**Youth East Surrey Performing Arts**

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**East Surrey Performing Arts**

**Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

**Updated June 2023**

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**Section 1: Introduction**

ESPA (formerly known as ESOSOC) have been giving children opportunities to perform for several decades, initially by including children in shows performed by adult casts and more recently (since 2004) by producing youth shows with casts entirely comprised of young people aged between 8 and 21 years - YESPA.

In addition to these shows, children are regularly included in Concerts, Workshops, Auditions and other events organised by the society.

ESPA is committed to making sure the young people in their care are always comfortable and enjoying themselves. The society organisers are in regular contact with Surrey County Councils ‘Child Employment’ team and are meticulous about following the most up to date regulations regarding performance licences, rehearsing hours, refreshments, rest periods and most important of all, safety.

We have a large community of licensed chaperones who volunteer to look after our children at the events we run. All chaperones licensed by Surrey and West Sussex have DBS (formerly CRB) checks carried out. Many are very regular and experienced volunteers who work with children in other areas of their lives as well as with our children. They are experienced at noticing if a child is unwell or unhappy and know how to respond.

We have written our child protection policy, general procedures and advice to members based on the ‘Guideline for developing Safeguarding Policies and Procedures for organisations that involve children in their performances’ document dated February 2021 from Surrey County Council.

We encourage further discussion on this subject if required by our members, workers, volunteers and parents and we recommend Kate Butler at Surrey County Council for an independent view on our approach to looking after children.

**Section 2: Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Statement**

ESPA and YESPA are fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and young people in their care. ESPA and YESPA recognise the responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation.

ESPA and YESPA acknowledge their duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. Paid staff and volunteers will endeavour to work together to encourage the development of an ethos which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children, young people and adults.

ESPA and YESPA recognise their duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014, the Children Act 2004 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 (in Scotland Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003), Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

*ESPA and YESPA believes that:*

• The welfare of the children is paramount

• All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.

• All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

• All members and employees of the organisation should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

*ESPA and YESPA will ensure that:*

• all children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.

• the welfare of each child will be put first.

• enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism.

• bullying will not be accepted or condoned.

• all adult members or the organisation and volunteers will provide a positive role model for dealing with other people.

• action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.

• relevant development and training is undertaken.

• a register is held of every child involved with the organisation and will retain a contact name and number for emergencies.

In addition, ESPA and YESPA will:

• keep up-to-date with health and safety legislation.

• keep informed of changed in legislation and policies for the protection of children.

***Welfare Officer***

ESPA and YESPA has a dedicated Child Protection/Welfare/Safeguarding Officer, who is in charge of ensuring that the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are adhered to. That person’s name is Carol Carden. Contact details are given further in the document.

***Implementing this policy***

In implementing this child protection policy ESPA and YESPA will:

• Communicate to all workers, members and volunteers, their legal and moral responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation.

• Communicate to all workers, members and volunteers their responsibility to work to the standards that are detailed in the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership and the need to maintain high standards of practise in protecting children.

• Ensure that all workers, members and volunteers understand their duty to report to the Child Protection Officer: any concerns that arise about a child or young person or a worker’s conduct towards a child or young person.

• Ensure that the Child Protection Officer understands their responsibility to refer any child protection concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (Police or Children’s Social Care).

• Ensure that any procedures relating to the conduct of workers/members are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner.

• Facilitate involvement of parents or carers in the work of the organisation and to make child protection policies and procedures available to them.

This policy will be regularly monitored by the Executive Committee of the organisation and will be subject to annual review.

Next Review Date: June 2024

**Section 3: Child Protection Procedures**

These guidelines have been designed to ensure the welfare and protection of any child or young person involved in workshops, shows and events organised by ESPA and YESPA.

1. All children and young people in our events are supervised but children under 16 are specifically cared for by our licensed chaperones. The ratio of chaperones to children is never less that 1:12 but is often higher if the children are younger. We do not work with children under 8 years of age.

2. Our chaperones note the times the children enter and leave an event and ensure they are returned to the care of a responsible adult.

3. For full day events, a written note, text message or email (from a guardian) is required for children over 12, but under 16, who wish to leave for lunch unsupervised (we do not allow children under 12 to leave unsupervised). The time will be recorded when any child leaves the venue for lunch and returns from lunch.

4. The children’s parents must submit a medical record for their child before each show or event. These are kept in a file on site during the event so that we are aware of any medical conditions, allergies or disabilities. The medical forms also contain the parents’ contact details and emergency numbers should they be needed. Medicine that may be required during an event, must be clearly labelled with the child’s name and dose instructions and stored appropriately until administration by the lead chaperone.

5. The lead chaperone always has a first aid kit with them on site.

6. The children are given regular breaks and are escorted to the toilets upon request at any time.

7. ESPA and YESPA provide water, squash and biscuits and asks children to bring their own packed lunch and ample water. For a full day event, we cater for any child who has forgotten their lunch or drinks.

