



Whitchurch Little Theatre Group

Whitchurch Little Theatre Group Safeguarding Policy

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1. Introduction

Whitchurch Little Theatre Group (WLTG) recognises its legal and moral duty to safeguard the welfare of children and adults at risk participating in its activities, whether as performers, volunteers, or audience members. This policy ensures that those who cannot protect themselves are kept safe, both physically and emotionally, during rehearsals, performances, and related activities.

This policy draws on legislation and guidance including:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Care Act 2014
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- Child Performance and Activities Regulations 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- NSPCC Guidance

2. Scope

This policy applies to all members, children, adults at risk, committee members, visitors, contractors and volunteers at WLTG.

Activities covered include:

- Rehearsals
- Performances
- Workshops
- Transport
- Online/digital communications
- Off-site activities or events linked to WLTG

3. Designated Safeguarding Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Jason Wainwright

Phone: 07980 540123

Email: Jason@securasound.co.uk

The DSL is responsible for managing concerns, reporting to statutory services, and overseeing safeguarding compliance.

4. Key Safeguarding Principles

- The welfare of the child/adult at risk is paramount
- Everyone has equal right to protection
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- Disclosures are acted upon appropriately
- Records are kept confidential and shared only when necessary

5. Definitions and Types of Abuse

Who We Safeguard

- A child is anyone under 18 years old
- An adult at risk is anyone over 18 who has care/support needs, is at risk of abuse, and cannot protect themselves

This includes people who are elderly, disabled, living with illness or mental health conditions, misuse substances, or rely on others for care.

Categories of Abuse

Physical Abuse

Hitting, pushing, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint

Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Non-consensual sexual activity, grooming, coercion, sextortion

Emotional / Psychological Abuse

Verbal abuse, threats, control, bullying, isolation

Neglect and Acts of Omission

Failure to meet physical or emotional needs, unsafe conditions

Financial or Material Abuse

Theft, fraud, misuse of money or property, coercion

Discriminatory Abuse

Abuse based on race, religion, gender, disability, sexuality

Organisational Abuse

Poor care culture or unsafe practices in group/institutional settings

Self-Neglect

Refusing care, poor hygiene, hoarding, unsafe behaviour

Domestic Abuse

Any abuse by a family member or partner; includes coercive control, forced marriage, and honour-based violence

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Forced labour, sexual exploitation, debt bondage, trafficking

Mate Crime and Cuckooing

Exploitation by someone posing as a friend; criminals taking over someone's home

Hate Crime

Abuse based on identity or perceived identity (race, disability, etc.)

6. Safeguarding Commitments

- All safeguarding roles require enhanced DBS checks
- All members must have access to this policy
- Safeguarding training and checks are reviewed every 3 years or if roles change

7. Parental Consent and Information

Parents/carers will:

- Be given full information about activities
- Provide consent for participation, photos, and transport
- Share emergency and medical details
- Be encouraged to raise support needs

8. Supervision During Activities

General Guidelines

- Children must be supervised at all times
- NSPCC ratios apply (e.g. 1 adult per 10 children aged 13–18)
- Two adults must always be present
- Children must never be left alone backstage or in dressing rooms

Chaperones

- Must be approved by the local authority and act *in loco parentis*
- Maximum of 12 children per chaperone
- Must provide ID and references unless well known
- Must know and follow this policy
- DBS checks required if unsupervised
- Responsible for children's safety, toilet trips, sign-in/out, and collection
- Must remain with children until safely collected
- Must log and report all incidents
- Can stop a child performing if unwell, tired, or unsafe

9. Physical Contact and Boundaries

- Physical contact must be minimal, appropriate, and consented
- Prefer demonstration or verbal guidance over touch
- Adults must maintain professional boundaries

10. Changing Facilities

WLTG will ensure that:

- Separate areas for adults and children are available
- Boys and girls should change separately when possible
- No adult enters alone unless absolutely necessary and in pairs
- Dignity and privacy must always be respected

11. Digital and Social Media Safety

WLTG will:

- Obtain consent for using images of children
- Avoid naming children in posts unless consented
- Not share contact info of under-18s

- Use secure platforms with adult supervision for online sessions

12. Preventing and Managing Risk

Risk Assessments

- Completed before productions involving under-18s or adults at risk
- Cover venue layout, content, dressing rooms, fatigue, etc.

Health and Wellbeing

- Include age-appropriate breaks
- Avoid long or late schedules
- Monitor for emotional distress or physical fatigue

Accidents

- Incidents recorded and signed by DSL
- Pre-existing injuries logged for transparency

13. Transport

- No transport unless pre-arranged and consented
- Children only released to authorised adults
- No lone car journeys unless consented, logged, and unavoidable

14. Disclosure or Suspicion of Abuse

If a child or adult at risk shares something concerning, your response is critical. Follow these steps to safeguard them and ensure proper reporting.

