

Boundless Theatre

Child Safeguarding Procedures

Last Review: July 2024

Next Review: July 2025

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Contact Details for designated safeguarding leads			
Overall Designated Safeguarding Lead	Adèle Reeves de Melo	adele@boundlesstheatre.org.uk	079200632 24
Secondary Designated Safeguarding Lead	Pavlos Christodoulou	pavlos@boundlesstheatre.org.uk	075156461 46
Trustee with Safeguarding responsibility	Charlotte Mcmillan	charlotte@mcmillan-consulting.co.uk	078807846 79

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at Boundless Theatre responsible for dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse is Executive Producer & Co-CEO Adèle Reeves de Melo (adele@boundlesstheatre.org.uk).

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead is:

- a. to carry out a risk assessment prior to any project involving direct work with children, young persons or adults at risk and monitor or, if necessary, reassess, the assessment and initiate appropriate changes
- b. to receive information from staff, volunteers, children, young persons, adults, parents, carers or teachers who have safeguarding concerns and record it
- c. to assess information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information about the matter as appropriate
- d. to consult initially with the relevant agency or authority to test out doubts or uncertainties
- e. to make a formal referral to the relevant agency or the police without delay

Within participatory projects, the leader of the group may be the first point of contact for point a) above. They will be identifiable to participants, parents and carers. Any information received by the project leader will be referred immediately to the Executive Producer who will manage points b) – d) in conjunction with the project leader.

Confidentiality Policy

The Data Protection Act 1998 requires personal information to be obtained and processed fairly and lawfully and for it only to be disclosed in appropriate circumstances.

The Act allows for disclosure of information without the consent of the subject in certain conditions, including for the purposes of the prevention or detection of crime, or the apprehension of offenders. The need to safeguard children from harm should be considered within these parameters.

The European Convention of Human Rights Article 8 also addresses the need to disclose information for “the protection of health and morals, for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others and for the prevention of disorder or crime... Disclosure should be appropriate for the purpose and only to the extent necessary to achieve that purpose”.

Overview

Purpose of this Procedure

Boundless Theatre and its staff, volunteers and trustees are committed to keeping children safe from harm. Our full [Safeguarding Policy can be found here](#), as well as on our website and [on request](#).

Please note: We have a separate procedure for [safeguarding Adults at Risk which you can read here](#).

This procedure aims to:

- Provide clear guidance for staff and volunteers working under our safeguarding policy and working with children on how to report concerns about the welfare of a child (under 18 years old).
- Identify key contact details for reporting both concerns to Boundless Theatre, and to relevant external organisations.
- Support staff, volunteers, and trustees at Boundless Theatre to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse.

It's important to remember that it is not your role nor responsibility to determine if something is abuse, and you should avoid any form of investigation. Your responsibility requires you only to recognise, respond, record, and report any concerns of abuse to the relevant safeguarding team named within this procedure. This procedure will take you through that process step by step.

Definitions of Terms

Child	As per the Children Act 2004, this is a legal term that refers to all those who have not yet reached their 18th birthday.
Young Adult	Any person between the ages of 18 years and 30.
Adult at Risk	<p>A person 18 years and over, where safeguarding duties apply, that meets the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)• is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect.• as a result of those care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect. <p>Please note: In the past, the older term 'Vulnerable Adult' has been widely used, but this has been updated in the Care Act 2014 and has been replaced by 'Adult at Risk'.</p>
Staff	A paid individual with either an employment or freelance contract with Boundless Theatre.
Volunteer	An unpaid individual supporting projects with Boundless Theatre.
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	A role and person within Boundless Theatre who has ultimate responsibility for operational safeguarding processes and procedures.
Secondary Designated Safeguarding Lead (SDSL)	Roles of one or more individuals within Boundless Theatre who support the DSL, in a deputised role, to carry out their safeguarding duties.

Trustee Safeguarding Lead (TSL)	A role and person on the Boundless Theatre trustee board who is responsible for ensuring organisational compliance with legislation and external regulators.
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Signs and Definitions of Child Abuse

Definitions of Child Abuse

Referenced from the [‘Definitions and signs of child abuse’](#) guidance document issued by the NSPCC in July 2020.

Child abuse happens when a person harms a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can also involve neglect.

Children may be abused by:

- family members
- Friends
- people working or volunteering in organisational or community settings
- people they know
- strangers

A child may be abused or neglected by someone inflicting harm, or by knowingly not preventing harm.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse happens when a child is deliberately hurt, causing physical harm. It can involve hitting, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or suffocating.

It's also physical abuse if a parent or carer makes up or causes the symptoms of illness in children. For example, they may give them medicine they don't need, making them unwell. This is known as fabricated or induced illness (FII).

