

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY implemented from August 1st 2009

NEWRY DRAMA FESTIVAL

CHAIRMAN: Mr G. McNulty
SECRETARY: Ms Eileen Mooney
TREASURER: Ms C Farrelly

VENUES: Newry Town Hall; The Sean Hollywood Arts Centre

DATES: Annual Event (March/April) (9 Nights)

Throughout this policy the word “parent” also includes guardians and carers.

1. PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF THE ORGANISATION:

Newry Drama Festival provides a platform for amateur performance in a competitive festival. Occasionally young people may participate in a drama group’s cast.

2. THE FESTIVAL ENVIRONMENT

Newry Drama Festival seeks to create a caring environment with the highest possible level of protection for children and vulnerable adults in partnership with parents and members of the group. It is our policy to inform all parents and groups, in as far as is reasonably practicable, of their role in ensuring that a safe environment exists throughout all events at the Drama Festival. Groups should note that the buildings used for the Festival are open to the general public.

3. TO WHOM DOES THIS POLICY APPLY:

This policy relates to children under the age of 18 years and those vulnerable adults who are identified to the organizers prior to their arrival at the Drama Festival venue. In recognising the needs of children from minority ethnic groups and children who are disabled, we actively seek to meet needs notified to us prior to the Festival. Contact details appear at the end of this Policy.

Work Experience Students. Newry Drama Festival offers a facility whereby students from Secondary Schools are able to assist and learn about the Festival and the practical aspects of performance of the groups.

It is recognised that Schools expect young adults undertaking such practical activities experience placements to develop independence, responsibility and the ability to make their own decisions and to apply learning. Members of the Festival committee will be responsible for supervising the backstage activities undertaken by the students.

4. NEWRY DRAMA FESTIVAL PERSONNEL

All Festival personnel are volunteers. They are made aware of the most recent version of this policy and fully support it. Personnel on duty at all Festival events will be office bearers and members of the Executive Committee or official helpers selected through the Committee on the recommendation of existing members. Roles for official helpers are discussed at the time of recruitment.

The Festival Secretary keeps contact information on all active members and helpers up to date annually. A badge identifies each individual member and helper on duty. At each Festival there will be a person with overall responsibility for handling concerns regarding safety and child protection and anyone wearing a Festival badge will be able to direct enquirers to him/her on request. Every problem/concern will be handled sympathetically and an official record kept.

All Festival personnel will be vigilant in monitoring all areas where children and vulnerable adults are in attendance within the limits imposed by the public nature of the venues as described in Section 2 above, and in accordance with the responsibilities of parents/guardians and carers outlined in Section 5 below. All unauthorized adults found in restricted areas will be challenged.

5. PREPARATION FOR ATTENDANCE AT NEWRY DRAMA FESTIVAL

A copy of this policy will be made available to all parents of children and vulnerable adults who are taking part in Newry Festival events. Parents should be satisfied that all children or vulnerable adults in their care, whether performing or as members of the audience, are adequately supervised by themselves or by responsible adults delegated by them.

Care should be taken to note in advance those occasions when Festival performers have to move between the Town Hall and Arts Centre. Festival personnel are not available to accompany children transferring between venues.

6. PERFORMANCE AREAS AND CHANGING AREAS:

We draw parents' attention to the fact that performers will, in some cases, be required to use the changing facilities available in the Festival venue. Parents, or the responsible adults delegated by parents, should be satisfied that all children or vulnerable adults in their care are adequately supervised throughout their time in performance and changing areas and make themselves known to a Festival official on entering the vicinity of the changing room area. All unauthorized adults in these areas will be challenged.

7. PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO RECORDING (including those versions encapsulated in mobile phones) & PRESS PHOTOGRAPHY;

In order to avoid disappointment on the day of competition, this Policy draws to parents' attention that very strict rules regarding photography are in place. Photography in all forms is strictly forbidden in performance and changing areas and all other circulation areas designated as forbidden by the Festival Committee.

Photographs may be taken on the final night after the final adjudication by those Press photographers who have made themselves known to an official on duty. If you do not wish your child to be photographed by the press you must ask the responsible adult attending with your child to ensure that his/her photo is not taken.

8. THE LEGISLATION & GUIDANCE THAT SUPPORTS THIS POLICY:

Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003; The Protection of Children Act 1999; The Court Services Act 2000; The Care Standard Act 2000; Statutory Instrument No. 439 (NI).

9. POLICY REVIEW

The Executive Committee of Newry Drama Festival will constantly review this policy, improving and enhancing it as necessary to incorporate changes in legislation and in local circumstances. In doing this they will look to the Association of Ulster Drama Festivals for support and that body, in turn will look to other agencies for examples of good practice, most notably the NSPCC and the other policy guidelines of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

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