

Spirit Youth Group – Safeguarding policy

August 2024

1. Policy statement

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that everyone, including members, volunteers and leaders who take part in our activities can do so in a safe environment. This policy outlines the extra care that adult volunteers and leaders need to take in working with young people under the age of 18. All adults working with Spirit in a voluntary capacity will be made aware of this policy and how it can be accessed.

2. Policy description

We have a duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of all members, volunteers and leaders.

We recognise that harm can come in many forms and Spirit Youth Group asks that all adult volunteers and leaders are alert to any issues for concern. This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in the United Kingdom. A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from [nspcc.org.uk/childprotection](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/childprotection)

All adult volunteers and leaders should recognise that their behaviour with young people under the age of 18 must always be appropriate and professional, to ensure they do not put themselves at risk, for example through behaviour that could be misinterpreted. Any allegations will be managed in accordance with this safeguarding policy.

3. The Policy

The Leadership Team of Spirit Youth Group will:

1. Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all young people under the age of 18.
2. Ensure all adults are aware of and comply with the published Adult Code of Conduct and also this safeguarding policy (including reporting any concerns without delay).
3. Ensure that all allegations against, and concerns about, any adult volunteer or leader are acted on in accordance with this policy.
4. Ensure that cases of suspected abuse are referred to the appropriate bodies.
5. Provide an appropriate level of duty of care.

4. Practice and Key Procedures

Staffing

All adult volunteers and leaders acting on behalf of Spirit Youth Group must read and agree to its published Adult Code of Conduct.

Confidentiality & information sharing including e-safety

The welfare of young people under the age of 18 overrides any obligations of confidentiality we may hold to others. No one volunteering, or involved, with Spirit Youth Group can promise absolute confidentiality as information may need to be disclosed in the event of a safeguarding concern.

Individual cases will only be shared or discussed on a “need to know” basis.

Timely and accurate written records play an essential role in safeguarding individuals, who may have suffered, are suffering or are at significant risk of suffering harm. It is important that records are only shared at the appropriate time and with necessary agencies. Within Spirit Youth Group the decision to share written information, and with whom, will be undertaken by the Designated Safeguarding point of contact, Becky Curtis who is contactable via email at safeguarding@spiritdrama.uk

Where relevant, we will ensure we fulfil our obligations under Child Care Law in terms of parental responsibility and Mental Capacity Legislation on supporting, where possible, the individual's right to make their own decisions. When consent is required for any care, activity or intervention we will, unless it is an emergency, obtain consent from the individual if of sufficient age and/or capacity for understanding.

Whistleblowing and safeguarding

Whistleblowing is when someone raises a concern about a person or practice within Spirit Youth Group, which will affect others in an illegal and/or harmful way. Spirit Youth Group promotes the sharing of any concerns regarding the safeguarding of members, volunteers and leaders as soon as possible with the Designated Safeguarding point of contact, Becky Curtis.

If individuals reporting their concerns within Spirit Youth Group do not feel they have been acted upon then we support their right to report these concerns to social care services and/or the police, under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.²²

Young people who work with our organisation

All young people (defined as those under 18) who are undertaking volunteer work, production work or support with sessions are included within this policy and their safeguarding as individuals given the same importance as all young members. Any disclosures, observations of possible harm or disturbing behaviour must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding point of contact immediately.

Reporting Child Protection Concerns

It is not the role of Spirit Youth Group Leaders to confront individuals about potentially abusive behaviour or to make assessment as to whether abuse has or has not occurred.

The following procedures set out how to report incidents of abuse and the required referral actions.

If a member under the age of 18 discloses to an adult volunteer or leader, that they have suffered abuse, the following steps must be taken:

- i. The adult volunteer or leader makes a record of the information given, using the words of the child. The report is signed and dated by the adult volunteer or leader. The template attached should be used.
- ii. The adult volunteer or leader reports the disclosure to the designated safeguarding point of contact within Spirit Youth Group who refers the matter to the local Social Services department. The designated safeguarding point of contact also informs the whole Leadership Team.
- iii. If it is not possible to contact the designated safeguarding point of contact, then if any adult volunteer or leader has urgent concern about the safety of a child at risk, they may make a direct call to the local Social Services Department, or local Police Authority's Child Protection Team or, as a last resort, the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline2 (24 Hour) 0800 800 5000
- iv. Social Services will, with due regard for confidentiality, inform the referrer of any action taken

If an adult volunteer or leader has concerns that another adult volunteer or leader could be responsible for abusive behaviour, they have a responsibility to take the following steps:

- i. The adult volunteer or leader discusses their concerns with the safeguarding point of contact who, at their discretion, refers the matter to the local Police.
- ii. If the safeguarding point of contact is unavailable, and if any adult volunteer or leader has an urgent concern about the safety of a child or adult at risk, they should make a call to the local Social Services Department or the local Police authority's Child Protection Team or, as a last resort, the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline (24 Hour) 0800 800 5000 immediately.
- iii. If the adult under suspicion is a volunteer or leader invited by Spirit Youth Group to participate in productions and/or weekly sessions, appropriate, immediate and long term steps will be taken by the Leadership team.
- iv. Note all concerns in writing using the form.