Health and Safety Policy 2027

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PERFORMERS THEATRE COMPANY

POLICY STATEMENT

At Performers Theatre Company, health and safety is closely linked to safeguarding. We recognise our responsibility to protect children and young people from harm and to provide an environment where they feel safe, supported and able to participate fully. All health and safety practices will be managed alongside our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Performers Theatre Company is committed to providing a safe, healthy and supportive environment for all students, staff, freelancers, volunteers, parents, carers and visitors.

We recognise our responsibility to protect the physical and emotional wellbeing of everyone participating in our activities, including children, young people and adult performers.

The safety and welfare of children and young people remain paramount, and appropriate safeguards will be implemented throughout our classes, rehearsals, workshops, productions and events.

Health and safety is a shared responsibility. All individuals involved in Performers Theatre Company activities are expected to contribute to maintaining a safe environment.

POLICY AIMS

This policy aims to:

- Prevent accidents, injuries and cases of work-related ill health.
- Promote safe practices across all activities, venues and performances.
- Ensure staff, volunteers and participants understand their responsibilities concerning health and safety.
- Provide clear procedures for risk assessment, incident management and emergency response.
- Ensure appropriate first-aid arrangements are maintained.
- Identify and manage risks associated with theatrical productions, dance, acting, singing and other performing arts activities.
- Support the physical and emotional wellbeing of participants.
- Comply with applicable health and safety legislation, including the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and relevant supporting regulations.

This policy operates alongside the organisation's safeguarding, risk assessment and other relevant procedures.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- All employees, freelance teachers, visiting professionals and volunteers.
- All children and young people under 18 participating in Performers activities.
- Adult students and performers participating in Ascend classes, productions and other activities.
- Parents, carers, visitors and contractors where relevant.
- All activities organised or delivered by Performers Theatre Company.

These activities include:

- Regular performing arts classes.
- School of Dance sessions.
- Early years classes.
- Adult performing arts classes.
- Rehearsals and theatrical productions.
- Workshops, masterclasses and summer schools.
- Performances, showcases and public events.
- Trips, visits and off-site activities.
- Technical rehearsals, backstage activities and production preparation.

The policy applies across all venues used by Performers Theatre Company, including hired premises, theatres and external locations.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Management Responsibilities

The Principal acts as the organisation's Health and Safety Lead and is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy.

Management responsibilities include:

- Ensuring health and safety is integrated into the planning and delivery of all activities.
- Ensuring appropriate risk assessments are completed, reviewed and communicated.
- Identifying hazards and implementing proportionate control measures.
- Ensuring appropriate first-aid arrangements are maintained.
- Maintaining suitable incident, accident and near-miss reporting procedures.
- Ensuring staff receive relevant health and safety information and training.
- Coordinating health and safety arrangements with external venues.
- Ensuring equipment used by Performers is suitable and maintained appropriately.
- Reviewing incidents and taking reasonable steps to prevent recurrence.
- Ensuring serious incidents are escalated and reported where required by law.

Where the Principal is unavailable, an appropriately designated senior member of staff will coordinate immediate health and safety matters and escalate significant concerns as necessary.

Staff and Volunteer Responsibilities

All staff, freelancers and volunteers must:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others.
- Follow relevant risk assessments and safety instructions.
- Report hazards, accidents, injuries and near misses promptly.
- Use equipment and facilities safely.
- Maintain appropriate supervision of participants.
- Familiarise themselves with venue-specific emergency procedures.
- Know who the designated first aider is.
- Report concerns relating to unsafe equipment, facilities or working practices.
- Cooperate with management in implementing health and safety measures.

Staff must not undertake activities for which they lack the necessary training, competence or authorisation.

Student Responsibilities

Students and participants are expected to:

- Follow reasonable instructions from staff.
- Behave safely and respectfully.
- Report hazards, injuries or concerns promptly.
- Wear suitable clothing and footwear.
- Use equipment only when authorised.
- Respect safety boundaries and restricted areas.

