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**SOUTH SIDE THEATRE ACADEMY**

*Experience the Stage*

# **SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

Updated: 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Please note that all staff and volunteers must read and sign this document before the start of their employment.

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## Introduction

**South Side Theatre Academy** values young people and children as being a vital part of the organisation and desires to see them grow, mature and be challenged in a healthy and safe environment.

We seek to provide a safe and caring environment for all young people and see safeguarding as an essential outworking. We are committed to protecting and promoting the welfare of those entrusted to our care and those who we encounter through our classes and projects.

We acknowledge that children and young people can be the victims of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.”

*Bethany Pease and Toby Ward-Smith* are the designated Child Protection Officers for South Side Theatre Academy. And a copy of this child protection policy will be kept within the register at all classes and is therefore easily available to parents, carers and staff upon request.

### We are committed to:

- following all legal requirements in relation to safeguarding children and adults and good practice recommendations;
- exercising proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with young people, and ensuring that workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy; and
- Supporting the safeguarding leads in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults.

### We recognise that:

- social services have lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child or adult;
- where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency; and
- safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.

## Appendix 1: Safeguarding Policy

### Purposes

The purpose of **South Side Theatre Academy** is to offer the children a safe and welcoming environment with fun activities where the children can grow and learn in theatre. Whether this be through games, rehearsals, activities or through other independent groups working in partnership with **South Side Theatre Academy**.

### Aims

- To provide a rehearsal and workshop space for children and young people to develop from childhood into adulthood through theatre.
- To enable the children to express themselves freely.
- To assist the children in integrating into the group and community.
- To help children/young people appreciate the diversity of their cultures.

### What is Child Protection?

Child protection is the response to the different ways in which a young person's or child's physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual health are damaged by the actions of another person.

### Organisation - South Side Theatre Academy

Each child and young person should be formally registered within the group. The information includes an information/consent form which their parent/guardian must complete. This can be found on the South Side Theatre Academy website ([www.southsidetheatre.com](http://www.southsidetheatre.com)) or paper files in the register. These forms have vital information about health and emergency contacts and should be kept securely and brought to each session.

### We recognise that:

- all children, of any age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of abuse and harm;
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues;
- reasonable adjustments may be required to ensure appropriate access to and engagement with organised activities for some children; and
- working in partnership with other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of children.

### Class Practices

South Side takes the following steps to ensure the protection of those in its care:

- all leaders (ages 18+) are enhanced DBS checked every 3 years;
- guest speakers or volunteers such as a teenager completing their Duke of Edinburgh will not be left alone with children at any point;
- at least one female and one male leader will be present for each class wherever possible;
- South Side will arrange safeguarding refresher training on a regular basis;
- all new leaders are made aware of this policy and given guidance on its use;
- the use of mobile phones during workshops by children is prohibited;
- Wi-Fi in the workshop spaces is typically password protected and has parental controls enabled;
- leaders will not correspond with children under the age of 16 in private messages or via social media, unless from a South Side device or social media, with South Side holding parental/guardian contact details for all members;
- leaders will not meet with children outside of organised groups or public gatherings;
- copies of the key contacts and cause for concern form are kept in the class folder for ease of reference;
- parental consent must be obtained for taking photographs and posting photographs on social media and these must not be stored on personal devices for longer than strictly necessary;
- the main venue door will be kept locked or be monitored during classes;
- wherever possible, two leaders should be in any vehicle being used to transport children. If two leaders are not available, the front passenger seat(s) must be left empty. A leader on their own must not provide transport to only one child without specific parental request and emergency requirement;
- all leaders must comply with the Code of Conduct on working with Children and Young People and are given guidance on its contents; and
- all leaders are required to sign and return a copy of the policy.
- a register should be kept for each and every session.

### **Children with learning disabilities**

South Side takes the following additional steps in its work with children with learning disabilities to ensure their protection and full participation:

- Wherever possible, additional support will be provided for those that need it;
- reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate specific needs; and

- South Side will arrange and make available to all team members the opportunity to attend disability awareness training from time to time.

