

North West Drama

Safeguarding Policy & Procedure

Last updated: 9th March 2024

by Matt Wardle (Creative Producer) North West Drama Services Ltd

This policy to all staff, volunteers, board members and anyone working on behalf of North West Drama Services Ltd.

The purpose of this policy is:

- *to protect the children/ young people who work with North West Drama Services;*
- *to provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principals that guide our approach to safeguarding.*

North West Drama Services Ltd 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 we work with, and to help keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

North West Drama recognises that the safety and welfare of the children with whom we work is the responsibility of everyone. It is every child's legal right to feel safe and secure, and we all have a responsibility to ensure that this basic principle is upheld; this applies equally when we work with children and young people in their own school and when we work with them in partner theatres or other settings.

This policy provides a framework of good practice for all staff, volunteers, board members and anyone working on behalf of North West Drama Services Ltd.

We should be guided at all times by the essential principle in the 1989 Children Act: **"The welfare of the child is paramount"** reinforced in the 2004 Children Act.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Designated Safeguarding lead is Matt Wardle, Creative Producer. His responsibilities are:

- *to ensure sufficient resources (time and money) are allocated to ensure that the policy can be effectively implemented*
- *to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults*
- *to ensure staff (paid and unpaid) have access to appropriate training/information*
- *to receive staff concerns about safeguarding and respond to all seriously, swiftly and appropriately through liaison with school staff at an appropriate level*
- *Keep up to date with local and national arrangements for safeguarding and DBS checking*
- *Hold licenced Chaperone status and attend relevant training to ensure this is maintained*
- *Take forward concerns about responses*

Legal Framework

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

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- General data Protection Regulation 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding of 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 and 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, school staff, parents and carers is essential to promoting young people's welfare.

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

- valuing them, listening to them and respecting them as individuals
- adhering to the safeguarding good practice listed below
- ensuring our website is safe to use, and sharing information on e-safety with school staff as required

- providing effective supervision for staff and volunteers and a 'Responsible Person' procedure to ensure all issues are promptly reported
- Ensuring our staff have the relevant DBS clearance which is kept up to date, including regular update service checks where appropriate
- Sharing information about safeguarding with all volunteers and staff
- Sharing concerns with those who need to know; in particular, the nominated staff members for safeguarding in schools with which we work
- Ensuring we have received the expressed consent of parents/ carers for the use of personal data and audio/visual media of the children and young people with whom we work, for the fulfilment of our work and only storing or using this if consent has been granted
- Ensuring that digital communication with children and young people is carried out safely and appropriately, only where necessary

North West Drama staff, freelancers and volunteers will:

- Always ensure another member of staff is present to listen and/or observe, when in a difficult or sensitive situation arises involving a child
- Avoid being alone with a child – a meeting with a child or young person should take place as openly as possible – always remain in public view
- Provide appropriate support to a child who is obviously distressed, but this will always remain in public view
- Never initiate physical contact with a child, unless it is appropriate and part of, for example, a drama game or exercise (eg. 'high five' or taking the hands of the person next to you in a circle game)
- Never make assumptions or generalisations about a child based on their ethnicity, background or another protected characteristic (disability, gender identity, sexual orientation or religion). For more on this please see [Safeguarding children who come from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities \(NSPCC, April 2022\)](#)
- Do not make contact with children for non-NWDS related business
- Never do things of a personal nature for a child that the child could do for themselves
- Never accompany a child into a toilet, or assist a child in using the toilet or in adjusting their clothing
- Always seek the guidance of a member of school staff if a situation arises in which you are unsure of the best course of action. Trust your instincts.

Safe Recruitment

North West Drama Services Ltd ensures safe recruitment through requiring all staff and volunteers to have a current DBS certificate, or to use the DBS Update Service through which their DBS Certificate can be validated.

North West Drama Services Ltd requires all staff and volunteers to give permission for us to undertake regular DBS checks. Where staff or volunteers work on our behalf in schools regularly, these are done in September, January and April each year. Where staff or volunteers work on our behalf in schools on a one off or short-term basis, this is carried out before the work takes place.

Expectations of our staff and volunteers

Professional boundaries are what define the limits of a relationship between a support worker and a client. They are a set of standards we agree to uphold that allows this necessary and often close relationship to exist while ensuring the correct detachment is kept in place.

North West Drama Services Ltd expects staff to protect the professional integrity of themselves and the organisation. The organisation expects its staff to conduct themselves within the code of conduct of the schools, theatres or other venues which they are visiting.

Occasionally North West Drama Services will offer volunteer placements through work with our partner theatres. In these instances North west Drama Services will ensure relevant DBS clearance is obtained for anyone coming into contact with our school groups. They will at no time have responsibility for the supervision of school groups.

