**FEEL Theatre Company**

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**SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR FEEL THEATRE COMPANY**

**1.POLICY STATEMENT**

**This policy is based on the following principles:**

* **The welfare of the child and young person is paramount;**
* **All children and young people, 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 will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;**
* **All members (paid/unpaid) have a responsibility to report concerns to the designated person with responsibility for child protection.**
* **FEEL believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.**

**2.FRAMEWORK**

**This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:**

* **Children Act 1989**
* **United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991**
* **Data Protection Act 1998**
* **Sexual Offences Act 2003**
* **Children Act 2004 • Protection of Freedoms Act 2012**
* **Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children**

**We recognise that:**

* **the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989**
* **all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse**
* **some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues**
* **working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people’s welfare**

**We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:**

* **valuing them, listening to and respecting them**
* **adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers**
* **providing effective management for staff members through supervision and support.**
* **recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made**
* **sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents and staff**
* **sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately**

**3.PROCEDURES**

**The purpose of the policy:**

* **To provide protection for the children and young people who receive FEEL’s services;**
* **To provide company members with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be a risk of, harm;**
* **This policy applies to all staff including senior managers and board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, students or anyone working on behalf of FEEL.**

**Suspected abuse and the child**

**What to do if you suspect that abuse may have occurred;**

* **You must report the concerns immediately to the designated person: Natalya Martin. The role of the designated person is to:**
* **Obtain information from staff, volunteers, children or parents and carers who have child protection concerns and to record this information;**
* **Assess the information quickly and carefully and ask for further information as appropriate;**
* **Check whether a common assessment has been completed; if so, add to it and contact the lead professional. Otherwise, complete a common assessment;**
* **Consult with a statutory child protection agency such as the local children’s social services department or the NSPCC to clarify any doubts or worries;**
* **If concerns persist the lead professional (or designated person if concern is of a child suffering or likely to suffer significant harm) should make a referral to a statutory child protection agency or the police without delay.**
* **The designated person has been nominated by FEEL to refer allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities. In the absence of Natalya Martin the matter should be brought to the attention of Erika Noda.**

**Suspicions will not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.**

**It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies. If for any reason you believe that the nominated persons have not responded appropriately to your concerns, then it is up to you to contact the child protection agencies directly.**

**Allegations of physical injury or neglect**

**If a child has a symptom of physical injury or neglect the designated person(s) will:**

1. **Contact Social Services for advice in cases of deliberate injury or concerns about the safety of the child. The parents should not be informed by the organisation in these circumstances.**
2. **Where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. The designated person will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.**
3. **In other circumstances speak with the parent/carer/guardian and suggest that medical help/attention is sought for the child. The doctor will then initiate further action if necessary.**
4. **If appropriate the parent/carer will be encouraged to seek help from Social Services. If the parent/carer/guardian fails to act the designated person should, in case of real concern, contact social services for advice.**
5. **Where the designated person is unsure whether to refer a case to Social Services then advice from the Local Area Children’s Safeguarding Board or NSPCC will be sought.**

**Allegations of sexual abuse**

**In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse the designated person(s) will:**

**1. Contact the Social Service duty social worker for children and families directly. The designated person will not speak to the parent (or anyone else).**

**2. If the designated person is unsure whether or not to follow the above guidance, then advice from the Local Area Children’s Safeguarding Board or NSPCC will be sought.**

**3. Under no circumstances should the designated person attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation or suspicions of sexual abuse. The role of the designated person is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to Social Services whose task it is to investigate the matter under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.**

**4. Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse should normally be reported to the designated person, their absence should not delay referral to Social Services.**

**What to do after a child has talked to you about abuse**

**1. Make notes as soon as possible (ideally within 1 hour of being told). You should write down exactly what the child has said, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately before being told (i.e. the activity being delivered). You should record the dates, times and when you made the record. All hand written notes should be kept securely. You should use the form ‘Confidential Abuse & Major Incident Record Sheet.’ This form is Appendix Six and is attached at the back of this policy.**

**2. You should report your discussion to the designated person as soon as possible. If this person is implicated you need to report to the second designated person. If both are implicated report to Social Services.**

**3. You should under no circumstances discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those nominated above.**

**4. After a child has disclosed abuse the designated persons should carefully consider whether or not it is safe for a child to return home to potentially abusive situation. On these rare occasions it may be necessary to take immediate action to contact Social Services to discuss putting safety measures into effect. If a child is at immediate risk of harm, or if you believe a crime has been committed, contact the police on 999 or 101.**

**Staff members – allegations & concerns Allegations against a member of staff**

**We will assure all staff/volunteers that we will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child. Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:**

**-A criminal investigation,**

**-A child protection investigation,**

**-A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.**

**The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.**

**Procedure for reporting concerns or allegations**

**Any concerns should, in the first instance, be reported to the designated person for child protection, a FEEL Facilitator.**

**If the allegation has been handled inadequately and concerns remain or if the allegation is about the poor practice of the designated person, it should be reported to Natalya Martin. They will then decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not the organisation should initiate disciplinary proceedings.**

