Student Work Experience Placement Policy 2027

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Policy Responsibility: **Sam Gibbs (Principal)**
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PERFORMERS THEATRE COMPANY

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Performers Theatre Company is committed to providing meaningful, safe and supportive work experience opportunities for students interested in the performing arts, teaching, theatre production and arts administration.

Work experience placements offer students the opportunity to develop practical skills, gain an understanding of professional working environments and explore potential career pathways.

This policy applies to all work experience students undertaking an approved placement with Performers Theatre Company, whether arranged through a school, college or independently by a parent/carer.

It also applies to staff, freelancers and volunteers involved in supervising or supporting placements.

All placements are subject to availability, suitability and approval by the Principal.

PRINCIPLES

Performers Theatre Company aims to ensure that every placement:

- Provides a positive and worthwhile learning experience.
- Is appropriate to the student's age, abilities, interests and experience.
- Takes place in a safe, inclusive and supportive environment.
- Offers appropriate supervision and guidance.
- Respects the student's dignity, wellbeing and individual needs.
- Complies with relevant safeguarding, health and safety and data protection requirements.
- Supports the development of confidence, independence and professional skills.

Work experience students are learners rather than replacements for paid staff and must not be used to cover staffing shortages or fulfil duties requiring qualified or authorised personnel.

PRE-PLACEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Before a placement begins, the Principal or an authorised representative will confirm the arrangements with the student and, where appropriate, their school, college or parent/carer.

These arrangements will include:

- The proposed dates, hours and location of the placement.
- The student's age and relevant experience.
- The intended activities and learning opportunities.
- The name of the designated supervisor.
- Emergency contact information.
- Relevant medical, accessibility or additional support requirements.
- Appropriate parent/carer consent for students under 18.
- A suitable assessment of placement risks.
- Any required documentation from the school or college.

Independently arranged placements will be subject to the same safeguarding and safety requirements as school- or college-organised placements.

The Principal may decline or postpone a placement where appropriate supervision, insurance or safety arrangements cannot be confirmed.

PLACEMENT STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES

Work experience placements will be structured around the student's interests, abilities and the opportunities available within Performers Theatre Company.

Depending on the placement, activities may include:

- Observing performing arts classes and rehearsals.
- Supporting teachers with appropriate supervised classroom activities.
- Assisting with the preparation of teaching materials and resources.
- Observing theatre production planning and administration.
- Supporting suitable front-of-house or event activities.
- Assisting with appropriate costume, prop or production preparation.
- Learning about the day-to-day operation of a performing arts organisation.

All activities must be approved by the designated supervisor and remain appropriate to the student's age, experience and abilities.

Work experience students must not:

- Lead classes or rehearsals independently.
- Have sole responsibility for supervising children.
- Undertake unsupervised one-to-one activities with children.
- Administer medication or provide first aid unless specifically authorised, appropriately trained and permitted under the relevant arrangements.
- Access restricted safeguarding, medical or confidential records.
- Operate potentially hazardous technical equipment without appropriate assessment, instruction and supervision.

Placements should provide opportunities for observation, practical learning, discussion and feedback.

SUPERVISION

Every work experience student will be allocated a designated supervisor who is responsible for overseeing their placement.

The supervisor will:

- Explain the student's duties and responsibilities.
- Provide appropriate induction and guidance.
- Ensure activities remain suitable and safe.
- Monitor the student's progress and wellbeing.
- Provide opportunities for questions and feedback.
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding and supervision arrangements are maintained.

Work experience students must remain under the direction of authorised staff throughout their placement.

They must never be left solely responsible for a class, group of children or other activity requiring staff supervision.

Where the designated supervisor is unavailable, suitable alternative supervision must be arranged before the student continues their activities.

The level of supervision will be determined by the student's age, experience, activities and the associated risks.

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

Safeguarding is a fundamental responsibility of everyone involved in Performers Theatre Company.

Work experience students must receive an appropriate safeguarding induction before undertaking activities involving children or young people.

This will include:

- Maintaining professional boundaries.
- Recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns.
- Understanding appropriate and inappropriate physical contact.
- Following instructions from authorised staff.
- Maintaining confidentiality.
- Using appropriate communication channels.
- Understanding what to do if a child makes a disclosure.

Work experience students must not communicate privately with children through personal social media accounts, messaging applications or other unauthorised channels.

They must not arrange private meetings with children or independently photograph or film students.

Any safeguarding concern must be reported promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), **Sam Gibbs**, or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), **Jess Eaton**, where appropriate.

Where a concern involves the Principal, the alternative reporting arrangements outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy must be followed.

Work experience students must not investigate safeguarding concerns themselves or promise confidentiality to a child making a disclosure.

Any safeguarding checks required for a placement will be considered in accordance with the nature of the activities, supervision arrangements and applicable legal requirements.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Performers Theatre Company is committed to ensuring that work experience placements take place in a safe and appropriately managed environment.

A documented, proportionate assessment of the placement arrangements will be completed before the student starts.

This will consider:

- The student's age, experience and individual needs.
- The activities they will undertake.
- The level of supervision required.
- The venue and working environment.
- Relevant equipment and potential hazards.
- Emergency procedures and first-aid arrangements.
- Any additional control measures required.

