point and/or the police if no-one from your organisation is available and you believe the young person to be in immediate danger.

Parental Consultation

Professionals should seek, in general, to discuss concerns with the family and, where possible seek the family's agreement to making a referral unless this may either delay the referral or place the young person at increased likelihood of suffering significant harm.

(See also 8. Recording and Managing Confidential Information and 9. Information Sharing below.)

A decision by any professional not to seek parental permission before making a referral to Children's Social Care Services must be approved by the DSL, recorded and the reasons given. Where a parent has agreed to a referral, this must be recorded and confirmed on the relevant Referral Form.

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Where the parent is consulted and refuses to give permission for the referral, further advice and approval should be sought from the DSL, unless to do so would cause undue delay. The outcome of the consultation and any further advice should be fully recorded.

If, having taken full account of the parent's wishes, it is still considered that there is a need for a referral:

- The reason for proceeding without parental agreement must be recorded.
- The Children's Social Care Services team should be told that the parent has withheld her/his permission.
- The parent should be contacted by the referring professional to inform her/him that after considering their wishes, a referral has been made.

Stage 2

The DSL or worker will take immediate action if there is a suspicion a child has been abused or likely to be abused and will contact:

- **MAST** (Multi-Agency Screening Team): **01422 393336**
(Out of hours call the Emergency Duty Team (EDT: **01422 288000**
Or complete an <https://safeguarding.calderdale.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Early-Intervention-and-Safeguarding-Statutory-Referral-form-min.pdf>
- If they believe a child is at immediate risk of harm by a member of the public or family member they should contact the Police – **999**
- Advice can also be sought through:
NSPCC National Child Protection Helpline on: **0808 800 5000** (Mon-Fri 12pm to 4pm) or 24 hours a day by email at help@nspcc.org.uk
The NSPCC Child Protection Helpline is a free service that provides counselling, information and advice to anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse.
The NSPCC is unique amongst charities as it also has statutory powers to intervene on behalf of children, along with local authorities. Professionals can also therefore make referrals to the NSPCC if they become aware of safeguarding concerns. They should however contact their local authority in the first instance.

7. Managing Allegations against a member of Staff or Volunteer

CTS will ensure any allegations made against members or a member of staff will be dealt with swiftly and in accordance with the following procedures:

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- The person to whom an allegation or concern is first reported will ensure the young person is safe and away from the person against whom the allegation is made.
- The person to whom an allegation or concern is first reported should treat the matter seriously and keep an open mind. They should not:
 - investigate or ask leading questions if seeking clarification
 - make assumptions or offer alternative explanations
 - promise confidentiality, but give assurance that the information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis
- The CTS DSL should be informed immediately. In the case of an allegation involving the named person, alternative arrangements should be sought to ensure the matter is dealt with by an independent person or referred to the named deputy.
- The DSL should contact the Local Authority Designated Team, who will advise on how to proceed.
- Subject to restrictions on the information that can be shared, the DSL should, as soon as possible, inform the person accused about the nature of the allegation; how enquiries will be conducted and the possible outcome (e.g. disciplinary action, and termination of contract/dismissal or referral to the DBS and/or regulatory body where required).
- CTS has a legal duty under [the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act \(SVGA\) 2006 \(England and Wales\)](#) to make a referral to the DBS in cases when an employer has dismissed or removed a person from working with children or vulnerable adults (or would or may have done so if the person had not left or resigned) because of concerns over their behaviour towards children. For more information on this see [DBS Guidance](#).
- The individual who first received/witnessed the concern should make a full written record of what was seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible after observing the incident/receiving the report. It is important the report is an accurate description and is signed and dated.
- The DSL if appropriate, can support the worker during this process, but must not complete the report on their behalf. This report must be made available on request from either the police and/or Children's Social Care.
- Regardless of whether a police and/or Children's Social Care investigation follows, CTS will ensure an internal investigation takes place and consideration is given to the operation of disciplinary procedures. This may involve an immediate suspension and/or ultimate termination of contract or dismissal.
- Duty of Care to a young person: The worker or DSL should follow up what happens to any referral made by the organisation if they do not hear back from Children's Social Care or the police.
- We will refer to the following guidelines to report to the Charity Commission: [How to report a serious incident in your charity](#)

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8. Recording and managing confidential information

CTS has a commitment to manage all confidential information safely, following our Data Protection policy. When recording information, we will:

- Ensure that we note exactly what was said as soon as possible after any disclosure or allegation. It is important to record the actual words used by the young person.
- Make a note of any signs or injuries and any behaviour. Where possible we will draw a picture to indicate location of injuries.
- Ensure that the person who receives the allegation or has a concern completes the organisation pro-forma for recording concerns/allegations of abuse, harm and neglect (see Appendix for the template) and ensure it is signed and dated on each page.
- Respect confidentiality and file documents securely. To do this we will refer to the Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) and The Data Protection (Fundamental Rights and Freedoms) (Amendment) Regulations 2023.

