



1 SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Introduction to Thames Festival Trust's Safeguarding Policy

Thames Festival Trust (the Trust) have been developing and delivering river and waterfront arts, heritage, environmental, and arts-based learning programmes since 1997. The Trust's education work inspires young people to value creativity and to nurture a connection with their local river environment. Sustainability themes, community cohesion and social inclusion are embedded in the Trust's work. The Trust aims to nurture creativity, sustainability and wider arts provision in schools. The work delivered by the Trust with children and young people is predominantly centred around in-school arts-based workshops. We place artists, poets and musicians in classrooms to work with young people between the ages of 8 and 14 years old. The Trust also holds an annual mass choir performance, Kids' Choir, made up of children from across London primary schools, as part of its Totally Thames festival.

The Trust is committed to safeguarding all children, young people and vulnerable adults (*hereafter referred to in this document as CYPVA*) that come into contact with our work. We believe that all CYPVA have an equal right to protection from physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect regardless of their age, race, religion, ability, gender, sexual identity, language or background, and consider their welfare to be paramount.

Definitions:

- 'Child' – a person under the age of 18.
- 'Young People' – a person in the upper age range of the definition of a child. It has no legal status but acknowledges that people aged 16 or 17 no longer consider themselves children.
- 'Vulnerable Adult' – a person who is 18 years or over who is or may be in need of support services by reason of mental health or other disability, age or illness, and is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

- 1.1 This document outlines the principles, policy and procedures which need to be followed by all staff, contractors and volunteers working with CYPVA at or on behalf of the Trust.

They aim to:

- Promote a working environment in which the rights of CYPVA are respected;
- Raise awareness of the need to protect CYPVA and reduce risks to them;
- Provide guidance on creating a safe working environment and outline appropriate reporting structures;
- Ensure that when abuse is suspected or disclosed, it is clear what action must be taken.

- 1.2 These policies and procedures are designed to promote a positive and safe environment for all CYPVA involved in activities run by the Trust. All staff, contractors, volunteers and trustees must be committed to working to the principles established in this document and must also be familiar with the procedures to be followed in the event of any concern about abuse.

- 1.3** The Trust will work with all statutory services to make appropriate referrals and co-operate with the Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board in the local authorities in which our activities are carried out.

2 Principles for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults

The Trust is committed to respecting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in all aspects of its work. Accordingly, the following principles underpin work with CYPVA and should inform all practice:

- All children deserve the opportunity to achieve their potential.
- Children have the right to play and to take part in cultural, artistic and recreational activity.
- All children are of equal worth and will be treated with equal respect regardless of age, ethnicity, race, colour, sex, sexual identity or disability.
- All activities and events will be designed to promote the fullest possible social inclusion of children regardless of age, ethnicity, race, colour, gender, sexual identity or disability.
- Children have a right to respect for their views and experience.
- Children have a right to feel safe at all times when involved with any activity run by the Trust.
- Children have a right to protection from all forms of violence or abuse.
- Children have the right to protection from any actions which are detrimental to their best interests.

The Trust believes the above principles and values are equally applicable to young people and vulnerable adults, and that the above should underpin work with them and inform all practice pertaining to them.

The Trust understands the importance of effective safeguarding arrangements for CYPVA in every local area, underpinned by two key principles:

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part;
- a person-/child-centred approach: for services to be effective, they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children and young people. (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018)

3 Creating a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults

CYPVA that take part in activities run by the Trust will always have a member of school/centre staff, a parent or other responsible adult with them. When staff members are delivering outreach projects, carers or staff from the external agency will be asked to be present.

The Trust will ensure that all partners have robust Safeguarding procedures and sign up to the Trust's Safeguarding Code of Conduct.

3.1 Employment safeguards and policies

In its recruitment and selection procedures, the Trust will take all practical measures to ensure that people unsuitable for working with CYPVA are not recruited to positions where they will have contact with CYPVA during the course of their work. In respect of all such applicants:

- They will be asked to account for gaps in employment history.
- References will be checked before new members of staff begin work.
- All new staff who work with CYP will have to undertake an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure

- Once appointed, all new staff will be inducted in the Trust's safeguarding procedures.
- Practitioners, volunteers and trustees should not have unsupervised contact with CYPVA.
- Freelance staff and contractors working with CYP will be required to have a recent (within the last three years) Enhanced DBS certificate or be part of the DBS Auto-renew service. In both cases the DBS certificate needs to show that the workforce (position they have applied for) is relevant to the work they will be carrying out for TFT.
- The Trust will ensure all staff, contractors, volunteers and trustees know the name of the Designated Safeguarding Officer and their role.
- The Trust will ensure all staff, contractors, volunteers and trustees understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and for referring any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- All new and existing members of staff, contractors, volunteers and trustees will sign up to the Trust's Safeguarding Code of Conduct. Any staff member, contractor, volunteer or trustee who is charged with a criminal offence against a CYPVA, either in a personal or professional capacity, will be immediately suspended pending the outcome of the criminal proceedings.