Expectations will be communicated in an age-appropriate manner and with consideration for individual needs.

Parent and Carer Responsibilities

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Provide accurate and up-to-date medical and emergency contact information.
- Inform Performers of relevant health conditions, injuries or additional support requirements.
- Follow venue and collection procedures.
- Communicate concerns that may affect their child's safe participation.
- Support the organisation's reasonable health and safety arrangements.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk assessments will be completed for relevant venues, activities and events, including classes, trips, performances and technical rehearsals.

Assessments will consider risks associated with:

- Physical activities and movement.
- Slips, trips and falls.
- Stage equipment, scenery and props.
- Electrical and technical equipment.
- Manual handling.
- Fire and emergency evacuation.
- Medical needs and accessibility.
- Supervision and safeguarding.
- Emotional wellbeing and unsafe behaviour.
- Activities involving mixed age groups.
- External venues and off-site activities.

Risk assessments must identify significant hazards, those who may be affected and the measures required to reduce risks to an acceptable level.

Dynamic risk assessments will be undertaken where circumstances change during activities.

Staff must report newly identified hazards so that appropriate action can be taken.

Risk assessments will be reviewed annually, following significant incidents or whenever activities, venues or arrangements change materially.

Performers Theatre Company's existing Core Risk Assessment and Event Risk Assessments will be used to support these arrangements. Additional assessments will be completed where a particular activity presents risks not adequately addressed by existing documents.

FIRST AID AND MEDICAL NEEDS

Performers Theatre Company will ensure that at least one member of staff holding a current, appropriate first-aid qualification is present at every class, rehearsal, workshop, production, performance and organised event.

The level and type of first-aid qualification required will be determined by the nature of the activity, the ages and needs of participants and the relevant risk assessment.

First-aid arrangements will be confirmed in advance.

Staff must know who the designated first aider is and how to obtain immediate assistance.

Where the designated first aider becomes unavailable, the activity must not proceed or continue without suitable alternative first-aid provision.

First-Aid Equipment

- Suitable first-aid equipment will be available during activities.
- First-aid kits will be checked regularly and replenished when necessary.
- Staff must know the location of first-aid supplies.
- Additional equipment or arrangements will be considered where identified by risk assessment.

Medical Information

Parents and carers must provide relevant medical information before a child participates in activities.

Adult participants should inform Performers of medical conditions or support requirements relevant to their safe participation.

Medical information must be handled confidentially in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Policy.

Relevant information must be accessible to appropriately authorised staff where necessary for safety or emergency response.

Medical Emergencies

In a medical emergency:

1. Staff will assess the immediate situation and summon the designated first aider.
2. Emergency services will be contacted by calling 999 where necessary.
3. Appropriate first aid will be provided within the first aider's training and competence.
4. The participant will be supervised and supported while assistance is arranged.
5. Parents or carers will be contacted as soon as reasonably practicable where a child is involved.
6. The incident will be recorded and escalated appropriately.

Staff must not administer medication or undertake medical procedures beyond their training, authorisation or agreed arrangements.

Any individual emergency healthcare plan must be followed where applicable.

FIRE SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire and emergency evacuation procedures must be established for every venue used by Performers Theatre Company.

Where premises are hired, Performers will coordinate with the venue operator to understand the applicable emergency arrangements.

Staff must be familiar with:

- Fire alarm arrangements.
- Emergency exits and evacuation routes.
- Designated assembly points.
- Procedures for raising the alarm.
- Arrangements for assisting individuals requiring additional support.
- Procedures for accounting for students and participants.

Emergency exits must remain unobstructed.

A designated member of staff will coordinate the evacuation of the Performers group.

Staff must take reasonable steps to ensure all participants leave the affected area safely.

A register or other appropriate attendance record will be used to account for participants at the assembly point.

No individual should re-enter an evacuated building until authorised by the appropriate responsible person or emergency services.

