

SAFEGUARDING & PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN [CHILD PROTECTION] POLICY

Worcester Operatic & Dramatic Society – hereafter referred to as WODS, is committed to adopting a culture amongst the members of the society that accepts and recognises the need to develop an awareness of the issues that can cause harm to children and young people.

The society recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Child [Performances] Regulations 1968, the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

WODS, and its youth section WODYS are aware of the need to be vigilant to the possible risks of harm to children and young people whilst creating a safe environment where they can enjoy rewarding and stimulating experiences related to the learning and practice of theatrical skills. This includes taking part in amateur theatrical productions.

WODS acknowledge that when referring to children and young people this will encompass all persons who have not yet reached their 18th birthday [Children Act 2004]. WODS recognise that abuse and maltreatment of children can take many forms, whether it is physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect.

WODS believes that:

- The welfare of the child or young person is paramount.
- All children and young people, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief, and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to promptly and appropriately.

WODS will endeavour to ensure that:

- All children and young people are treated equally and with respect and dignity.
- The welfare of each child and young person will always be put first.
- It holds an up-to-date register of every child and young person involved with WODS / WODYS, including a current contact name and number of parent/carer/guardian for use in case of emergencies. These contact details should always be close at hand.
- A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers the children and young people to share in the decision-making process.
- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism.
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned.
- All adult members of the society provide a positive role model for dealing with other people.
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
- It keeps up-to-date with health & safety legislation.
- It keeps informed of changes relating to legislation and policies for the safeguarding and protection of children.
- It will undertake relevant development and training.

The society has procedures and good practice guidelines, which accompany this policy, to promote the safety, protection and welfare of all children and young people associated with WODS and WODYS. This policy should be read in conjunction with WODS Equal Opportunities Policy and Health & Safety Policy.

WODS has a designated Child Protection Officer – **Eddie Jones Tel 07794 266558** - his role is to:

- Act as a source of advice to the society.
- Liaise with the relevant agencies at the time of a referral.
- Ensure that information is available to assist the relevant agency with any investigation.
- Work closely with the officers of the society during any investigation maintaining appropriate confidentiality.
- Lead on the development and implementation of this policy along with the procedures and good practice guidelines.

This policy will be regularly monitored by WODS committee and will be subject to annual review. September 2008