It is essential that qualified school staff members are present at all times when staff from North West Drama Services are working in schools. Any issues of inappropriate behaviour or language must be dealt with by the school staff member.

Working with School Groups in Third Party Venues

When schools visit theatres or other performance venues to work with our team, whilst our manage the event, safeguarding remains the responsibility of the teacher in charge of each class and their accompanying adults. This will ALWAYS be communicated clearly to teachers in advance of any visits/ performance events. Theatre and performance venues are often open to the public, and whilst classes are allocated their own space to eat and hold their classes during an event, we remind teachers to remain vigilant when the children are using toilets which are also open to the public.

During live theatre events, we DO NOT allow audience to film or photograph the performance. Professional photographs are made available to schools who will distribute them to parents/ carers in line with their own safeguarding policy.

Child Performance Licensing

In line with statutory requirements and local authority best practice, North West Drama Services Ltd will obtain an appropriate licence (individual or a Body Of Persons Licence) for performances in our host venues.

Reporting

Staff and volunteers representing North West Drama Services Ltd must always refer any incidents, issues or disclosures (including those of bullying or harassment) to an appropriate member of staff (or a senior member of staff if the conduct of staff members causes concern).

Staff and volunteers representing North West Drama Services Ltd may be required to complete a written statement concerning the incident they witnessed, and must always provide a truthful and full account of the issue they are reporting.

Staff and volunteers representing North West Drama Services Ltd must inform the Designated Safeguarding lead (Matt Wardle) of any issues they have reported, so that this can be followed up with the appropriate school should any further information be required.

Safeguarding During School Visits

When North West Drama staff visit schools (either on a one off basis or as a regular arrangement), they will wear their name badge so that they and the organisation they represent are clear to all staff. During their visit, the school's safeguarding policy and procedure must be followed at all times. This includes signing in and out and the wearing of a visitor badge.

In line with the guidance in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022', North West Drama now operates a 'Safe Recruitment policy' whereby the DSL for North West Drama undertakes termly DBS record checks for all staff and staff members are provided with a written statement of confirmation that the check has been recently undertaken.

Our staff will carry their most recent DBS certificate and photographic ID when attending, so that the school may carry out a spot check should their own policy require them to do so.

Where North West Drama staff have concerns about safeguarding and child welfare during a visit, they will refer the issue to the school's own DSL, or request support from North West Drama's DSL. North West Drama's DSL will then access support them to access the school's safeguarding procedure to ensure concerns are reported.

Speech Bubbles

In partnership with Peoplescape Theatre, North West Drama delivers Speech Bubbles in schools across the North West. North West Drama practitioners will make themselves familiar with their placement school's safeguarding procedure and ensure this is followed at all times. Any concerns regarding individual pupils' wellbeing will be addressed with the designated lead for safeguarding and NWD practitioners will always provide a written statement should this be appropriate. Schools will liaise directly with Matt Wardle (Creative Producer) should there be any concerns on the school's part.

Access to the 'Speech Bubbles Online Assessment System', administered by Speech Bubbles CIO, is strictly limited to the project leader and administrator to protect personal data. It is only accessed by the project leaders for Speech Bubbles CIO in anonymised form. For North West Drama, access to the online monitoring system is strictly limited to the project leader

Acceptable Use of the internet

Where physical school visits are not viable or where pupils are learning virtually, we may on occasion consider the use of appropriate virtual or digital communication. This will always be done through and in line with schools' digital Acceptable Use of the internet policy and with the full agreement of the schools involved. We will never communicate directly with pupils in other circumstances.

Photographic Consent

North West Drama Services Ltd operates a number of projects ('The Children's Shakespeare Festivals' and 'The Children's Time Travel Festival') which can involve the taking of photographs/ video footage by professional photographers/ videographers. Consent for pupils to be included in photographs is sought via their school. Where there are safeguarding concerns surrounding a child, we will seek to avoid taking photographs of them. If however, there are several children in a class/ group for whom consent is not given, it can be very difficult to avoid these children due to the nature of the style of performance. In this instance we will, if class teachers are in agreement, take photographs of the class in performance, and then give all of these images to the school. We will then delete them from our servers, so that no images of the class are stored on North West Drama's servers.

Print

North West Drama Services Ltd operated a number of projects ('The Children's Shakespeare Festivals' and 'The Children's Time Travel Festival') which involve the printing of pupils' names in a performance programme which is made available to the audience. Pupil names are only printed if expressed consent has been given by their parent/ carer. Names can be withheld from print for safeguarding purposes and where consent has not been given.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and procedure termly.

This policy was last reviewed on 1st March 2025

Written and reviewed by:

Matt Wardle, *Creative Producer & Safeguarding Lead*

Signed: M.Wardle

Date: 01.03.25