8. We always notify parents that we are a nut free society and not to bring food containing nuts to the event, for the safety of the children.

9. Our chaperones are careful to notice if a child is not feeling included or happy at the event and to try and encourage the child to be friendly and participate in activities.

10. Chaperones are trained to make sure the children have privacy when changing and are not made self-conscious by the design of their costume. This includes any wing side changing by adult or child cast.

11. Chaperones are trained to notice if the content of the show or songs is not age appropriate and raise concerns with the production team if concerned.

12. Chaperones are trained to be aware of the latest time the children may rehearse/perform until and to make sure the children leave on time.

**Section 4: Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse**

The following section provides clear definitions of the different kinds of abuse that workers, volunteers and cast need to be aware of.

***Physical Abuse***: Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, and burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

***Emotional Abuse***: Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the Childs emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or “making fun” of what they say or how they communicate. It may include interactions that are beyond the child’s developmental capability, as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying) causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

***Sexual Abuse***: Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may include noncontact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

***Neglect***: Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. It may involve a parent or a carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, (including exclusion from home or abandonment) failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers) or the failure to ensure access to the appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsive to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

***Bullying***: Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else – such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It’s usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Bullying that happens online, using social networks and mobile phones, is often called cyber bullying. A child can feel like there’s no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night.   
  
***Child Sexual Exploitation***: Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, drugs, alcohol, accommodation or gifts as a result of them performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can also occur through the use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition; for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet or mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they’re in a loving, consensual relationship. Child sexual exploitation is a hidden crime. Young people often trust their abuser and don’t understand that they’re being abused. They may depend on their abuser or be too scared to tell anyone what’s happening. Children who work in entertainment may be sexually exploited in return for offers of TV, film or modelling/ photographic work and roles in professional stage productions.

**Section 5: Responsibilities of ESPA and YESPA**

At the outset of any production the organisation will:

• Complete a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process.

• Identify the person responsible for child protection.

• Recruit chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children including appropriate consultation with the local authority.

• Ensure that children are supervised at all times.

• Know how to get in touch with the local authority social care services, in case it needs to report a concern.

**Section 6: Named Person(s) for Child Protection and Safeguarding**

ESPA and YESPA has an appointed individual who is responsible for dealing with any child protection and safeguarding concerns. In their absence, a deputy will always be available for workers, members and cast to consult with.

Named Person for Child Protection/Safeguarding: Carol Carden : 07968177094

In their absence, the following people may be contacted and they will forward information to Carol Carden as soon as possible:

Alison Gilbert (07941 293019)

Alison Bond (07734305723)

Clare McFadden (07941 202259)

**Section 7: Stages to follow if you are concerned about a child or young person**

*1.* *Suspicion of abuse:*

• If you see or suspect any abuse of a child (as listed in Section 4) while in the care of ESPA and YESPA, please make this known to the person with responsibility for child protection.

• If you suspect that the person with responsibility for child protection and safeguarding is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the local authority designated officer (LADO).

• Make a note for your own records of what you witnessed as well as your response, in case there is any follow up.

• If a serious allegation is made against any member of ESPA or YESPA, chaperone, venue staff etc., action will be taken to ensure the individual has no further contact with the child until the investigation is concluded. In addition, the individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms etc. and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production.

*2.* *Disclosure of abuse and who to inform*

If a child confides in you that abuse has taken place:

• Remain calm and in control but act immediately.

• Listen carefully to what the child says. Allow the child to talk at their own pace and only ask questions for clarification. Don’t ask questions that suggest a particular answer.

• Don’t promise to keep it a secret. Make it clear to the child that you will only tell the people who need to know and who are able to help.

• Reassure the child that ‘they did the right thing’ in telling someone.

• Tell the child what you are going to do next.

• At the first opportunity, share the information with the child welfare officer. It is that person’s responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually Children’s Social care or the Police.

• In the absence of the designated child welfare officer or a deputy, please contact Surrey County Councils Children’s Service

• Never investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where a child makes a disclosure.

• As soon as possible, make a note of what was said, using the child’s own words. Include the date, time and any names that were mentioned and who you passed the information to. Make sure you sign and date any notes recorded.

*3.* *Recording information*

• In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, the details of an allegation or reported incident will be recorded, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a statutory child protection agency.

• An accurate note shall be made of the date and time of the incident or disclosure, the parties involved, what was said or done and by whom, any action taken to investigate the matter, any further action taken e.g., suspension of an individual, where relevant the reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, and the name of the persons reporting and to whom it was reported.

• The record will be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation.

**Section 8: Creating a Safe Organisation**

*Photographs and images of children*

There are risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on web sites and in other publications such as theatre programmes. Photographs can be used as a means of identifying children when they are accompanied with personal information, for example, "this is X who goes to such-and-such a school and who likes playing football". This information can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to start to 'groom' that child for abuse. Secondly the content of the photo can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. There is evidence of this adapted material finding its way on to child pornography sites.