**Action if there are concerns**

**1. Concerns about poor practice: If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; this will be dealt with as a misconduct issue.**

**2. Concerns about suspected abuse: Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the designated person, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.**

**The designated person will refer the allegation to the social services department, who may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.**

**The designated person will refer to the DBS (formally ISA) information about employees who (may) have harmed children while working with FEEL Theatre Company as stated in The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.**

**The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.**

**If the designated person is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Agency Liaison or Head of Community Theatre who will refer the allegation to Social Services.**

**3. Internal Enquiries and Suspension**

**The designated person will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries. Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries, the organisation will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the organisation must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that, on a balance of probability it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.**

**Preventative measures and good practice for FEEL’s workshops and activities**

**We will aim to protect children from abuse, and our team members from false allegations, by adopting the following guidelines:**

**We will keep records of all company members (both paid staff members and volunteers).**

**We will keep records of all children attending our activities. Registers will include workshop details (session days, times and venue) and the names of the regular staff members who run the session.**

**We will keep a record of attendance of all sessions as well as termly monitoring and evaluation records.**

**Our staff will record any unusual events on the accident/incident form.**

**Written consent from a parent or guardian will be obtained for every child attending our activities.**

**Where possible our staff should not be alone with a child, although we recognise that there may be times when this may be necessary or helpful.**

**If a participant requires assistance with toileting, staff should escort children of the same sex to the toilet but are not expected to be involved with toileting, unless the child has a special need that has been brought to our attention by the parent/guardian.**

**We recognise that physical touch between adults and children is occasionally acceptable and appropriate for some activities within session times in public places. However our staff will be discouraged from this in circumstances where an adult or child is left alone. FEEL’s Guidance Notes for Safe Touch are outlined in Appendix Five at the back of this policy**

**All staff should treat all children with dignity and respect in attitude, language and actions.**

**Third Party Access**

**If we receive unsolicited calls from agencies and film companies looking to be linked up with young people with performance or youth theatre background, they must be able to respond to a positive to the following questions or the conversation should go no further:**

**1. Does all the staff in your organisation who directly works with young people hold an advanced DBS certificate?**

**2. Who is the organisation’s lead DBS signatory; can we have access to dialogue with that individual?**

**3. Will there be chaperones with the young people?**

**Ideally someone from the organisation should be known to at least one member of FEEL staff or a partnership organisation.**

**We will not divulge any contact details (see Data Protection Policy); we would, however, allow someone access to talk to our young people overseen by our tutors or staff members once parental/carer consent has been obtained.**

**The organisation should be encouraged to provide their contact details and a permission request letter/form for our young people to take home and discuss with parents/guardians before handing over their own contact details.**

**4. PROFESSIONAL CONFIDENTIALITY**

**Every effort will be made by FEEL to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information will be handled and disseminated on a “need to know basis” only. This includes the following people:**

**FEEL Theatre Company Principal.**

* **The parents/carer of the person who is alleged to have been abused.**
* **The person making the allegation.**
* **Social Services/Police.**
* **The alleged abuser.**

**\* Social Service advice to be sought on whom should approach the abuser.**

**All information is to stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with the data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).**

**5. RECORDS AND MONITORING**

* **Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. FEEL is clear about the need to record any concern about a child or children within the group, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies.**
* **Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse, or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, must make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen (if appropriate using a body map to record), putting the event in context, and giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken. This should be presented to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) who will then decide on appropriate action.**
* **These file notes are kept in a confidential file in chronological order (which is separate to pupil files) and stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Communication & Interaction Centre office). All child protection records are stored securely and confidentially.**

**6. SUPPORTING PUPILS AT RISK**

* **FEEL is committed to ensuring that our participants receive the right help at the right time.**
* **FEEL may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of children at risk of, or who have suffered, harm. Nevertheless, whilst with FEEL, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, or they may be withdrawn, or display abusive behaviours towards other children.**
* **FEEL will endeavour to support pupils through:**
* **The workshops; to encourage our pupils to stay safe and to develop healthy relationships, self-esteem and self-motivation.**
* **FEEL promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all participants and adults a sense of being respected and valued.**
* **Recognition that children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. Therefore, staff who work in any capacity with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behavioural problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.**
* **Recognition that in a home environment where there is domestic violence,**

**Action If Bullying Is Suspected:**

* **The same procedure is to be followed as set out in the section relating to responding to suspicions or allegations, if bullying is suspected.**

**Action to Help the Victim and Prevent Bullying:**

* **Take all signs of bullying seriously.**
* **Investigate all allegations and take appropriate action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.**
* **Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help him/her although you cannot promise to tell no one else.**
* **Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom and when). All records to be signed and dated by company member who recorded them.**
* **Report any concerns to a member of FEEL Theatre Company**
* **Action Towards Bully(ies):**
* **Speak to the school Principal immediately for advice & guidance**
* **Inform the school Principal of the situation and action(s) taken.**
* **Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of his/her behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).**
* **FEEL Theatre may inform the bully(ies) parents**
* **Impose sanctions as necessary.**
* **Encourage and support the bully (ies) to change behaviour.**
* **Keep a written record of all action(s) taken.**