9. Information sharing

We recognise that young people have a right to confidentiality, unless the organisation considers they could be at risk of abuse and/or harm. In order to keep young people who come into contact with our service safe from harm, we may need to share information with other professionals, in particular, where the following comes to light:

- a young person's health and development are being adversely affected, or they are being exposed to possible harm
- a parent who may need help, or may not be able to care for a young person adequately and safely
- adults and other children who may pose a risk of harm to a young person.

As a general principle, information will only be shared with the consent of the parent and subject of the information, about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.

Under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR information may be shared without consent if there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk ([Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#) paras 31-34).

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Information shared will be necessary for the purpose for which it is being shared, will be shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up to date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.

A record will be kept of any decisions to share information and the reasons for it - whether it is to share information or not. If information is shared the record will state what has been shared, with whom and for what purpose.

10. Safer Recruitment

We recognise that there are people who work, or seek to work with children and young people who may pose a risk, and who seek to harm. We have a clear process for recruiting staff, trustees and volunteers to help reduce this risk.

- We conduct face-to-face interviews with all prospective freelancers, trustees and volunteers.
- We check the candidate's identity by asking them to bring photographic ID, and check the candidate actually holds any relevant qualifications they say they have.
- Unless they subscribe to the DBS update service, and this reveals that their record is clear and their disclosure is at the relevant level and up to date, all applicants will be asked to undertake an enhanced DBS check if their role is eligible for such a check. If they are undertaking regulated activity, this check will include a check against the list of those barred from working with children and young people. The number of their DBS check and the date it was obtained will be recorded in a securely held register. The DSL will sign the register to confirm they have seen the check and the information is correct.
- If a new DBS check is necessary, applicants will be asked to subscribe to the DBS update service.
- Applicants will be asked to familiarise themselves with CTS's Child Protection policies and related procedures. They will be given a copy of the Child Protection Code of Good Practice and required to abide by it.

11. Responsibilities of the trustees

CTS trustees understand that they are ultimately accountable for all that happens within this organisation and this includes the implementation of effective safeguarding procedures. We therefore recognise and uphold the following commitments to:

- Provide written guidance to all staff, volunteers and trustees.
- Ensure everyone understands their legal duties and responsibilities.
- Develop a clear framework for behaviour management towards young people.
- Provide information about procedures to follow if an allegation is made.

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- Ensure all workers have training to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse.
- Ensure that all staff have enhanced DBS checks where appropriate.
- Have correct policies in place covering CTS activities.
- Understand what is good safeguarding practice and take responsibility for ensuring all staff within this organisation follow this.
- Ensure all workers understand that physical punishment or threat of physical punishment must never be used.
- Ensure that workers understand that verbal humiliation of children is unacceptable.
- Ensure that we work in accordance with the Charity Commission guidance on legal duties of trustees and management committees: [Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees](#)

12. Distributing/Reviewing Policies and Procedures

We will provide and maintain a system for distributing, displaying and reviewing CTS policies and procedures. They will be posted on the CTS website and a copy will be given, or be made easily available to all staff, volunteers, trustees, parents and young people.

The policies will be reviewed annually and signed off by the Trustee Board.

We are aware that best practice guidance advises the involvement of parents/carers and young people in developing policies that affect them.

Definitions

Terms used in the policy:

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to protect children or young people who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of Calderdale Theatre School in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

Young person includes everyone under the age of 18.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

DSL refers to the nominated Designated Safeguarding Lead or their Deputy for your organisation.

Related Policies

Child Protection – Code of Practice

Student Code of Conduct

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Anti-Bullying Policy
Taking, Using and Storing Images Policy
Equality and Diversity Policy
Complaints Policy

Approved by Trustees and last updated March 2026

APPENDIX

Child Protection Internal Recording Pro Forma

CONFIDENTIAL
The following information

Full name, including any aliases.	
Gender	
Date of Birth	
Address:	
Who Has Parental Responsibility?	
Details of disclosure or concern, include date, time, full names, actual wording used)	

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Any special needs of the young person.	
Actions Required	
Consent Given by child/young person/parent: Yes / No If consent not given, please state clearly reason for overruling the need for consent.	
Follow Up	
Your Name	
Your Role	
Signature	
Date, time and place:	

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