

MARCH 2026

**riverside**  
theatre company

**RIVERSIDE THEATRE COMPANY**

# **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

Designated Child Protection Lead:  
Kirsty Pitt: [rtccpo@gmail.com](mailto:rtccpo@gmail.com)  
Trustee/Senior Lead:  
Terri Lalonde: [terri@channel7.org.uk](mailto:terri@channel7.org.uk)

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed on: 16th March 2026  
For any further advice please contact: NSPCC Helpline  
0808 800 5000

# Riverside Theatre Company

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## 1. Policy statement

Riverside Theatre Company (herein referred to as 'RTC') has a duty of care to safeguard from harm all children and young people with whom it interacts. We strongly believe that all children and young people have the right to be treated fairly, justly and have the right to freedom from abuse and harm.

This policy details the legal requirements, organisational procedures and best practice. This policy applies to all RTC staff, including those who work on a volunteer and freelance basis, as well as RTC's Committee.

Our policy ensures that all our staff and volunteers are carefully selected and vetted, have the relevant qualifications and experience, and accept responsibility for helping to prevent the abuse of children and young people in their care. We aim to offer comprehensive advice to RTC staff members and freelance artists covering legal requirements and good practice for safeguarding.

All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

We have procedures in place to address poor practice and to help any child/young person who appears to be at risk or who appears to be a victim of abuse. We will offer help and support when a child/young person tells us that they are affected by these issues. We will work extensively with external agencies such as the NSPCC and the police to ensure, as far as possible, that children and young people are protected.

The terms "child", "children" are used to refer to anyone under the age of 18. The terms "young person", "young people" are used to refer to any RTC participant aged 18 or over.

## 2. Staff roles & responsibilities

The **Designated Safeguarding Officer** leads upon *policy development, reporting and implementation*, including:

- Reviewing and updating the organisation's safeguarding policy on an annual basis or when necessary
- Leading upon contact with Local Authority Social Services in the event that a child/young person is at risk of harm
- Managing complaints about poor practice and allegations against staff/volunteers
- Referring relevant issues of safeguarding to the Committee for consideration
- Collecting monitoring data on all safeguarding activities across the organisation
- Ensuring safer recruitment procedures are followed and promoting safeguarding across the organisation
- Ensuring all chaperones' licences are up to date and that RTC tutors have enhanced DBS checks.

## 3. Safer recruitment & selection of staff

Safe recruitment and selection practice is vital in safeguarding and protecting children and young people. RTC recognises and takes seriously its responsibility to adopt practice which minimises risk to the children and young people by ensuring that measures are in place through this practice to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children and young people or who are unsuitable to work with them.

The safety and well-being of children and young people is the priority at all times throughout the recruitment and selection process. RTC follows the Safer Recruitment process as per the [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) Guidance. In accordance with this, RTC will ensure the following:

- The safety of children and young people is explicitly stated in job descriptions and person specifications
- Interviewers question and interrogate regarding gaps in employment history
- Appropriate reference checks are carried out on new staff/volunteers
- RTC carries out enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for relevant roles i.e. tutors and chaperones and freelance staff when contracting. A new DBS check will be carried out every three years from commencement of contract
- Whenever a new tutor joins RTC, there will always be an extra tutor/assistant in the room who has knowledge and experience of the RTC ethos and good practice
- RTC has an open-door policy when rehearsing or during performance development, this means that at any time, another member of staff may enter the space to observe

the session. This offers transparency and an opportunity to feedback and reflect on good practice

## 4. Identifying & Responding to Concerns about a child/young person

At times, RTC staff may have to respond to concerns about the welfare of children and young people. This could relate to the actual or alleged harm of a child/young person. Alternatively, a child/young person RTC works with may disclose abuse directly to staff. This section provides information and guidelines on our procedures in these situations.

### 4.1 Identifying types & indicators of abuse

In order to effectively protect children and young people against harm, all staff should be familiar with the various types and key signs of abuse. The [Children Act 1989](#) defines four main categories of child abuse:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Neglect

All staff are required to acquaint themselves with indicators of abuse (see appendix 1).

