

Safeguarding Children Who Perform

A code of conduct for Chaperones

The chaperones first duty is to the children in his/her care. They must ensure the safeguarding and welfare of the children at all times.

While s/he is engaged as the chaperone on a production, s/he may not undertake any other activity that would interfere with his/her duties.

The chaperone is in loco parentis, except when the child is being taught by an approved teacher, and should exercise the care, which a good parent might reasonably be expected to give.

Chaperones are responsible for the welfare of the child/children in their care at all times during the period, beginning with the first and ending with the last performance to which the licence relates, except where the child is in the care of their own parent or teacher.

-  A chaperone must be aware of and understand the conditions of the performance licence of the child who is in his/her care
-  A chaperone is the key person who the child/ren look to for guidance, protection, clarification and support
-  Chaperones must make themselves aware of any medical needs/disabilities of the children in their care and be clear about any arrangements relating to medicines e.g. inhalers, care of young person with an allergy or diabetes or any assistance the young person may need.
-  A chaperone should know where the young people in his/her care are at all times.
-  A chaperone is allowed to be in charge of a maximum of 12 children at any one time. However, this may be dependent upon the ages and the needs of the children. If the chaperone considers they cannot look after the number of children in their care safely, you must advise the person in charge of the production to change the arrangement.
-  A chaperone must not permit young people under statutory school age (last Friday in June in the school year in which they are 16) to leave the performance/rehearsal venue unescorted, unless in the company of their parents.
-  Always be aware of the fire/safety/major incident arrangements of the venue
-  A chaperone should be aware of the first aid procedures at the venue
-  A chaperone should ensure that any/all accidents/incidents are reported and recorded.
-  A chaperone must ensure that the children are comfortable.
-  Ensure that the children have sufficient access to food and drink and be aware of any allergies the child has, have the appropriate meal times and rest/comfort breaks.
-  Ensure all the young people have adequate and appropriate supervision during changing and toilet arrangements (where possible children should be allocated separate toilets from the adults).
-  A chaperone should keep a register of all the young people in his/her care at all times and keep the daily record sheets up to date. Head counts alone are not acceptable.
-  Chaperones must stand up for the child above production pressures.

- ☞ Chaperones must keep a confidential list of all important contacts e.g. the child's licencing authority, the local authority in whose area the child is performing, the child's parent/legal guardian, contact details, any medical details etc.
- ☞ Chaperones should be familiar with the productions social media policies
- ☞ All chaperones must work within the agreed parameters of confidentiality e.g. sharing of personal information/details must only be disclosed on a need to know basis, to the appropriate people.
- ☞ A chaperone must safeguard the sharing of information to ensure that it is not accessed by third parties and must not release any child's details to any members of the public/press/media.

Behaviour of chaperones

A chaperone must:

- ☞ Be the child's champion
- ☞ Conduct yourself in an appropriate manner on set. You should be visible so the young people can see you, but not get in the way of the crew/set.
- ☞ Be alert to potential hazards and ensure that your focus remains on the young people at all times.
- ☞ Pay attention to the welfare of the children at all times and not be distracted in any way such as by being 'star struck', reading, using social media etc.
- ☞ Always report to the head chaperone or other identified appropriate person if any problems or queries arise.
- ☞ Report any concerns immediately. Know who to report them to and what to do in each case.
- ☞ Be aware that some children are in the care of their parent whilst on set. A chaperone should intervene if a parent agrees to something that may contravene child performance regulations or may endanger a child.
- ☞ Ensure their DBS check is renewed either annually via the update service or every three years.
- ☞ Ensure that they comply with any conditions to ensure their chaperone approval is renewed.
- ☞ Attend training within three months of being a new chaperone or before their approval is renewed.
- ☞ To carry a copy of their chaperone approval when they are on a production and show this to any inspecting officer from a local authority.
- ☞ **Notify the local authority at the earliest opportunity if there are any changes to their circumstances, including health issues, arrests, and bail conditions and or safeguarding concerns relating to them or their immediate family members.**
- ☞ **Notify the local authority if they have been dismissed from a production because of concerns about their practice.**

A chaperone must not:

- ✎ Leave the child/ren alone with another adult (unless it is another licenced chaperone, the child's parent or teacher).
- ✎ Release children to an adult they are not expecting at the end of the production unless this has been confirmed by the parent / production.
- ✎ Engage in an inappropriate relationship with a child or young person. This includes communication via social media, text messaging (unless agreed in advance with parents), websites and social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. This means that chaperones should ensure that their personal social networking sites are set to private and children/young people are not listed as approved contacts. Equally, chaperones should not accept 'friend requests' from children/young people they are looking after.
- ✎ Take photos of the child/ren
- ✎ Use mobile phones whilst looking after the children
- ✎ Give gifts or show favouritism to children.
- ✎ Drink alcohol and/or take drugs when you are working. Your capacity to perform your duties as a chaperone must not be impaired by alcohol or drugs.
- ✎ Possess, take or supply illegal drugs, including cigarettes.
- ✎ Swear or use inappropriate language.
- ✎ Enter into conversations of an inappropriate or sexual nature
- ✎ Disclose or provide your personal details or information to the child.
- ✎ Permit young people to use inappropriate language. If this does happen it is important to discuss with the parents
- ✎ Discipline the child/ren. It is not the role of the chaperone to discipline a child and they must never hit, shout or otherwise punish a child. Any behaviour issues should be discussed with a parent, person in charge and a suitable resolution found.
- ✎ Approach cast members for autographs or photos during working hours
- ✎ Let children perform if they are unwell

Physical touch

- ✎ Always check that it is ok with the child before you help them
- ✎ Touch should always be conducted in an open manner. It should never be 'secret' or in a surreptitious manner.

Response to disclosures:

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

- ✎ Remain calm and in control, but do not delay in taking action
- ✎ Listen carefully to what is being said. Allow the child to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification.
- ✎ Don't ask leading questions, use the following strategy:
 - ✎ T – Tell me
 - ✎ E – Explain that to me
 - ✎ D – Describe that to me
- ✎ Do not promise to keep it a secret or confidential, reassure the child that they did the right thing telling someone and explain what you will do next.
- ✎ Use the first opportunity you have to share the information you have with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (the person responsible for child protection). Each production company should have a nominated child protection person.

- ✎ If that person is not available, contact Children's Social Care or the Police. You can also seek advice from the child employment officer in your home borough during working hours or from the emergency out of hours safeguarding duty team.
- ✎ As soon as possible, make some notes (using the child's own words). Note the date, time, any names that were involved or mentioned and whom you gave the information to.
- ✎ Parents should not routinely be informed at this point if they are the subject of the disclosure as this may compromise the safety of the child.
- ✎ Where another registered chaperone is the alleged abuser, the matter must also be referred immediately to the safeguarding lead on the production who can make a referral to the appropriate licencing authority. The chaperone can prompt the production company to ensure this is done.
- ✎ Information/ evidence gathering is not the responsibility of the chaperone. This is a matter solely for the investigating authorities.

If you have any concerns relating to the safeguarding & welfare of the child, for example neglect, engaging in inappropriate contact with adults, child sexual exploitation, it is your responsibility to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead and to inform your local authority of any concerns.

Confirmation of Receipt and Understanding of the Chaperone Code of Conduct

As an approved chaperone with Havering Council, you are expected to read, understand and accept this Code of Conduct. Failure to adhere to this Code of Conduct could lead to your approval being suspended and, or revoked in line with the Chaperone Approval Policy.