Fire drills and emergency familiarisation activities will be undertaken at appropriate intervals, taking account of venue arrangements and risk assessments.

Where necessary, individual evacuation arrangements will be established for participants who require additional assistance.

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

Performers Theatre Company maintains a separate Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Health and safety concerns involving the welfare or protection of a child must be managed in accordance with that policy.

Staff and volunteers undertaking eligible roles involving children will be subject to appropriate safeguarding checks, including enhanced DBS and Children's Barred List checks where the role is legally eligible and requires them.

Not every volunteer or occasional visitor is automatically eligible for the same level of DBS check.

Appropriate safeguarding arrangements and supervision must be determined according to the individual's role and responsibilities.

Any concern regarding a child's welfare must be reported promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Sam Gibbs
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Jess Eaton

Where a child is at immediate risk of harm, emergency services or the appropriate statutory agency must be contacted without delay.

SUPERVISION AND COLLECTION

Students will be appropriately supervised throughout organised activities, with supervision arrangements reflecting their age, needs, the activity and the relevant risk assessment.

ClassManager will be used to maintain attendance records for regular classes, with appropriate arrangements for productions and other activities.

Staff must remain aware of which students are present and report unexplained absences or concerns appropriately.

For performances and licensed activities, suitable chaperone and supervision arrangements will be implemented in accordance with applicable requirements.

A secure sign-in and sign-out process will be used where required.

Children must only be released in accordance with the organisation's Child Collection Policy, including any formally authorised independent travel arrangements.

Where an authorised adult does not arrive for collection, the procedures within the Child Collection Policy must be followed.

Adult participants are responsible for their own arrival and departure arrangements, except where specific support arrangements have been agreed.

USE OF EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

All equipment used by Performers Theatre Company must be suitable for its intended purpose and checked appropriately before use.

Props, costumes, scenery and set pieces must be stored and used safely.

Technical equipment, including lighting and sound systems, must only be installed or operated by individuals with appropriate competence or supervision.

Students must not access restricted technical or backstage areas without authorisation.

Particular attention must be given to:

- Trailing cables and trip hazards.
- Heavy or unstable scenery.
- Elevated platforms and staging.
- Lighting equipment and electrical connections.
- Safe movement of props and set pieces.
- Costume-related movement restrictions.
- Backstage access and visibility.
- Storage and manual handling.
- Appropriate footwear and safe movement surfaces.

Hazardous materials, tools and equipment must not be used by students unless specifically authorised, appropriately supervised and supported by a suitable risk assessment.

Unsafe equipment must be removed from use or isolated until it can be made safe.

ACCIDENT, INCIDENT AND NEAR-MISS REPORTING

All accidents, injuries, significant incidents and near misses must be reported promptly to the Health and Safety Lead or the designated senior member of staff.

Immediate Response

Where an incident occurs, staff must:

1. Make the immediate area safe where possible.
2. Provide or obtain appropriate first aid.
3. Contact emergency services where necessary.
4. Ensure other participants remain appropriately supervised.
5. Notify parents or carers where appropriate.
6. Record the incident accurately and promptly.

Recording

Incident records should include:

- Date, time and location.
- Individuals involved.
- A factual description of what occurred.
- Any injuries or relevant symptoms observed.
- First aid or other assistance provided.
- Witness information where appropriate.
- Parents, carers or other individuals notified.
- Any immediate corrective action.

Records must be stored securely and handled in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Policy.

Investigation and Follow-Up

The Principal will review significant incidents and identify whether additional controls, changes to procedures or updated risk assessments are necessary.

Where an incident raises safeguarding concerns, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy must also be followed.

RIDDOR Reporting

Performers Theatre Company will assess whether relevant incidents are reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).

Where an incident is legally reportable by Performers, the organisation will ensure the required notification and records are completed within the applicable statutory timeframe.

Responsibility for reporting incidents occurring at hired premises will be clarified with the venue operator according to the circumstances and applicable legal duties.

