Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure for Heddington Amateur Dramatic Society

Temp Ver 0.1

1. Policy Statement

The Heddington Amateur Dramatic Society (HADS) recognises it has a duty of care.

The society recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. All members of the society accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

The society believes that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All members of the society should be clear on how to respond appropriately. The society has child protection procedures which accompany this policy. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the society's Equal Opportunities Policy and Health & Safety Policy.

2. Responsibilities of the Society

- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity
- The duty of care to children will always be put first
- A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers the children to share in the decision-making process
- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned
- All adult members of the society provide a positive role model for dealing with other people
- Action will be taken immediately to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour
- It will keep up-to-date with health & safety legislation
- It will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children
- It will undertake relevant development and training
- it will hold a register of every child involved with the society and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

3. Productions

At the outset of any production involving children the society will:

- Undertake a risk assessment in relation to the safety of children and monitor risk throughout the production process; If physical contact, such as a body hold or lift,

between an adult and a child is required for the production it will be discussed with the child's Parent.
- Identify at the outset the person with designated responsibility for child protection.
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case it needs to report a concern.

4. Key People

The society has a dedicated Child Protection Officer, who is responsible for ensuring that the child protection policy and procedures are adhered to.

That person's name is: Jackie Williams who can be contacted on 07762 186127

Second Contact: Sally Watts who can be contacted on 07824 830767

5. CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURE

Parents

- The society believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents
- and the society. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the society and to share responsibility for the care of children. All parents will be given a copy the society's Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children
- after rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of the society to take children home.

Unsupervised Contact

- The society will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with
- children.
- If possible there will always be two adults in the room when working with children.
- If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimise risk. For
- example, work will be carried out in a public area or in a designated room with a
- door open.
- If it is predicted that an individual is likely to require regular unsupervised contact with children, he or she may be required to obtain a criminal record disclosure.

Physical Contact

- All adults will maintain an appropriate distance from children.
- Adults will only touch children when absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity.
- Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

Suspicion of abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of the society, please make this known to the person with responsibility for child protection. If you suspect that the

person with responsibility for child protection is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the Chairperson.
- Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed as well as your response, in case there is follow-up in which you are involved.
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of the society that individual will be suspended immediately and excluded from all society events until the investigation is concluded.

Disclosure of abuse

If a child confides in you that abuse has taken place:

- Remain calm and in control but do not delay taking action.
- Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Don't promise to keep it a secret. Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the person with responsibility for child protection. Make it clear to the child that you will need to share this information with others. Make it clear that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help.
- Reassure the child that 'they did the right thing' in telling someone.
- Tell the child what you are going to do next.
- Speak immediately to the person with responsibility for child protection. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually social services or the police.
- As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was said, using the child's own words. Note the date, time, any names that were involved or mentioned, and who you gave the information to. Make sure you sign and date your record.

Recording

- In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, the details of an allegation or reported incident will be recorded, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a statutory child protection agency.
  An accurate note shall be made of
    - the date and time of the incident or disclosure
    - the parties involved
    - what was said or done and by whom
    - any action taken to investigate the matter
    - any further action taken eg. suspension of an individual

- Where relevant the reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency will be recorded, along with the name of the persons reporting and to whom it was reported. The information will be kept confidential by the Child Protection Officer on an external drive

Rights & Confidentiality

- If a complaint is made against a member of the society that member will be made aware of their rights.
- No matter how you may feel about the accusation, both the alleged abuser and the child who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998. (to be superseded by the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) in

May 2018. Remember also that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released.

General Duty of Care for Members towards Children

- All adult members should exercise the care which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give to a child.
- If a member is concerned that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the member must inform the parents and not allow the child to continue.
- Children are not to leave the theatre unsupervised unless in the company of a designated person.
- Members should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by the society.

Version: 2026

Approved on behalf of the committee by the Chair

Signed: Jackie Williams

Date: 9.2.2026