### Ways that safeguarding concerns may be brought to your attention

Abuse can be discovered through a number of ways, such as:

- a person might make a direct disclosure about themselves;
- a person might make a direct disclosure about another person;
- a person might offer information that is worrying but not a direct disclosure;
- a volunteer might be concerned about a person's appearance or behaviour or about the behaviour of a parent or carer towards someone in their care;
- a parent or carer might make a disclosure about abuse that a person in their care is suffering or at risk of suffering; or
- a parent might offer information about a child that is worrying but not a direct disclosure.

### Reporting safeguarding concerns

Key points to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child or adult, for example, call 999;
- in non-emergency situations, follow the 'how to report concerns' flow chart (Appendix 3);
- complete a cause for concern form and give to the Class Lead who will then pass onto the Artistic Director;
- do not start your own investigation;
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends, or family; and
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed, your class lead and the Artistic Director can help you.
- Please note the class lead or Artistic Director may be aware of further background about the child that they have been unable to share with the class leaders.
- If you have any concerns, please report it! It's better to be safe than sorry.

### Child Protection Representatives

The **South Side Theatre Academy** has appointed a child protection representative, Bethany Pease. The in-class Child Protection Lead is Toby Ward-Smith or the relevant class leader. Their contact details can be found below. If any worker has any child safety

concerns, they should discuss them with these representatives. They will take on the following responsibilities:

- Ensuring that the policy is being put into practice;
- Being the first point of contact for child protection issues;
- Keeping a record of any concerns expressed about child protection issues;
- Bringing any child protection concerns to the notice of the Management Committee and contacting the Local Authority if appropriate;
- Ensuring that paid staff and volunteers are given appropriate supervision;
- Ensuring that everyone involved with the organisation is aware of the identity of the Child Protection Representative.

Toby Ward-Smith's Contact Details

Mobile: 07930 005 073

Email: [info@southsidetheatre.com](mailto:info@southsidetheatre.com)

Bethany Pease's Contact Details

*Only contact when Toby is not available.*

Mobile: 07492 351672

Work (Achieving for Children, Surbiton Social Services): 07711 909539 (9am-5:15pm)

Email: [bethany.pease@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:bethany.pease@achievingforchildren.org.uk)

Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Social Services Contacts

Children's Social Care

Contact our children's Single Point of Access (SPA) Team

Telephone: 020 8547 5008 (Open 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday)

Out of Hours Duty Social Worker

If you need to speak to someone urgently outside office hours, please ring the Duty Social Worker.

Telephone: 020 8770 5000

Surrey County Council Social Services Contacts

Children's Social Care

Contact our children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA) Team

Telephone: 0300 470 9100 or email [cspa@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:cspa@surreycc.gov.uk)

Out of Hours Duty Social Worker

If you need to speak to someone urgently outside office hours, please ring the Duty Social Worker.

Telephone: 01483 517898 or email [edt.ssd@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:edt.ssd@surreycc.gov.uk)

**Talking to someone who has told you that they or another person is being abused**

It takes a lot of courage for someone to disclose that they are being neglected and or abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual, their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in others, or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault.

If someone talks to you about any risks to their safety or wellbeing you will need to let them know that you must pass the information on.

### **During your conversation**

- A conversation about abuse or neglect will be difficult for everyone involved. To avoid making a situation worse, be aware of the following:
- Allow them to speak freely.
- Remain calm and do not overreact – the person may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting you.
- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I’m so sorry this has happened’, ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’.
- Do not be afraid of silences – remember how hard this must be for the person.
- Under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as whether it happens to others too, or what the person’s relatives think about all this. You may ask questions such as when did this happen.
- At an appropriate time tell the person that in order to help them you must pass the information on.
- Do not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to someone who has been abused.
- Avoid telling the person off for not disclosing earlier. Saying ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ or ‘I can’t believe what I’m hearing’ may be your way of being supportive but the person may interpret it that they have done something wrong.
- Tell the person what will happen next. The person may agree to go with you to see the Class Lead. Otherwise, let them know that someone will come to see them before the end of the day/group.
- Report verbally to the Class Lead as soon as possible.
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible on the cause for concern form and hand it to the Class Lead. We recommend writing notes whilst the student is talking to you originally.