3.2 Unaccompanied children, young people and vulnerable adults

CYPVA taking part in activities run by the Trust will always be accompanied by a member of school/ centre staff, a parent or other responsible adult. If staff or freelance artists are delivering projects with CYPVA outside of a school or other usual CYPVA facility, for example, Kids' Choir, there will always be 2 members of staff or adults with DBS certificates so that no staff are on their own with CYPVA. Appropriate information will be sought regarding medical needs and emergency contact details.

3.3 Prohibited behaviour within the Trust

The following types of behaviour are never acceptable when working with CYPVA as a staff member, contractor, volunteer or trustee with the Trust, and will always lead to disciplinary action:

- Hitting or striking a CYPVA;
- Verbally abusing (including shouting or swearing at) a CYPVA;
- Deliberately humiliating or undermining a CYPVA;
- Befriending or communicating with a CYPVA alone via any personal communication channels;
- Developing a social or sexual relationship with a CYPVA;
- Encouraging or knowingly being involved in a CYPVA committing a crime;
- Taking illegal substances before or during a Trust activity;
- Being intoxicated at a Trust activity involving CYPVA;
- This list is not exhaustive and any behaviour which may harm a CYPVA will be treated in the same way.

Any staff member, contractor, volunteer or trustee who suspects or is aware of a colleague behaving in any of the above ways, should immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer. If the Designated Safeguarding Officer is not available, they should inform the Designated Safeguarding Trustee; where there concerns about trustees, these should also be passed on to the Chair of the Board. If the person concerned is the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Director should be informed. In the event that the person concerned is the Director, then the Chair of the Board should be informed.

4 Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Protection Procedures

- The Trust will ensure it undertakes an annual review of its CYPVA Protection Policy and procedures.

- The Trust will ensure it has a Designated Safeguarding Officer who has received appropriate training and support for this role. This role will usually be held by the Head of Education and Engagement (currently Kate Forde); and in her absence or in addition, the Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding (currently Olga Stanojlovic).
- The Trust will ensure that any member of staff appointed and/or assigned to work on projects that take place within a school, a centre or other setting (real or virtual) for CYPVA receives appropriate training and support for their role.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer will take responsibility for making all staff, contractors, volunteers and trustees aware of the policies and procedures for working with CYPVA and keeping them safe. In the event of any action needing to be taken in respect of safeguarding, it is the Designated Safeguarding Officer who must be informed and who will take lead responsibility.

4.1 Understanding child abuse

Not only is it important to promote a positive environment for CYPVA, it is also necessary to be alert to the possibility that a CYPVA, with whom staff, contractors or volunteers (and, on occasion, trustees) are in contact, might be at risk of abuse. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will go through Appendix 1 and 2 with all core staff, plus contractors and volunteers that work directly with CYPVA. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will go through Appendix 4 with all core staff, plus contractors and volunteers, that work with CYPVA in online workshops and online projects.

4.2 Allegations of abuse against a staff member, volunteer or trustee

In the case of allegations against a staff member, contractor, volunteer or trustee, an investigation may have three related strands:

- If the allegation reaches the threshold of significant harm, the matter should be referred to Social Care who will undertake safeguarding inquiries relating to the safety and welfare of any CYPVA involved.
- Where circumstances warrant it, there may be a police investigation into a possible crime.
- If it appears that allegations may amount to misconduct or gross misconduct, the Trust's disciplinary procedures will be invoked.

Staff, volunteers, contractors or trustees about whom there are concerns will be given information to help them understand the concerns expressed and the processes being invoked, and will be informed of the outcome of any investigation and the implications for disciplinary processes. The investigation will be completed as quickly as possible, consistent with its effective conduct. In any case involving a criminal investigation, the decision as to when to inform the suspect of the allegations should always be jointly agreed between the police and other relevant agencies.

All enquiries into allegations will be overseen by the Designated Safeguarding Officer who will liaise with police, Social Care, and other interested parties and attend relevant meetings as required and keep staff, volunteers and trustees informed as appropriate.

5 Changes in Legislation

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will ensure that changes to legislation are reflected in this policy and related practices within the Trust, and will attend training where appropriate in order to implement legislation effectively.