If someone discloses abuse to you:

- **Stay calm and listen carefully.**
Let them speak freely. Avoid showing shock, anger, or disbelief.
- **Don't ask leading questions.**
Let them explain in their own words. Do not push for details or suggest answers.
- **Reassure them.**
Acknowledge they've done the right thing by telling you. Use phrases like *"You've done the right thing by telling me"* or *"You're not in trouble."*
- **Never promise to keep it a secret.**
Explain that you may need to share what they've said to help keep them safe.

- **Record the disclosure as soon as possible.**
Use the person's exact words where you can. Include:
 - Time and date of the disclosure
 - Who was present
 - What was said or observed
 - Any injuries or concerns
- **Report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).**
If the DSL is unavailable or the subject of the concern, report it to the Chair.

Emergency Procedures

If the person is **in immediate danger**, or there is a **risk to life or serious injury**:

1. **Call 999** for police or ambulance.
2. Inform the DSL **as soon as it is safe to do so**.
3. If a child is not collected and you cannot reach their parent or guardian:
 - Remain with the child in a safe space.
 - Contact the DSL or Chair to assist.
 - If the situation becomes urgent or unsafe, contact **Children's Services** or the **Police** for guidance.

15. Allegations Against Members or Volunteers

If there is a concern that someone within WLTG has:

- Harmed a child or adult at risk
- Committed a criminal offence against them
- Behaved in a way that raises concerns about their suitability to work with vulnerable individuals

Then the following procedures must be followed.

Steps to Take Immediately

- **Take the allegation seriously.**
Even if it seems unlikely, all concerns must be reported and recorded.
- **Ensure immediate safety.**
If there is an immediate risk to anyone, take action to remove the person from contact and call emergency services if needed (999).

- **Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately.**
If the DSL is unavailable or the subject of the concern, report to the Chair.
- **Suspend the individual from WLTG activities where appropriate.**
This is a precaution, not a judgement of guilt, and protects all parties while the matter is investigated.
- **Report the allegation to the appropriate external body:**
 - **For concerns involving children:** Contact the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**.
 - **For adults at risk:** Contact the **Adult Safeguarding Team** via Shropshire Council.
- **Complete a safeguarding incident/reporting form.**
Use exact details and be objective.
- **Keep all records confidential and secure.**
Do not discuss the allegation with others, including the accused, unless directed by safeguarding professionals.
- The accused must be informed of the allegation **at the appropriate time**, and supported throughout any investigation.
- Allegations must be handled with discretion to avoid compromising investigations or reputations.

16. Record Keeping and Information Sharing

- All safeguarding records retained for at least 7 years
- Use the WLTG Safeguarding Incident/Reporting Form
- Share only with those who need to know

Records Must Include:

- Date and time
- Names involved
- Exact disclosure
- Actions taken
- To whom it was reported

Rights and Confidentiality

- Both victim and accused have legal rights
- Presumption of innocence applies
- Confidentiality breaches may harm investigations

17. Whistleblowing

WLTG encourages all members, volunteers, and staff to report safeguarding concerns about anyone — including colleagues, chaperones, or committee members — without fear of reprisal. All whistleblowing reports will be handled sensitively and in confidence, and the identity of the whistleblower will be protected wherever possible. If internal reporting is not appropriate or effective, concerns can be raised externally with the **Shropshire Council Safeguarding Team** or the **NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line** on **0800 028 0285**.

18. Training and Review

- All relevant personnel complete safeguarding training every 3 years
- Policy reviewed every 2 years or after an incident

19. Local Safeguarding Info

Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership (SSCP) is the local multi-agency body responsible for overseeing and coordinating safeguarding work across the county.

What SSCP Does:

- Develops safeguarding policies and procedures for children and adults at risk
- Provides guidance and training for professionals and volunteers
- Oversees serious case reviews and learning reviews
- Ensures effective communication between local services (e.g. health, education, police, social care)

If a safeguarding concern arises that may require statutory intervention (e.g. social services, police), the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** may refer to SSCP guidance to decide next steps — including whether to contact:

- **Children's Services**
- **Adult Safeguarding Team**
- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**

The partnership also offers resources and training useful for WLTG volunteers, chaperones, and committee members.

Visit the Website:

For up-to-date policies, contact details, and referral pathways, visit:
www.shropshiresafeguardingcommunitypartnership.co.uk