



Child Protection Policy

Policy Statement

CircusMASH is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of all young people who take part in its activities. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. CircusMASH will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in its activities through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines outlined below. Staff, leaders and volunteers should show respect and understanding for the rights, safety and welfare of other staff, leaders and volunteers and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of CircusMASH. The process of implementing the policy is the responsibility of the Director.

Policy Aims

- Provide children and young people with appropriate safety and protection while they are in the care of CircusMASH.
- Create an environment where young people feel safe and secure, have their view points valued, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Develop awareness in all staff and volunteers of the need for child protection and of their responsibilities.
- Allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Behaviour Statement

In order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made all personnel should demonstrate exemplary behaviour by:

- Treating all young people equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Avoiding being the only adult alone with young people.
- Avoiding private or unobserved interaction with young people and encouraging open communication with no secrets.
- Ensuring that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.

- Recognising the development of needs and capacity, avoiding excessive rehearsal or performance schedules and not pushing them against their will.
- Being an excellent role model.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given.

Practices to be avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies (for example, if a child sustains an injury and needs to be taken to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to collect a child at the end of a session). If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of CircusMASH's staff and volunteers or the child's parent/guardian.

- Avoid spending time alone with a child.

You should never:

- Discriminate against, show preferential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive, even in fun.
- Invite or allow children to your home.
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- Condone smoking or the consumption of alcohol by young people under the legal age. You are obliged to report any sightings of this to the young person's parent/guardian.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate contact with young people.
- Do things of a personal nature for a child that they could do for themselves.
- Allow young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged (e.g. swearing, racial/sexual taunts)
- Permit abusive behaviour or activities (e.g. bullying, ridiculing or initiation ceremonies).
- Make assumptions based on rumour or hearsay.
- Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working with CircusMASH, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate authorities.