

Taunton Festival of the Arts

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY (Revised 21/10/14)

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT: The safety of children and vulnerable adults is paramount and all, without exception, have the right to protection from abuse. All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately and all the charity's trustees, staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report concerns. *Throughout this policy where "children" are mentioned, this also includes members of other vulnerable groups. Where "parent" is used it also includes guardians and carers.*

1. **PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF THE ORGANISATION:** The Taunton & Somerset Music Drama & Dance Festival aims to advance the education of the public in the arts of music, speech and drama and dance, in particular by holding an annual performing arts festival and arranging concerts, workshops and other events. The Festival provides a platform for amateur performance for children and adults, combined with an educational element from professionals. Copies of this policy will be sent to teachers making entries and will accompany the syllabus and programme.
2. **THE FESTIVAL ENVIRONMENT:** It is the Festival's policy to ensure that, in co-operation with parents and teachers, the annual competitive festival and annual concert or other events, if any, take place in safe and secure environments as far as is reasonable and practicable. This may involve the use of more than one venue for each section as well as for the Festival generally. The Festival is solely responsible for running these activities. Neither the Festival members nor the section volunteers are responsible for any children who attend the Festival, or who have to move between venues during it. The Festival venues are open to the public. The Festival, which is run by volunteers, will use its best endeavours to inform parents and teachers of this policy.
3. **TO WHOM DOES THIS POLICY APPLY? :** The policy relates to children under age 18 and members of vulnerable groups of any age who are identified to the organisers prior to their arrival at the Festival (provision for this is included in Part A of the entry form, enclosed with the syllabus or by contacting the address or telephone number at the foot of this document). In recognising the needs of children from all ethnic groups or who are disabled, the Festival actively seeks where possible to meet the needs notified to the Festival by parents, guardians, carers or teachers, but needs to know beforehand in order to prepare support or let you know that we are unable to help.
4. **FESTIVAL PERSONNEL:** The Festival is run entirely by volunteers. Checks are made on all relevant volunteers through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) where necessary. The Management Committee are the charity trustees who are elected at the AGM in accordance with the constitution. Stewards who assist with the running of events are

recruited through the recommendation of members of the Committee and a record is kept of their contact details and of their referees. The involvement of volunteers is reviewed annually to see whether they need an enhanced disclosure from the CRB.

5. All volunteers are aware of this policy document and have been fully briefed on how it will be implemented. Stewards who assist with the running of events are provided with short job descriptions and these are reviewed annually. Stewards wear identifying badges. In the event of a problem an approach must be made to anyone wearing a Festival badge. That person will be able to direct you, quietly and privately to someone who will be able to help. Any such problem will be the subject of a written report which will be dated and kept for future reference. The Festival uses professional accompanists as appropriate.
6. **PREPARATION FOR ATTENDANCE AT THE FESTIVAL:** Children who attend Festival venues remain the responsibility of their parents, teachers or responsible adults acting on their behalf, who must ensure that they are adequately supervised at all times. This statement is made to make it clear that where parents are not personally attending with their children, they are satisfied that their children will be accompanied to the Festival and adequately supervised by responsible adults acting for them. This policy will be sent with an acknowledgement of class entries. It is also printed in every syllabus and programme and is also on display at all venues. Teachers making entries on behalf of pupils will be asked to sign an undertaking that parents or responsible adults have been informed of the Festival's policy and that they accept these conditions. If they do not, entries cannot be accepted as it may damage the organisation irreparably if the Festival fails to follow the safeguarding policy.
7. **PERFORMANCE AND CHANGING AREAS:** Parents or teachers must not allow children to stray from the areas within the venues designated for Festival use or which are available to the general public. They must accompany or supervise any child who wishes to use 'warm up', changing or toilet facilities since these areas will not be supervised by Festival personnel.
8. **PHOTOGRAPHY OR VIDEO/ AUDIO RECORDING:** is not allowed but an authorised photographer may be available for publicity purposes. Parents or teachers who do not wish photographs to be taken are responsible for ensuring that children are not included in press photos. No other photography or recording of any kind will be allowed and announcements will be made to this effect throughout the Festival.
9. **LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE SUPPORTING THIS POLICY:** The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974; The Children Act 1989; The Police Act 1997; The Data Protection

Act 1998; The Human Rights Act 1998; The Protection of Children Act 1999; The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000; The Children Act 2004; The Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

10. **POLICY REVIEW:** The organisers will constantly review their policy, revising and enhancing it as necessary. In doing this they will look to the British & International Federation of Festivals for support and that body, in turn, will look to other agencies for good practice, most notably the NSPCC and Arts Council of England policy guidelines. **Contact : Secretary to the Trustees : Tel : 01823 275020**