**7. SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES**

* **FEEL recognises that there are a number of specific safeguarding issues about which staff need to be aware, including child sexual exploitation (CSE), bullying (including cyberbullying), domestic violence, drugs, safety (including sexting), fabricated/induced illness, faith abuse, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, gangs and youth violence, gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG), mental health, private fostering, radicalisation, teenage relationship abuse, trafficking.**
* **Whilst FEEL will ensure that staff avail themselves of opportunities to raise their awareness and gain knowledge regarding these areas, we recognise that expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support in relation to these issues. Government guidance is available on the GOV.UK website and organisations such as the NSPCC (www.nspcc.org.uk) provide specialist information.**
* **Child sexual exploitation (CSE) involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly ‘consensual’ relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming. However, it also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.**
* **FEEL is committed to raising awareness of CSE.**
* **FEEL are alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), or already having suffered FGM. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a collective term for illegal procedures, which include the removal of part or all external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for nonmedical reasons. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Staff should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found in the SET procedures and in chapter 3 (pages 16-17) of the FGM Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation (HMG 2015) that can be found on the GOV.UK website.**
* **There is a legal obligation for any suspicion of intended, or actual, FGM to be referred to Children’s Services and/or the Police.**

**8.WHISTLEBLOWING**

* **All staff must be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues in line with the school’s Code of Conduct / Whistleblowing policy.**
* **Any staff member can press for re-consideration of a case if they feel a child’s situation does not appear to be improving. They must refer their concerns to Children’s Services directly, if they continue to have concerns for the safety of a child.**

**9.TRAVEL TO OTHER THEATRE OR PERFORMANCE SPACES**

**Travel to and from other Theatre or performance spaces must be arranged with the school, using a mode of transport the school have agreed.**

**For travel learners must have the correct ratio of support. In this instance, carers or other members of staff will be required to travel with the students.**

* **The driver like all coaches / volunteers who have access to participants supporting FEEL should have agreed to a vetting check (CRB, Access NI or Disclosure Scotland) being carried out on them.**
* **Parents should be informed of the person who will be transporting their child, the reasons why and how long the journey will take.**
* **A person other than the planned driver should talk to the child about transport arrangements to check they are comfortable about the plans**
* **The driver must ensure that they have insurance to carry others, particularly if they are in a paid position or claiming expenses.**

**10. PHOTOGRAPHY & IMAGES**

**Permission is requested from the school, participants, parents and carers prior to any images or video footage being captured.**

**Photography policy breakdown:**

* **Avoid using children’s names (first name or surname) in photograph captions. If the child is named, avoid using his or her photograph. If the photograph is used, avoid naming the child.**
* **Use a parental permission form to obtain consent for a child to be photographed/videoed.**
* **Obtain child’s permission to use their image.**
* **Only use images of children in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. Some activities – swimming, drama, gymnastics and athletics for example – present a much greater risk of potential misuse.**
* **Address the use of images of children on the organisation’s website. Images accompanied by personal information, eg, this is X who likes to collect stamps – could be used by an individual to learn more about a child prior to grooming them for abuse.**
* **Written expectations of professional photographers or the press who are invited to an event, making clear the organisation’s expectations of them in relation to child protection.**
* **Do not allow photographers unsupervised access to children.**

**11. PHOTOGRAPHY CONSENT FORM (for parents/carers and participants)**

**FEEL recognises the need to ensure the welfare and safety of all children.**

**In accordance with our child protection policy we will not permit photographs, video or other images of children and young people to be taken without the consent of the parents/carers and children.**

**FEEL will take all steps to ensure these images are used solely for the purposes they are intended. If you become aware that these images are being used inappropriately you should inform FEEL Theatre immediately.**

I give consent for photographs and/or videos to be taken of my child, that will be used for, but not exclusive to, FEEL Theatre’s website, social media platforms and publicity for future performances and work. Once we no longer need images for these purposes we will delete them. You can ask to see a copy of images we hold of your child(ren), or ask for them to be deleted, at any time by emailing us on [feeltheatre@gmail.com](mailto:feeltheatre@gmail.com)

Please sign below to give consent for us to photograph and/or video your child and use the images as described above.

Name of child:

Name of parent / guardian:

Signature:

Date:

**12. MINOR INCIDENT REPORT SHEET**

**This form should be used for less serious incidents, such as pastoral issues or incidents where the child is not immediately in danger or distress.**

**Date of Report: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Incident Reported By: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Incident Reported To: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Venue of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Details:**

**Next Step:**

**Signed (by Child Protection Officer or Agency Liaison):**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**FEEL Theatre Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy**

**13. STAFF DECLARATION SHEET**

**This form is to be signed by all staff, volunteers and work experience students (of all ages) to confirm that they have read and understood FEEL Theatre’s Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.**

**Staff Declaration**

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**I have read and understood FEEL Theatre’s Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy along with the attached appendices. I agree to adhere to and be guided by its terms and to re-read the policy to keep myself aware of best practice.**

**I know no reason why I should be considered unsuitable to work with children.**

**I have declared all convictions, or have no convictions or pending convictions against me. \***

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Please give this form to the Artistic Director(s); it will be kept in your file.**