### 4.2 Radicalisation

Radicalisation is the process by which individuals come to support terrorism or violent extremism. There is no typical profile for a person likely to become involved in extremism, or for a person who moves to adopt violence in support of their particular ideology. Although a number of possible behavioural indicators are listed below, staff should use their professional judgement and discuss with other colleagues if they have any concerns:

- Use of inappropriate language
- Possession of violent extremist literature including electronic material accessed via the internet and communication such as e-mail and text messages
- Behavioural changes
- The expression of extremist views
- Advocating violent actions and means
- Association with known extremists
- Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology

If staff have any significant concerns about a child/young person beginning to support terrorism and/or violent extremism, they should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately.

### 4.3 Female Genital Mutilation

Under the [Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003](#) it is illegal in the UK to subject a child to female genital mutilation (FGM) or to take a child abroad, or aid or abet someone to take a child out of the country to undergo the procedure. Despite the harm it causes, FGM practising communities consider it acceptable to protect their cultural identity. The age at which girls are subject to FGM varies greatly from shortly after birth to any time up to adulthood. The average age is thought to be 6-12 years but it is also thought that the age at which girls are mutilated is dropping.

A child/young person may disclose that she is at risk of FGM, has suffered FGM or that she has a sister or family member who is at risk of mutilation.

Staff should be alert to the following indicators:

- The family comes from a community that is known to practise FGM
- A child/young person may talk about a long holiday to a country where the practice is prevalent
- A child/young person may confide that they or a sister or family member is to have a 'special procedure' or to attend a special occasion
- A child/young person may request help from a tutor or another adult
- Any girl/young person born to a woman who has suffered FGM or has a sister or relative who has been subjected to FGM must be considered to be at potential risk

Any information or concern about a child/young person or member of their family being at risk of FGM must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer as a matter of urgency. This may be treated as an immediate child protection referral to the child/young person's home borough.

### 4.4 Hearing a disclosure

If a child/young person says or indicates that they are being abused, or information is obtained which gives concern that a child/young person is being abused, you should follow the below guidance:

**RECEIVE:**

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is said and react calmly so as not to frighten the child/young person.
- Make a note of what has been said as soon as possible.

#### **REASSURE:**

- Reassure the child/young person that they have done the right thing by telling you
- Tell the child/young person they are not to blame
- It is important that you do not promise to keep a disclosure a secret as your professional responsibilities may require you to report the matter.
- If you make this promise to a child/young person and then break it, you confirm to the child/young person yet again that adults are not to be trusted

#### **REACT:**

- Take what the child/young person says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child/young person who has a speech disability and/or differences in language;
- Do not ask 'leading' questions, for example 'what did they do next?' (This assumes they did something) or 'did they touch your private parts?' Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and that of the child/young person) in any later prosecution in court.
- Explain what you have to do next and whom you have to talk to.

#### **RECORD:**

- Make some brief notes at the time on any paper which comes to hand
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by a court.
- Record the date, time, place, persons present and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour
- Be specific when noting the words used by the child/young person. It is helpful to use direct quotes where possible.
- Do not include any of your opinions or assumptions in the notes. The record must be factual
- If you remember further details at a later date, you can add to your notes. Record the date of any further information added
- Use RTC's Incident Report Form (see appendix) to ensure all the required information is recorded

#### **REMEMBER:**

- To share your concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Officer who will take the matter forward.

## 4.5 Reporting allegations, suspicions or concerns

It is not the responsibility of anyone working at RTC to decide whether or not a child/young person is being abused or might be abused. However, there is a responsibility to act on concerns to protect children and young people in order that appropriate agencies can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the child/young person.

If you become aware of any issue or complaint relating to the welfare or wellbeing of children and young people then you should raise these with the Designated Safeguarding Officer who will be responsible for documenting your concern on an **Incident Report Form** (see appendix 2). All concerns will be considered and a decision reached as to whether the concern should be referred to Social Services.

All Incident Report Forms are securely stored in a restricted and protected folder on the RTC Google Drive. When an Incident Report Form is archived in this folder a note will be made on RTC's **Participant Safeguarding Tracker** (see appendix 3). The note will provide basic details about the incident and a reference to the location of the Incident Report Form.