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse involves:

- humiliating, putting down or regularly criticising a child
- shouting at or threatening a child or calling them names
- mocking a child or making them perform degrading acts
- constantly blaming or scapegoating a child for things which are not their fault
- trying to control a child's life and not recognising their individuality
- not allowing a child to have friends or develop socially
- pushing a child too hard or not recognising their limitations
- manipulating a child
- exposing a child to distressing events or interactions
- persistently ignoring a child
- being cold and emotionally unavailable during interactions with a child
- not being positive or encouraging to a child or praising their achievements and successes.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. It doesn't necessarily involve violence and the child may not be aware that what is happening is abuse.

Child sexual abuse can involve contact abuse and non-contact abuse. Contact abuse happens when the abuser makes physical contact with the child. Non-contact abuse involves non-touching activities. It can happen online or in person.

Abusers may threaten to send sexually explicit images, video or copies of sexual conversations to the young person's friends and family unless they take part in other sexual activity. Images or videos may continue to be shared long after the abuse has stopped.

Abusers will often try to build an emotional connection with a child in order to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse. This is known as grooming.

Neglect

Neglect is not meeting a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs. This can result in serious damage to their health and development. Neglect may involve a parent or carer not:

- providing adequate food, clothing or shelter
- supervising a child or keeping them safe from harm or danger (including leaving them with unsuitable carers)
- making sure the child receives appropriate health and/or dental care
- making sure the child receives a suitable education
- meeting the child's basic emotional needs – this is known as emotional neglect.

Effects of Abuse

Without appropriate intervention and treatment, the sustained abuse or neglect of children physically, emotionally or sexually is likely to have major long-term effects on all aspects of the child's health and well-being, such as:

- growth and development
- own self-image and self-esteem
- difficulties in forming or sustaining close relationships
- getting established in the workforce
- developing the attitude and skills necessary to be an effective parent

Children may suffer or be at risk of suffering significant harm. Harm may be attributable to:

- ill-treatment which may include sexual, physical or emotional abuse or
- the impairment of physical or mental health or
- the impairment of physical, intellectual or behavioural development

This may be the result of a deliberate act by a parent, carer or other adult or child; a failure to act or to provide proper care or both of these.

How is harm deemed to be 'significant'?

There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the degree and the extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, and the extent of premeditation, the degree of threat and coercion, sadism, and bizarre or unusual elements in child abuse.

Each of these elements has been associated with more severe effects on the child and/or relatively greater difficulty in helping the child overcome the adverse impact of the ill treatment.

Sometimes, a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm. More often, significant harm is a compilation of significant events, both acute and longstanding, which interrupt, change or damage the child's physical and psychological development. Some children live in family and social circumstances where their health and development are neglected. For them, it is the corrosiveness of long-term emotional, physical or sexual abuse that causes impairment to the extent of constituting significant

harm. In each case, it is necessary to consider any ill-treatment alongside the family's strengths and supports.

It is important to always take account of the child's reactions, and his or her perceptions, according to the child's age and understanding. Minor shortcomings in health care or minor deficits in physical, psychological or social development should not require compulsory intervention unless cumulatively they are having or are likely to have, serious and lasting effects upon a child.

Sources: [ITC](#), [NSPCC](#), [Department of Health 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'](#); [Arts Council England 'Keeping arts safe'](#)

Who abuses?

- you cannot tell by looking at a person whether they are an abuser – they do not appear different from the rest of society
- abusers come from all classes of society, all professions, ages and backgrounds
- abuse of children may sometimes be carried out by strangers, but it is much more common that the abuser is known to the child and is in a position of trust and/or authority
- it is not only adults who abuse children – children may suffer abuse from other children and young people

Barriers to implementing procedures

Adults:

- finding it hard to believe what we are hearing – shock, disbelief, fear or denial
- not being able to believe that the suspicion is about someone they know
- the fear of 'getting it wrong' and the consequences for the child, family and themselves
- worrying about making it worse for the child
- believing that services are stigmatised
- not wanting to be involved
- not having the information of what to do or who to contact

Children:

- being scared because they feel/have been threatened
- believing they will be taken away from home
- believing they are to blame
- thinking it happens to all children
- feeling embarrassed
- feeling guilty
- not wanting the abuser to get into trouble
- having communication or learning difficulties
- not having the vocabulary for what happened
- being afraid they won't be believed
- believing they have 'told' (maybe by dropping hints) and haven't been believed, so 'what's the point in trying again'

General:

- **Disability:** children with a disability are known to be particularly vulnerable due to dependency on others, communication issues, isolation, difficulty in recognising inappropriate behaviour, not being able to leave an abusive situation physically
- **Racism:** evidence suggests ethnic minority families often fail to receive appropriate services from statutory authorities

- **Faith issues:** strong beliefs about redemption and forgiveness can mark abusers and many others

How to Manage a Disclosure

How to respond to concerns

How you might become aware of the actual or likely occurrence of abuse

- a child might tell you
- someone else might report that a child has told them or that they strongly believe that a child has been or is being abused
- a child might show some signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation
- a child's behaviour may indicate to you that it is likely that s/he is being abused
- something in the behaviour of another member of staff or a young person, or in the way a member of staff or young person relates to a child, alerts you or makes you feel uncomfortable in some way
- you might observe one child abusing another

Responding to signs or suspicions of abuse

At any time a member of Boundless Theatre staff may see signs which lead them to suspect abuse. In the case of participatory projects, the project leader will be the designated contact, but other staff may be approached.

