

SEWELL BARN THEATRE SOCIETY – POLICY PAPER 3

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Introduction

Sewell Barn Theatre Society believes that no-one should ever experience abuse of any kind, and recognises that we have particular responsibility to promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We are committed to safeguarding the well-being of those groups, and protecting them from harm.

This policy applies to: all members, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of Sewell Barn Theatre Society or taking part in the Society's activities (excluding the audience for public performances). The purpose of this policy is to provide members and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to the protection of vulnerable people.

This policy recognises vulnerable people as:

- Children up to the age of 16 or young people aged 16-18.
- Adults aged over 18 defined as vulnerable by the *Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006*; this might include adults with a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs, or reduced physical or mental capacity.

This policy aims to:

- Protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who are members of, or volunteer for, Sewell Barn Theatre Society.
- Ensure members, staff and volunteers working with children, young people and vulnerable adults understand and accept responsibility for the safeguarding of those vulnerable individuals with whom they are interacting. Details are given below under 'Safeguarding Procedures'.
- Ensure that safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults is a primary consideration when Sewell Barn Theatre Society undertakes any activity, event or project.

How Sewell Barn Theatre Society might work with vulnerable people

Membership of the society is open to those over 16 years of age. We run regular rehearsals for members and put on performances for the general public. As such our involvement with vulnerable people might include, but is not limited to:

- Members of the society who attend rehearsals and performances.
- Relatives and friends of members who attend rehearsals and performances in a volunteering capacity
- Involvement of children under 16 in productions and performances (subject to conditions subsequently detailed in Box on p. 2).

Designated Safeguarding Officer

The Sewell Barn Theatre Society's designated Safeguarding Officer has responsibility for all safeguarding issues. All queries and concerns relating to safeguarding should be referred to that individual in the first instance, with contact via safeguarding@sewellbarn.org.

Any projects, events or other activities that will involve vulnerable people must be planned with the involvement of the designated Safeguarding Officer and in line with the society's procedures.

Safeguarding Procedures

The procedures detailed below apply to the groups of those involved in the Sewell Barn Theatre Society and the groups of vulnerable people identified in the Introduction above.

When the Society organises an activity or event where it will be responsible for the safeguarding of vulnerable people (other than as audience members), it will ensure:

- Planning is carried out in line with this policy and procedures.
- The event is attended by an appropriate number of DBS checked adults – this will be a minimum of one but more when practically possible.
- Where practically possible the total number of adults in attendance (not necessarily DBS checked) compared with the total number of children will be in line with the ratio table below - as based on Ofsted recommendations.
- There is a main contact for safeguarding on the day - this will be an individual who has been DBS checked.
- The main contact has access to emergency contact details and other relevant details (e.g. information about picking-up arrangements for vulnerable people).
- That if vulnerable people of different gender will be taking part in activities adults of different gender will be in attendance too.
- A vulnerable person is not to be left alone with an adult, unless that adult is DBS checked and carrying out regulated activity.
- Two adults (one DBS checked) should be the last to leave a venue once the activity has finished and will be responsible for ensuring vulnerable people get home safely.

Adult to child ratio table:

	Child's age				
	0-2	2-3	4-8	9-12	12-18
Maximum number of children per supervising adult	3	4	6	8	10

Performances involving under 16-year olds

The legal requirements relating to public performances that involve children and young persons under school leaving age (16) were updated in 2015, replacing previous guidance and legislation. Details are given at www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-performance-and-activities-licensing-legislation, with Norfolk County Council guidance at www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/children-and-families/children-in-entertainment.

In summary, amateur groups such as Sewell Barn Theatre **do not** require a children's performance licence (providing no payment is involved) but **do** have to formally apply to their local authority for a 'Body of Persons Approval' (BOPA) licence exemption when an under 16-year old appears in more than four public performances. A link to the NCC form to request such an exemption is given within the NCC website above; such a submission must be made at least 21 days before the first public performance.

Key requirements for the BOPA exemption are that:

- The child/young person's health and education will not suffer
- Robust safeguarding and supervision arrangements are in place. In particular, during rehearsals and performances, the child/young person must be directly supervised at all

times, either by one of their parents, or a teacher from their school, or a Licensed Chaperone.

Procedures for raising safeguarding concerns and incidents of abuse

If any member, staff or volunteer in Sewell Barn Theatre Society witnesses, suspects or is informed of a witnessed or suspected case of abuse they should immediately report it to the named Safeguarding Officer. If the named person is not available, or is involved in or connected to the abuse, it should be reported to the Chair of the Management Committee chair (contact via chair@sewellbarn.org).

If an individual wishes to report an incident of abuse against themselves they should report it to the named Safeguarding Officer or an individual they trust, on the understanding that where appropriate this person may refer the matter to the Safeguarding Officer.

Procedures for dealing with concerns and incidents of abuse

If abuse is suspected or found to have taken place, all actions, including any final resolution or decision, will be taken in the best interest of the person who has suffered the abuse and the best interests of the Sewell Barn Theatre Society. The named Safeguarding Officer (or person reported to in their absence) will first make a decision based on the immediacy of the concern and the following two factors:

1. *If the vulnerable person is in immediate danger or needs emergency medical attention:* call the police and/or ambulance service.
2. *If the person at the centre of the allegation is working with vulnerable persons at the current time:* remove them, in a sensitive manner, from direct contact with vulnerable people and follow the procedures below.

If neither of the above applies the named person will:

- Make a note of the concerns reported to them.
- Speak with Management Committee members to decide how to handle the reported abuse, excluding any Committee members who were involved in the incident.
- Escalate the report by either:
 - Raising concerns with the police – for serious or possible criminal offences.
 - Requesting an assessment by the local authority social care department about whether a vulnerable person is in need of protection.
 - Carrying out an internal investigation – for less serious incidents where they feel internal mediation will be successful.
- Where cases are escalated the Committee will cooperate with the police or local authority in dealing with the reported incident.
- Where an internal investigation takes place the Committee will:
 - Inform all parties involved of the reported abuse as soon as possible.
 - Inform the family/guardians of the person reported as being abused of the incident.
 - Arrange separate meetings with both parties within 10 days of the reported incident. A joint meeting may be arranged if appropriate.
 - Both parties should be given the chance to bring a friend or representative to the meeting.
 - Meetings will be attended by the designated Safeguarding Officer and at least one other committee member.

- All parties will also be invited to submit a written statement in advance of the meeting.
- Once meetings have taken place the Management Committee will decide on next steps and communicate them to all parties in writing within five days. Next steps will be either:
 - Escalate the incident to the relevant authority.
 - Further investigation – with established procedures and timelines to work towards a resolution.
 - A decision or resolution.

Policy review

The policy will be reviewed every three years by the Policies Subcommittee and any significant amendments will be referred to the Management Committee for ratification. It will also be reviewed in response to changes in relevant legislation, good practice, or in response to an identified failing in its effectiveness.

Policy initially drafted and adopted: June 2018

Policy last reviewed: October 2023

Next review due: Autumn 2026