## 4.6 Making a referral to social services

If a decision is made to raise a concern with Social Services, it will be the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Officer to formally report this concern. If, for any reason, the Designated Safeguarding Officer is unable to lead on this process, then a member of the RTC Committee will make the referral.

RTC will make all referrals within 24 hours of a serious concern or disclosure coming to light. When a referral is made, RTC will record the name and role of the children and young people's services member of staff or police officer to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call/referral.

If a concern is allayed and a decision is made not to make a referral, then RTC will still be required to record details of the concern and details as to why a referral was not made. This information may become relevant later on if further concerns emerge.

## 5. Allegations of misconduct or abuse by staff

In the event of allegations being made against an employee (staff or voluntary), RTC has a dual responsibility in respect of both the child/young person and employee. The same person must not have responsibility for dealing with the welfare issues of children and young people and the staff employment issues.

Two separate procedures must be followed:

- i. In respect of the child/young person, the Designated Safeguarding Ambassador will lead the process related to the child/young person;
- ii. In respect of the staff member against whom the allegation is made, the Designated Safeguarding Officer will lead the process related to the staff member.

With regards to the child/young person, the aforementioned process will be followed. With regards to the staff member against whom the allegation is made, the below process will be followed:

1. RTC will make formal contact with Cambridgeshire County Council, who is responsible for providing instruction in the event of an allegation of abuse or suspicious behaviour made against a staff member.
2. RTC is legally required to alert the [LADO](#) (local authority designated officer) to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children and young people has:
  - a) Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child/children and/or a young person/young people;
  - b) Possibly committed a criminal offence against a child/children and/or a young person/young people;
  - c) Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they are unsuitable for such work.
3. The LADO will instruct RTC on procedure, and what information may be shared with the person who is the subject of an allegation. RTC and LADO will decide, in consultation with the Police and/or any other relevant agencies, what may be shared in situations that may possibly lead to a criminal investigation.
4. Subject to advice from the LADO, and to any consequent restrictions on the information that can be shared, RTC will, as soon as possible, inform the accused person about the nature of the allegation, how enquiries will be conducted and the possible outcome.
5. In all instances, RTC will seek to ensure that any staff member is treated fairly and honestly and that they are supported to understand the concerns expressed and processes involved. They will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation and the implications for any disciplinary or related process.

Contact Details:

Email: [LADO@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01223 727 967 (Monday to Friday during office opening hours)

Telephone: 01733 234 724 (Emergency Duty Team - out of hours queries)

## 6. Communication with children and young people

### 6.1 Communication via telephone

Staff should in no circumstances make or receive calls or texts to or from children and young people using their personal mobile phone numbers. An RTC mobile is provided for contacting children and young people on rare occasions e.g. planned RTC trips.

This mobile should be pin locked so that data is not accessible by others. Staff members who use the organisation mobile should, where possible, take the call in an open environment where the conversation can be witnessed.

### 6.2 Communication via email

All email communication from RTC should be with parents/carers only. RTC staff should never request or use a child's/young person's personal email address.

### 6.3 Social Media

RTC recognises that social media can be a legitimate and effective way to communicate with children and young people. Current social media applications used by members include Facebook, to name but a few. Contact with children and young people through such forums should only take place through organisational accounts. Current organisational accounts are as follows:

Application	Purpose	Account Domain	Account Moderators
Facebook	Public Profile	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/RiversideTheatreCompany">https://www.facebook.com/RiversideTheatreCompany</a>	Emily Wainwright-Meekins Terri Lalonde Jenifer Warburton
Facebook	Members Page	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/150406661674458">https://www.facebook.com/groups/150406661674458</a>	Emily Wainwright-Meekins Terri Lalonde Jenifer Warburton