Remember, if someone has a need for immediate medical attention call an ambulance on 999.

1. [Record disclosure using the Checklist](#)
2. [Submit the record using the Major Incident Reporting Sheet](#)
3. [Report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead \(who will report to authorities within 24 hours\)](#)

Step One: Record the disclosure using the Checklist

At any time, a member of Boundless Theatre staff may be approached by a child or other adult alleging or disclosing abuse against an individual not involved with Boundless Theatre. In the case of participatory projects, the project leader will be the designated contact, but other staff may be approached.

The details of any allegation of abuse should be recorded by the staff member using the checklist provided below. This should be done immediately when the abuse is alleged. It should then be reported immediately to the Overall Designated Safeguarding Lead who in conjunction with the staff member will make further records and notes about the issue and refer the matter to appropriate authorities within 24 hours.

Checklist – responding to a child making allegations of abuse

- Stay calm
- Be non-judgmental
- Listen carefully to what is said without interrupting
- Find an appropriate opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others - **do not promise to keep secrets**
- Make it clear that you take them seriously

- Allow the child to continue at their own pace
- Record only what the child has said. Many cases fall down where it is possible to infer that leading questions were asked even at these early stages
- Record in writing what was said using the child's own words as often as possible in a clear and factual manner. Information that should be recorded includes:
 - the date and time of the incident and/or disclosure
 - any names mentioned, to whom the information was given
 - what was said or done by whom
- Record every incident of suspected, alleged or disclosed abuse you encounter
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Reassure them that you are going to do everything you can to help. Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared

Things to avoid

- ✗ Do not quiz for more information
- ✗ Do not speculate or make assumptions
- ✗ Do not voice negative judgements about the situation or the abuser
- ✗ Do not make promises you cannot keep
- ✗ Do not promise that 'everything will be alright'
- ✗ Do not offer to keep it confidential

It is important that everyone in the organisation is aware that the first person who encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is the task of a professional child protection agency, following a referral to them of concern about a child.

Step Two: Report to the Safeguarding Lead

It should then be reported immediately to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead** who in conjunction with the staff member will make further records and notes about the issue as part of the report. If the DSL is not available, please contact the **Secondary Designated Safeguarding Lead**. The DSL will speak to the individual about their wishes and what Boundless Theatre can do to support them further.

The DSL will:

- Record any action taken by the organisation
- where relevant: reasons why no referral to a statutory agency was made - and ensure that the record is signed and dated

Contact Details for designated safeguarding leads			
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Adèle Reeves de Melo	adele@boundlesstheatre.org.uk	07920063224
Secondary Designated Safeguarding Lead (SDSL)	Pavlos Christodoulou	pavlos@boundlesstheatre.org.uk	07515646146

Trustee with Safeguarding responsibility (TSR)	Charlotte Mcmillan	charlotte@mcmillan-consulting.co.uk	07880784679
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Step Three: Submit your report using the Major Incident Reporting Sheet.

The finalised report, after being completed by the staff member and DSL should be submitted via the Major Incident Reporting Sheet after following the checklist above. This should be done immediately when the abuse is disclosed and after speaking with the DSL

The information will be received by the DSL and stored in accordance with the requirements detailed in the Data Protection Act 1998. It will then only be shared by those who need to know, i.e. the organisation's senior management, the Chairman, and social services staff as necessary.

Responding to allegations of abuse against a member of Boundless Theatre's staff

The above steps should be followed in this instance as with any other disclosure. In the event of an allegation being made against the Overall Designated Safeguarding Lead, it should be reported to the Secondary Designated Safeguarding Lead - Wofai Je (wofai@boundlesstheatre.org.uk). A member of the board will be informed once proceedings are set in motion.