### **What you should do**

1. Listen to the child/young person.
2. Look at them directly and do not promise to keep any secrets before you know what they are, but always let the child/young person know if, and why, you are going to tell anyone.
3. Take whatever is said to you seriously and help the child/young person to trust his/her own feelings. Take notes of exactly what is said to you avoiding assumptions and conjecture.
4. It is not the role of the leader to investigate any allegations (this would contaminate evidence if a situation went to court). Any disclosure by a child/young person must be



reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Toby Ward-Smith), otherwise named the Child Protection Officer (Bethany Pease).

### What you should *not* do

1. Workers/volunteers should not begin investigating the matter themselves.
2. Do not discuss the matter with anyone except the correct people in authority.
3. Do not form your own opinions and decide to do nothing.

### Things to say or do:

- 'What you are telling me is very important'.
- 'This is not your fault'.
- 'I am sorry that this has happened/is happening'.
- 'You were right to tell someone'.
- What you are telling me should not be happening to you and I will find out the best way to help you'.
- Make notes soon after the event. Try to write down exactly what the young person or child said. Avoid assumptions or conjecture. Then copy this onto a Cause for Concern Form' (Appendix 4)

### Things *not* to say or do:

- Do not ask leading questions – Why? How? What?
- Do not say 'Are you sure?'
- Do not show your own emotions e.g., shock/disbelief.
- Do not make false promises.

### Teaching Online

The safeguarding of all participants in online classes is vitally important to us. As a service provider we have a duty of care for all our participants.

#### For Teachers:

- All the teachers for the 'online classes' are regular South Side teachers and have enhanced DBS checks. 'Public Liability Insurance' is held to cover the classes.
- South Side promises to always have at least 2 members of the team online during a class. One of these members will be monitoring the Zoom Class, whilst the other teaches. Ensuring guidelines are strictly adhered to.
- To ensure all participants safety all children will be held in a waiting room prior to the class and then a member of the South Side team will admit each participant booked on.
- All 'online class' leaders understand and agree to our Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct.
- Zoom Classes are password protected. The link for classes will be sent out to all participants via email on the morning of the class.
- All participants will be muted, unless asking a question or performing back.
- A register will be kept of all participants each week.

- Zoom sessions will be recorded for safeguarding & advertising purposes. This will be kept secure by South Side and not distributed for any other purposes and deleted after 4 weeks.
- Participants will be able to chat with only the leaders during the class via private chat. The public chat for everyone will be open. Chats are recorded and stored for 2 weeks.

### For Students & Parents

By booking onto our 'Online Classes and Workshops' parents agree to the following:

- To agree to ensure for all classes at least 1 parent or guardian is present for the safety and wellbeing of your child(ren).
- Parents agree to not share the Zoom link with anyone else to ensure safeguarding and confidentiality procedures are followed.
- Booking forms are completed with the correct information to allow us to contact you with details of the 'online classes'.
- To give consent for photos and videos of the classes to be used for advertising purposes. These will only be shared on the South Side social media pages and the website.

### **Trips/Outings**

- When organising a trip/outing make sure a trip/outing form is completed by all attendees. This includes details about the trip and a section for parents to give their consent. These slips must be returned before the event takes place and must be brought on the trip with the completed group information/consent forms. (If a group information/consent form has not already been completed for a child or young person, then it will need to be completed).
- Ensure that there is adequate insurance for the work and activities.
- A risk assessment must be completed for all trips out, with all members of staff having read this, with full safeguarding protocols discussed on this.
- All staff are responsible for the student's safety on all trips.

### **Personal Safety**

- A group of children or young people under sixteen should not be left unattended at any time.
- Avoid being alone with an individual child or young person for a long time. If there is a need to be alone with a child or young person (e.g., first aid or he/she is distressed) make sure that another worker knows where you are and why.
- At no time should a volunteer or worker from any external organisation arrange to meet a young person away from the activity without someone else being there.
- As such meetings should be planned and have the approval of a member of the Committee (this must be someone other than the organiser themselves).

- Teenage assistants should always be supervised.