Application	Purpose	Account Domain	Account Moderators
Website	Public Profile	<a href="https://www.riversidetheatrecompany.com/?fbclid=IwY2xjawPoSIZleHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETBjMjVhOWFGVEtIWUIPZ0kxc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHr-T-ndV7BkG5-n2Ngbw_NWKWkhgljsxJ4jglsFIAmtDX-oXEUVZsyOban0y_aem_Fum8WWmgF4L08GSreTeLLQ">https://www.riversidetheatrecompany.com/?fbclid=IwY2xjawPoSIZleHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETBjMjVhOWFGVEtIWUIPZ0kxc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHr-T-ndV7BkG5-n2Ngbw_NWKWkhgljsxJ4jglsFIAmtDX-oXEUVZsyOban0y_aem_Fum8WWmgF4L08GSreTeLLQ</a>	Terri Lalonde
Instagram	Public Profile	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/riverside_theatre_company/?hl=en-gb">https://www.instagram.com/riverside_theatre_company/?hl=en-gb</a>	Emily Wainwright-Meekins Terri Lalonde Jenifer Warburton

RTC staff, permanent or freelance, must not do any of the following on their personal social media accounts:

- Send or accept any friend requests from RTC members on Facebook
- Request to follow RTC members on other social media platforms
- Send or respond to any private messages from an RTC member on social media

RTC does not expect its staff to protect their personal social media accounts (by making sure their content is only visible to followers approved by the RTC account holder) however it does ask all staff to respect their association with RTC when uploading content.

RTC recognises there are the exceptions to this whereby there may be a family or close friendship connection outside of the RTC environment. These exceptions should be minuted.

## 7. Photography, video & online safety

Parental/guardian consent for photography or video recording of any child or young person is obtained through RTC Enrolment forms. Photographs and videos of children and young people will be stored in a designated folder that is only accessible by designated RTC staff.

RTC will announce at all performances that “Video and photography is not permitted during the performance”.

## 8. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

### 8.1 Check Levels

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) exists to help employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children and young people. A DBS check forms one part of the wider safeguarding process. It helps organisations to determine whether a person is a suitable candidate for a particular role by providing information about their criminal history.

RTC requires those undertaking roles working with children and young people undergo an Enhanced Disclosure Check from the Disclosure and Barring Service (“DBS”) or Disclosure Scotland or, to provide in-person, an existing certificate issued within three years of RTC employment end date.

The individual is required to supply all the relevant documentation required for DBS Checks promptly and in good time prior to the commencement of employment. Contracts may be terminated if the individual fails to provide the relevant documentation in good time or payment will be withheld until such time the individual supplies compliant identity documentation.

Where RTC pays for a DBS check to be undertaken, no further checks will be conducted and paid for, until the expiry of the original DBS check (3 years) or where there are grounds for concern. If the individual loses their certificate, RTC is not able to or liable for replacing a DBS check certificate. The individual will be responsible for paying for the set-up of another DBS check at the individuals’ own expense.

Where RTC pays for a DBS check to be undertaken and the individual fails to chase up missing hard copy certificates in good time (within 60 days) with the DBS check supplier directly, RTC will not pay for an additional check to take place in order to obtain a hard copy certificate. RTC is not able to or liable for replacing a DBS certificate and does not receive or keep copies of hard copy certificates as they are sent directly to the applicant’s address.

During your contracted period of employment with RTC, no relationships of an intimate or sexual nature with participants or any member of RTC are permitted, even though such young people may be over the age of consent.

If you are a current or alumni (over the age of 27) member of RTC who is already in a relationship with a current member of RTC, you must inform us of this relationship prior to your employment contract or Memorandum of Agreement’s start date. This remains in effect

for the duration of the membership of the young person, until such time as they become a vintage RTC member or voluntarily cease their membership with RTC.

The employed individual agrees to read and comply with the RTC Safeguarding Policy, a copy of which can be found on RTC's website.

Breach of the safeguarding policy may result in disciplinary action, which could lead to the termination of contract.