• YESPA will assess the potential risks to the child when making decisions about the type of images they wish to use and the way they are used.

• YESPA will ensure that parents support the use of names of their children in with a photograph and this should be limited to avoid use of any additional information that might help locate the child. Using only images of children in suitable dress may reduce the risk of inappropriate use. Parental permission to use an image of a young person must be sought in advance.

• If parents or other members of the audience are intending to photograph or video an event, they should be made aware of the organisation’s policy. The use of cameras or mobile phones with camera or filming capability in dressing rooms and other inappropriate environments is expressly forbidden.

*E-Safety*

• Most of our children will use mobile phones and computers. They are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. However, we know that some men, women and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings.

• The organisations e-safety policy explains how we try to keep children safe by not communicating with children via their phone, but with their parents.

• Cyber-bullying by children, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying.

*Parents*

• The organisation believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and the organisation. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the organisation and to share responsibility for the care of children.

• All parents have the opportunity to view the organisation's Child Protection Policy and procedures.

• All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. The organisation has a responsibility to ensure suitable arrangements are in place to take children home.

*Unsupervised Contact*

• The organisation will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.

• If possible, there will always be two adults in the room when working with children.

• If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimise risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area or in a designated room with a door open.

• If it is predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, he or she may be required to obtain a criminal record disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

• All children will be chaperoned at all times

*Gifts made to the children*

* Chaperones will be mindful of any allergies/food intolerances, that they have been made aware of, in the group before accepting any gifts for the children
* Favouritism of any child(ren) is not appropriate
* All gifts (which are not specifically given by a parent, relative or friend) should be made to all the children rather than a specific child(ren)

*Physical Contact*

• All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.

• Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity.

• Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

*Managing sensitive information*

• The organisation has a policy and procedures for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images of children.

• Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes.

• The organisation's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.

• The organisation will ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of its members, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such as criminal record disclosures.

• All digital documents containing sensitive information are password protected.

*Rights & Confidentiality*

• If a complaint is made against a member of the organisation, he or she will be made aware of his rights under the organisation's disciplinary procedures.

• No matter how you may feel about the accusation, both the alleged abuser and the child who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998. Remember also that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released.

*Accidents*

• To avoid accidents, chaperones and children will be advised of "house rules" regarding health and safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds. Children will be advised of the clothing and footwear appropriate to the work that will be undertaken.

• If a child is injured while in the care of the organisation, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the organisation's accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for child protection.

• If a child joins the production with an obvious physical injury a record of this will be made in the accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for child protection. This record can be useful if a formal allegation is made later, and will also be a record that the child did not sustain the injury while participating in the production.

*Chaperones*

• Chaperones registered with their local authority, will be appointed by the organisation for the care of children during the production process. The chaperone is acting in loco-parentis and should exercise the care which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give to a child. The maximum number of children in the chaperone's care shall not exceed 12.

• Potential chaperones will be required to obtain a chaperone registration from their local authority and to supply this registration to the organisation once the local authority has approved them as a chaperone.

• Chaperones will be made aware of the organisation's Child Protection and safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

• Chaperones may have unsupervised access to children in their care consequently a criminal record disclosure will be sought as a requirement of the local authority, before the grant approval for the chaperone.

• Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the producer. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily the chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue.

• If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the producer and not allow the child to continue.

• Under the Dangerous Performances Act, no child of compulsory school age is permitted to do anything which may endanger life or limb. This could include working on wires or heavy lifting. Chaperones should tell the producer to stop involving children in dangerous performances, and should contact the local authority.

• During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the stage door and signing them into the building.

• Children will be kept together at all times except when using separate dressing rooms.

• Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times.

• Children are not to leave the place of performance unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents, guardians or designated adult.

• Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.

• Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms unless accompanied by a chaperone.

• Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures in the venue, and will ensure that children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger.

• Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by the organisation.

• Chaperones should examine accident books each day. If an accident has occurred, the producer is not allowed to use that child until a medically qualified opinion has been obtained (not just the word of the parent or child).

• Chaperones should have written arrangements for children after performances. If someone different is to collect the child, a telephone call, text message or email should be made to the parent to confirm the arrangements.

• Children should be signed out when leaving and a record made of the time they left.

• If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child until arrangements have been made to take the child home.

**Section 9: Disseminating and reviewing these policies and procedures**

This document will be reviewed annually and once approved, signed by the named person for child protection (Carol Carden).

Any amendments need to be clarified and shared with members and where significant changed appear, these must also be relayed to parents/carers.

**Section 10: Useful Contact Numbers**

Child employment office: 01483 517838

childemployment@surreycc.gov.uk

Surrey Children’s Single Point of Access (C-SPA): 0300 470 9100

Children’s Services emergency duty team (out of hours): 01483 517898

Signed by:

Name: Carol Carden