### Child Safety

- Make sure that the area you are using for activities is fit for the purpose, e.g., remove furniture, which could cause injury in energetic games.
- Make sure that all workers and assistants know;
  - Where the emergency phone is and how to operate it
  - Where the first aid kit is
  - Who is responsible for First Aid and how to record accidents or injuries in the incident book;
  - What to do in the event of a fire or other emergency
- Once a year there should be a fire practice.
- Do not let children go home without a recognised adult unless the parent has specifically said they may do so. Never let a child go with another adult unless the parent has informed you that this will happen. Students walking home alone must have permission from parents/carers. This is completed via an online form and noted on the register. If they do not have permission, they may show you a text or call their parents, but the teacher must speak to them to confirm.
- If private cars are used for an outing, the drivers must be approved by South Side, be properly insured, have rested before driving, and should have a clean license. There should always be at least one other responsible person (16 or over) in each vehicle. All vehicles should be fitted with full seatbelts, not just lap belts. Full seatbelts should always be used.

Under no circumstances should a member of staff give a young person a lift home in their car.

In the case of trips or outings, it should be made clear if workers' cars will be used and where the children or young people will be returned to.

### New Workers

The team are by far the most valuable resource **South Side Theatre Academy** has for working with young people. When recruiting and selecting paid workers and volunteers the following steps will be taken:

- Completion of an application form/cv and cover letter;
- An interview from **South Side Theatre Academy**, who will take the final decision;
- Identifying reasons for gaps in employment, and other inconsistencies in the application;
- Checking of the applicants' identity (passport, driving license, etc);
- Taking up 2 references prior to the person starting work;

- Ensuring criminal record checks have been carried out through relevant local agencies including having an enhanced DBS check;
- Taking appropriate advice before employing someone with a criminal record;
- Allowing no unaccompanied access to children until all of the above have been completed;
- A probationary period of 1 month for new paid workers and volunteers;
- On-going supervision of paid workers and volunteers;
- Ensuring good practice is followed in working with children and young people by providing appropriate training and guidance.

## Training

It is a great benefit if workers undertake regular training for this type of work. South Side should keep workers informed of relevant courses.

**The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it is meeting its aims.**

## Working 1-2-1

1-2-1 LAMDA or private tutors can become an important part of a child or young person's life. Over a period of time tutors can build up a strong, trusting relationship with children and their families and play a key role in providing support.

South Side's tutors have a responsibility to promote children's wellbeing. It's important they are able to recognise and respond appropriately to any concerns and help keep children safe.

It's also vital to make sure children and young people are safe during a 1-2-1 tutoring session. This means all tutors must have undergone the necessary checks, and steps are taken to mitigate any risks during sessions, including an enhanced DBS check.

Tutors, parents, and children need to be clear about professional boundaries and appropriate behaviour to avoid any potential misunderstandings or allegations.

We recommend all private tutors take out their own Public Indemnity insurance. South Side holds this too.

1-2-1 sessions typically should take place in South Side premises. However, if taking place at a student's/teachers home the following procedures must be in place and agreed with parents prior to the classes starting. If any of these aren't followed, the lesson must not go ahead or stop immediately.

- Classes must always take place in a downstairs room with the door open.
- A parent/guardian/responsible adult must always be in the house, within earshot of the class.
- The room should be safe, and any dangers or inappropriate items removed.
- All confidential information should be removed.
- Classes must never take place in a bedroom.
- Parents/carers must not leave the house during a class.

- A professional relationship must always be maintained following the South Side Code of Conduct.

### **Managing Allegations**

If a parent/guardian raises concerns about the way a tutor has behaved, this needs to be taken seriously and dealt with sensitively and promptly.

Parents and carers must contact the Artistic Director if they wish to make an allegation, who is responsible for dealing with it.

Any allegation or concern that an employee or volunteer has behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child must be taken seriously and dealt with sensitively and promptly, regardless of where the alleged incident took place.

Depending on the situation, an appropriate response may involve:

- the police investigating a possible criminal offence
- your local child protection services making enquiries and/or assessing whether a child is in need of support
- South Side will follow the relevant disciplinary procedures with individuals concerned, which includes immediate suspension whilst investigations are ongoing.

South Side will also make sure any children involved are given appropriate support.

South Side must not attempt to investigate the matter but gather the facts of the case and keep written records.

If an allegation is made that a staff member or volunteer has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The Artistic Director must report this immediately to the local child protection services.

Liaise with your local child protection services and the police to ensure that you are responding appropriately.

If the allegation is against someone South Side does not employ directly, the organisation they work or volunteer for should be involved in the investigation.

If someone resigns from their post or refuses to cooperate with the process, this must not prevent an allegation being followed up.