Not every accident involving a student or member of staff is reportable under RIDDOR.

EXTERNAL VENUES AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

Performers Theatre Company delivers activities at hired venues and external locations.

The venue operator will ordinarily retain responsibilities relating to the premises and facilities under its control.

Performers remains responsible for managing the risks arising from its own activities and for taking reasonable steps to protect participants, staff and others affected by those activities.

Before activities commence, appropriate arrangements should be confirmed regarding:

- Access and safe use of facilities.
- Fire evacuation and emergency procedures.
- First-aid arrangements.
- Reporting premises-related hazards.
- Accessibility and additional support needs.
- Equipment and technical facilities.
- Emergency contact arrangements.
- Responsibilities for managing and reporting incidents.

Any identified concerns must be raised with the venue operator and addressed before the affected activity proceeds where necessary for safety.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES AND PARTICIPANT WELLBEING

Performers Theatre Company recognises that performing arts activities may involve physical exertion, repetitive movement, vocal demands and emotional challenges.

Staff must ensure that activities are appropriate to participants' age, ability, experience and individual needs.

Relevant considerations include:

- Suitable warm-up and preparation.
- Appropriate progression of physical demands.
- Safe dance and movement techniques.
- Suitable flooring, footwear and clothing.
- Hydration and rest opportunities.
- Avoidance of unnecessary physical strain.
- Reasonable adjustments for disabilities and additional needs.
- Appropriate responses to illness, injury or fatigue.
- Emotional wellbeing and supportive teaching practices.

Participants must not be pressured to continue an activity where doing so would present an unreasonable risk to their health or safety.

Staff must take concerns seriously and adapt activities where appropriate.

PRODUCTIONS AND TECHNICAL REHEARSALS

Theatrical productions can involve additional hazards that are not routinely present in regular classes.

These may include:

- Scenery construction and movement.
- Stage lighting and sound equipment.
- Microphones and associated cables.
- Costume changes and backstage movement.
- Elevated staging or platforms.
- Props and special effects.
- Restricted backstage areas.
- Large groups of performers.
- Mixed adult and child casts.
- Extended rehearsal and performance schedules.

Appropriate production-specific risk assessments must be completed and communicated to relevant personnel.

The production team must identify individuals responsible for coordinating backstage safety, technical operations and emergency arrangements.

Children must be supervised appropriately throughout performances and backstage activities.

Any special effects, unusual staging or potentially hazardous activities must be assessed and authorised before use.

Where productions take place at external theatres, Performers will coordinate safety arrangements with the venue's technical and management teams.

INFECTION PREVENTION AND ILLNESS

Performers Theatre Company will take reasonable steps to reduce the spread of infectious illness during activities.

These may include:

- Encouraging appropriate hand hygiene.
- Maintaining suitable cleanliness of shared equipment.
- Encouraging individuals who are unwell to follow relevant public health guidance.
- Managing bodily fluid incidents safely.
- Ensuring appropriate access to hygiene facilities.
- Following applicable public health advice where necessary.

Parents and carers should inform Performers where a child's illness may affect safe participation.

Staff must respond appropriately where a participant becomes unwell during a session.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Health and Safety Policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal.

Feedback from staff, parents, carers, students and other relevant individuals will be considered where appropriate.

Accidents, incidents and near misses will be reviewed to identify opportunities for improvement.

The policy may be updated sooner where:

- Legislation or relevant guidance changes.
- A significant incident occurs.
- New venues or activities are introduced.
- Risk assessments identify additional requirements.
- Organisational arrangements change.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that relevant changes are communicated to staff and implemented appropriately.

RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Core Risk Assessment.
- Event Risk Assessments Policy.
- Child Collection Policy.
- Missing Child Procedure.
- GDPR and Data Protection Policy.
- Student Code of Conduct.
- Staff Code of Conduct.
- Production and Rehearsal Policy.

Where specific risk assessments or venue procedures establish additional safety requirements, those arrangements must also be followed.