## 9. Child Performance Licencing

### 9.1 Requirement to licence

All children who perform on stage or in television, films, commercials or who work as models, have their welfare and safety protected by the following children in entertainment legislation:

- [Children & Young Persons Act 1933 & 1963](#)
- [Children \(Performances\) Regulations 1968](#)
- [The Children \(Performance\) \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) Regulations 1998\(1\)](#)
- [The Children \(Performance\) Amendment Regulations 2000](#)
- [The Children \(Performance\) \(Amendment\) \(No.2\) Regulations 2000](#)
- [Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England \(April 2015\)](#)

For the purposes of children in entertainment, a child is a person aged from birth until the end of their compulsory schooling.

The aforementioned legislation requires licences to be issued by each Local Authority (LA) for children who take part in one of the following categories:

- **Broadcast performances** (films, TV, video) includes performances that will be broadcast and those that are not broadcast.

It is the responsibility of RTC to establish contact with the relevant local authority in which a child resides to obtain instructions as to whether a license is required.

The Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England (April 2015) only applies to actual performances and therefore the following information does not apply to rehearsals or regular workshops.

More information on child licensing and the rules that RTC abide by can be found:

## 9.2 Chaperones

All licensed children need to be chaperoned while taking part in a performance. Chaperones act in loco parentis (in place of parent) and should exercise the care which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give that child. Regulations require a ratio of 1 chaperone to 12 children.

A chaperone's first priority is always to the child and the chaperone must not take part in any activity that would prevent them from proper supervision and care of the children they are responsible for. A chaperone will have total charge of a child unless chaperoned by their parent/carer whilst at the theatre/performance location.

If the child has completed their performance and is then handed into the care and control of their parent/carer who is outside of the stage performance area, the chaperone will no longer have responsibility for the child.

Licensed Chaperones are approved by Local Authorities and will be familiar with the law regarding *children in entertainment*.

## Appendix 1 - Indicators of Abuse Resources

(all staff to read)

All staff should be aware of the [types of abuse](#) and report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The [NSPCC](#) provides a variety of resources and help guidelines that all staff and volunteers should familiarise themselves with.

## Appendix 2 - [Incident reporting form](#)

(accessible to all via link)

## Appendix 3 - [Participant Safeguarding Tracker](#)

(accessible to Safeguarding Officer only)

## Appendix 4 - Diversity & Inclusion Statement

At Riverside Theatre Company, we believe every young person deserves a safe, welcoming, and empowering space to create, explore, and express themselves. We celebrate the richness that comes from diverse voices, cultures, identities, and lived experiences.

We are committed to fostering an environment where all participants—regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, ability, socioeconomic background, religion, neurodiversity, or cultural heritage—are valued and respected.

Our rehearsal spaces, programs, and productions are built on the principles of equity, empathy, and mutual respect. We work intentionally to remove barriers, challenge bias, and ensure that every young person has the opportunity to participate fully, both onstage and off.

Together, we strive to make RTC a place where everyone feels seen, heard, and empowered to shine—onstage, backstage, and in every corner of our community.

## Appendix 5 - Anti-bullying Statement

We will not tolerate bullying. Incidents of bullying will be investigated and treated seriously. Actions will be taken to stop the bullying.

## Appendix 6 - GDPR

Riverside Theatre Company is dedicated to safeguarding the personal information under our control. We take our obligations under the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 seriously, especially when processing sensitive information relating to the safety and welfare of children or vulnerable adults.

We operate in a secure environment, ensuring that information is shared only on a 'need to know' basis and only where it is necessary for the purposes of safeguarding.

What we collect: We may collect, store, and share personal data such as names, DOB, contact details, and sensitive safeguarding information (e.g. reports of abuse, incidents, or risk assessments).

We will share information with third parties (such as police, social services, or local safeguarding hubs) without consent if it is required to protect a child or adult at risk.

You have the right to request access to the information we hold about you. However, this may be restricted if it compromises the safeguarding of another person.

For questions, please contact our Designated Safeguarding Officer.

## Appendix 7 - Roles & Contacts

Key Roles	Role	Contact
Kirsty Pitt	Designated Safeguarding Officer / Child Protection Officer	rtccpo@gmail.com 07946 314345
Jennifer Warburton	Vice-Chair & Designated Safeguarding Ambassador / Deputy Safeguarding Officer	rtcstneots@gmail.com