'Settlement agreements' (where a person agrees to resign, and the employer agrees not to pursue disciplinary action) must not be used in cases of alleged abuse.

South Side should make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of all parties while an allegation or concern is being investigated. Make sure everyone involved in the investigation understands this.

### Whistleblowing

Staff and volunteers should feel confident about challenging the behaviour of others and voicing concerns. They can make a report to the police or local child protection services if they feel uncomfortable reporting it within the organisation, or by contacting our Whistleblowing Advice Line:

- 0800 028 0285
- [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

### Supporting the Child

Consider how best to support the children involved, their parents or carers, and individuals who have had an allegation made against them. This includes:

- telling parents or carers and the employee or volunteer concerned about the allegation as soon as possible (as long as this does not place any children at further risk of harm)
- telling them how you are going to manage the allegation
- keeping everyone informed about the progress and outcomes of the case.

It's important to keep a clear and comprehensive summary of:

- all allegations that have been made
- details of how allegations have been followed up and investigated
- decisions made about the allegation and actions taken.

If South Side removes a member of staff or volunteer from working with children because they pose a risk of harm (or if you would have but the person has resigned or left), we have a legal duty to inform the relevant disclosure and barring agency. Failure to do this is a criminal offence.

### Learning Lessons

If an allegation is substantiated it is vital to think about lessons that can be learnt. This should include:

- considering any factors that may have contributed to or failed to prevent abuse occurring
- reviewing safeguarding and child protection measures to ensure ongoing vigilance
- making changes to organisational policies and procedures as necessary.

## Appendix 2: Definitions

### Different types of abuse

Abuse can be broadly classified into four types: physical, sexual, emotional and neglect. Abuse can affect both adults and children and the examples given below reflect generic situations, although some child specific examples are also given. The lists are not exhaustive. If you are not sure if something constitutes abuse, speak to your Deputy DSL.

**Physical Abuse** is violence causing injury or occurring regularly. It can affect an adult or a child. It happens when:

- a person is hurt or injured by being hit, shaken, squeezed, thrown, burned, scalded, bitten, or cut.
- someone tries to drown or suffocate someone else.
- someone gives poison or inappropriate drugs another or alcohol to a child.
- someone fabricates the symptoms or, or deliberately induces, illness in someone else.

In some cases, the injuries will be caused deliberately. In others they may be accidental but caused by the person being knowingly put at risk.

**Sexual Abuse** occurs when someone uses power or control to involve another person in sexual activity in order to gratify the abuser's own sexual, emotional, or financial needs or desires. It can happen to an adult or a child. It may include:

- forcing or enticing someone to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the person is aware of what is happening.
- encouraging children or adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- showing someone, especially a child, pornographic material or involving them in the production of such materials.
- involving someone, especially a child, in watching other people's sexual activity or in inappropriate discussions about sexual matters.

**Emotional Abuse** is persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment of a person that is likely to cause serious harm to their mental wellbeing or development. It can happen to an adult or a child. It may include:

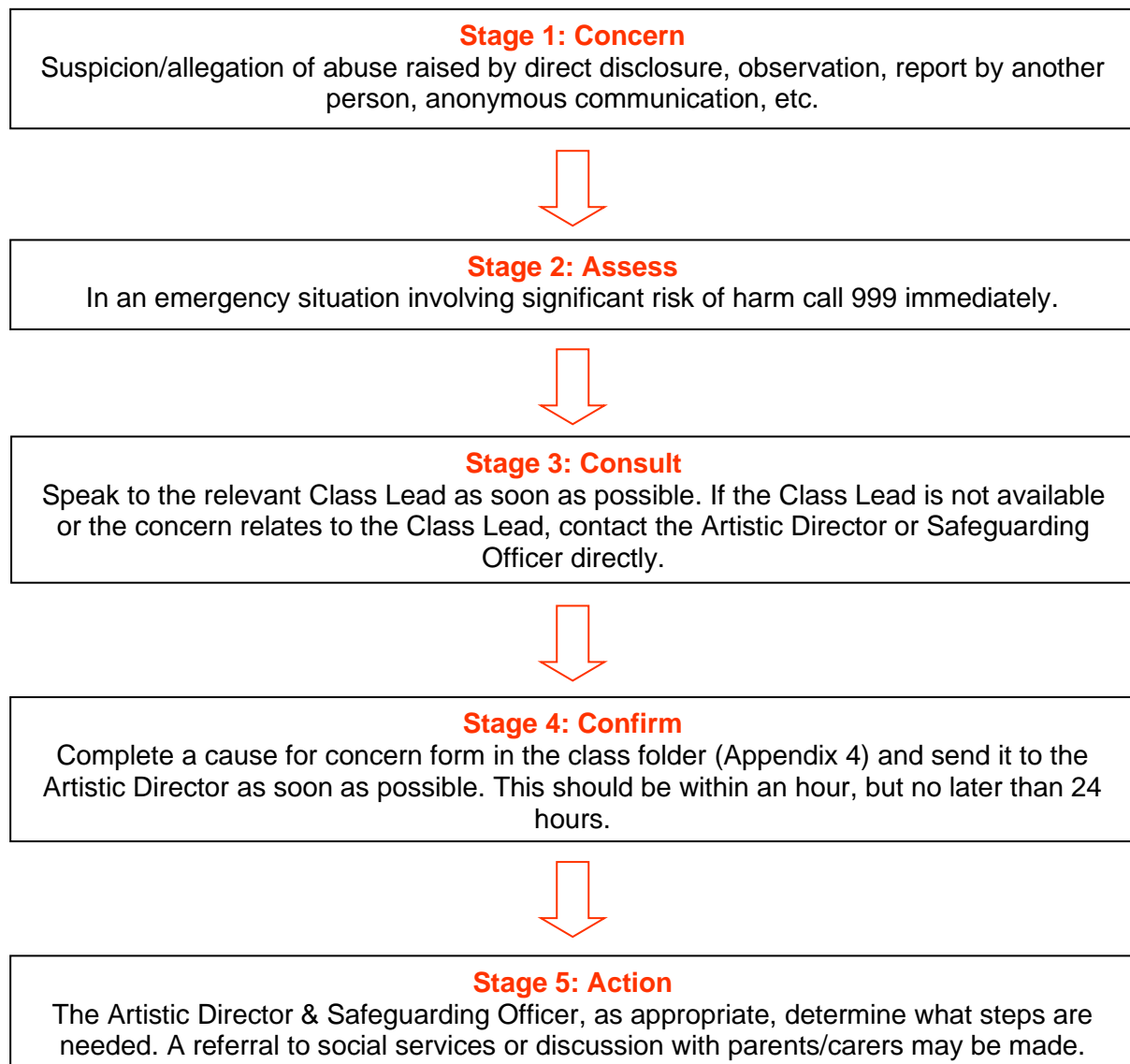
- persistently denying someone love and affection.
- regularly making the person feel frightened by shouts, threats, or any other means
- hurting another person or a pet in order to distress someone.
- being so overprotective towards someone that they are unable to develop or lead a normal life.
- exploiting or corrupting a someone, e.g., by involving them in illegal behaviour
- conveying to someone the message that they are worthless, unlovable, inadequate, or their only value is to meet the needs of another person. This may or may not include racist, homophobic, or other forms of abuse.

**Neglect** involves persistently failing to meet someone's physical, psychological, or emotional needs. It can happen to an adult or a child. It may include:

- failing to ensure that a person's basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, hygiene, and education are met.
- failing to provide appropriate supervision to keep a person out of danger. This includes lack of supervision of particular activities or leaving a child alone in the house.

## Appendix 3: How to Report Concerns

Flowchart of how to report safeguarding concerns at South Side Theatre Academy.





## Appendix 4: Cause for concern forms

**Report following unusual activity/behaviour/disclosure of abuse.**

Child's Name (initials):

Date:

Your name:

Location of event:

Time of disclosure:

Details of event (can use extra paper – please attach):

Suggested action:

What are you worried about?

On a scale of 0-10 with 0 being the worst possible scenario and 10 being the best where would you rate this incident?

Signed:

Date:

This policy was originally adopted by the **South Side Theatre Academy** on 11/05/2018 and reviewed on 07/09/2023.

Signed on behalf of the Management Team by:

Signature..... *T. Ward Smith* .....

Name in Capitals.....TOBY WARD-SMITH.....

The policy has been reviewed by the Management Team on:

Date.....07/09/2023.....