Lost or Missing Young People

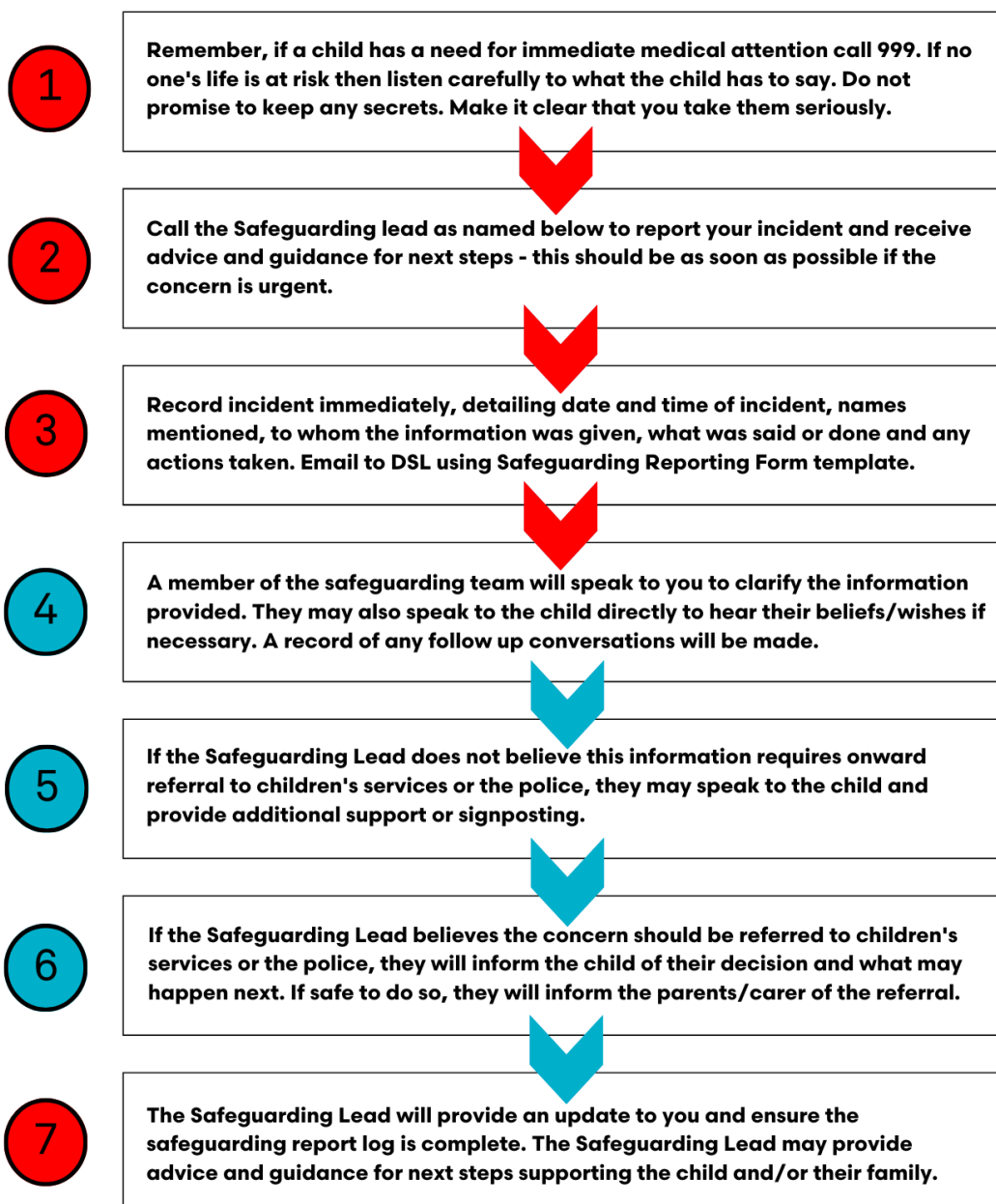
Below is the procedure for dealing with a lost or missing young person during a Boundless Theatre activity:

1. In the event a child engaged in a Boundless Theatre activity cannot be found, the Designated Overall Safeguarding Lead must be notified immediately and told when and where the child was last seen.
2. All available staff should conduct a thorough search of the area, while also ensuring that all other children should remain in the care of suitable staff. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must be kept updated.
3. If the young person is not found within 30 minutes, the parents and then the police must be called by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Designated Overall Safeguarding Lead will take further advice from the Police.
4. If the child is found the designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed, they will then inform parents, police and any other relevant authorities.
5. A report should be completed using the Major Incident Reporting Sheet. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should investigate how the incident occurred and take appropriate action to ensure that similar events do not happen again.

Reporting Flow Diagram

Safeguarding Reporting Diagram

All steps highlighted in red indicate your role within the reporting process, those in blue relate to the actions of the safeguarding team at Boundless Theatre.



To 'whistleblow' or report any Safeguarding concerns, please contact the Safeguarding Lead below:

Adèle Reeves de Melo (Executive Producer)
Contact - adele@boundlesstheatre.org.uk / 07920063224

**boundless
+theatre**

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