Work experience students must:

- Follow staff instructions and relevant risk assessments.
- Use equipment only when authorised and appropriately supervised.
- Report hazards, accidents, injuries or near misses promptly.
- Familiarise themselves with emergency evacuation procedures.
- Wear suitable clothing and footwear for the activities undertaken.
- Avoid tasks that exceed their abilities or present unnecessary risks.

Work experience students must not undertake hazardous activities, including working at height, using specialist stage equipment or handling electrical systems, unless the activity is lawful, specifically assessed and subject to appropriate instruction and supervision.

A member of staff holding an appropriate, current first-aid qualification will be present during organised Performers activities in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy.

WORKING HOURS AND BREAKS

Placement hours will be agreed before the placement begins.

Where appropriate, standard daytime arrangements may be based around 9:00am–5:00pm, with approximately six to seven hours of placement activity per day.

However, because Performers Theatre Company operates classes, rehearsals and productions during evenings and weekends, alternative hours may be agreed where suitable.

All arrangements must:

- Be appropriate to the student's age and circumstances.
- Comply with applicable legal requirements relating to young people.
- Include suitable rest and refreshment breaks.
- Take account of travel, education and wellbeing.
- Be agreed with the school or college where applicable.
- Be communicated to parents/carers where appropriate.

Students must not be required to work excessive or unsuitable hours.

Any proposed changes to the agreed schedule must be approved in advance.

BEHAVIOUR AND PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS

Work experience students are expected to demonstrate appropriate behaviour and professionalism throughout their placement.

They must:

- Arrive punctually and appropriately dressed.
- Follow reasonable instructions from their supervisor.
- Treat students, staff, families and visitors with respect.
- Use appropriate language and maintain professional boundaries.
- Demonstrate a positive attitude and willingness to learn.
- Respect company property and the facilities of external venues.
- Follow safeguarding and health and safety procedures.
- Avoid using personal mobile phones during activities unless authorised.
- Inform their supervisor promptly of any absence, lateness or difficulty.

Work experience students must familiarise themselves with the relevant expectations in the Staff Code of Conduct and Staff Handbook.

Where concerns arise, the supervisor will discuss these with the student and, where appropriate, their school, college or parent/carer.

Serious misconduct or safeguarding concerns may result in the placement being suspended or ended, following appropriate consideration of the circumstances.

INSURANCE

Performers Theatre Company will ensure that appropriate insurance arrangements are confirmed before accepting a work experience placement.

This will include checking whether the proposed placement and activities are covered by the organisation's Employers' Liability and Public Liability Insurance, as applicable.

Where necessary, confirmation will be obtained from the insurer, particularly for placements involving technical, backstage or other potentially higher-risk activities.

Any insurance documentation required by a school or college will be provided where appropriate and available.

A placement must not commence where the necessary insurance arrangements have not been established.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

Work experience students may encounter confidential information during their placement.
They must respect the privacy of children, families, staff and the organisation.

Work experience students must not:

- Access ClassManager or other restricted company systems without specific authorisation.
- Access safeguarding records, medical information or other sensitive personal data unless explicitly authorised and necessary for an appropriate task.
- Discuss confidential student, family or staff information outside authorised professional arrangements.
- Copy, retain or share company records without permission.
- Photograph or film students without the Principal's prior authorisation.
- Publish company-related content or identifiable student images through personal social media accounts without appropriate authorisation.

Any authorised handling of personal information must comply with the GDPR and Data Protection Policy.

Photography and filming must comply with the Photographs and Images Policy and relevant consent arrangements.

Suspected data breaches or confidentiality concerns must be reported promptly.

EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

Performers Theatre Company is committed to providing equal opportunities and ensuring that all individuals are treated with fairness, dignity and respect.

Work experience placements will be considered without unlawful discrimination.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered for students with disabilities or additional needs to support their participation.

Students are expected to demonstrate respect for the diversity of the Performers community and must not engage in bullying, harassment or discriminatory behaviour.

Any concerns should be raised with the designated supervisor or Principal.

FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

Performers Theatre Company aims to ensure that work experience students gain meaningful insight into the performing arts and the operation of the organisation.

Throughout the placement, students will be encouraged to reflect on their learning and ask questions.

Where appropriate, the designated supervisor may provide:

- Informal feedback during the placement.
- Opportunities to discuss strengths and areas for development.
- A final review of the student's experience.
- Completion of relevant school or college evaluation documentation.
- Confirmation of attendance or participation.

Students may also be invited to provide feedback about their experience to support the ongoing improvement of future placements.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Principal is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy and approving work experience placements.

The policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where changes to legislation, safeguarding guidance, insurance requirements or organisational arrangements make this necessary.

Individual placement arrangements will be reviewed where concerns arise or circumstances change.

RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Staff Code of Conduct.
- Staff Handbook.
- Health and Safety Policy.
- GDPR and Data Protection Policy.
- Photographs and Images Policy.
- Social Media Policy.
- Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Child Collection Policy.
- Missing Child Procedure.
- Core Risk Assessment and relevant Event Risk Assessments.