



## **Echo Theatre - Safeguarding Policy**

The aim of the Echo Theatre Safeguarding Policy is to promote good practice by:

- Providing children, young people and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Echo employees and freelancers (paid and voluntary).
- Enabling staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific safeguarding issues.

All practitioners (paid and voluntary) and members of Echo Theatre are expected to adhere to a code of conduct in respect of their contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This code of conduct is set out below.

### **Child Protection Officer**

Shannon Toyne is the designated Child Protection Officer for Echo Theatre and her contact details are made available to all practitioners (paid and voluntary), children and young people and their parents/carers. All concerns or queries with regard to child protection issues should be reported to her. e

Shannon will undertake relevant development and training in order to be informed about legislation and policies for protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults and to keep up to date with health and safety.

### **Code of Conduct**

Shannon Toyne, practitioners (paid and voluntary) and all Echo Theatre members must conduct themselves in a sensible manner. This relates to the use of language and the way in which they move about any of the venues including treating the building and people working in it with respect, and not putting themselves or others at risk of injury.

#### **1. Inappropriate Behaviour**

This includes:

- physical and verbal abuse to others, and unacceptable language either towards or in the presence of a child or young person
- the drinking of alcohol, smoking of cigarettes or the taking of any illegal substance while engaged in any activity with children or young people.
- Harmful sexual behaviour, including using sexually explicit words and phrases, inappropriate touching, using sexual violence or threats, full penetrative sex with other children or adults.

## DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

### PHYSICAL ABUSE

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institution or community setting; by those known to them, or more rarely by a stranger. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

### EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

### SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

### NEGLECT

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## 2. Damage to Property

This includes behaviour that could cause damage to any building, furniture, equipment or personal belongings.

Ignoring or encouraging children or young people that are involved in any of the above behaviour is also unacceptable.

The disciplinary procedure will be as follows:

1. A verbal warning will be issued, asking for the behaviour to stop.
2. If the behaviour continues the person responsible will be asked to leave.

Should the offence be from an Echo Theatre member, a call will be made to their parent/guardian, asking them to collect their child/young person. A record of the incident will be kept on file, and a copy given to the person who made the offence.

A further discussion will then take place between the child or young person involved and the Child Protection Officer. The incident will then be referred to the members of Echo Theatre to discuss whether permanent expulsion from the group and/or project is necessary. Shannon Toyne will make the final decision on whether permanent expulsion is necessary.

Where the offence is deemed to be serious, involving deliberate injury to person or property, automatic expulsion from the group will occur and the police will be called.

## 3. Referral process should abuse be suspected:

1. You must report concerns as soon as possible to Shannon Toyne who is nominated by Echo Theatre to act on their behalf in referring allegations of suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities. If it is an emergency, and the designated persons cannot be contacted, then children and family services or the police should be contacted at the numbers given at the end of this document.
2. If the suspicions relate to the designated person, then the deputy or children and family services should be contacted.
3. Suspicions should not be discussed with anyone, other than those named above.
4. It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies. We would hope that an individual would use this procedure. However, if you feel that the organisation has not responded appropriately to your concerns, it is open to you to contact the child protection agencies directly.

## Recruitment and Disclosure

Any individual engaged by Echo Theatre to work with, or have unsupervised contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults will be subjected to all reasonable vetting. This will include undertaking an enhanced DBS check and providing the names of two references, one of which must be from a professional organisation.

For longer residencies, they will also be on a trial period, not exceeding 3 months. During this trial period, the children and young people involved will be consulted on this individual's suitability. These responses will be made in confidence and not disclosed to the individual being engaged.

## Equal Opportunities

Echo Theatre is committed to making its projects accessible to all without discrimination towards race or ability. To ensure this is possible:

- all venues used by Echo Theatre will be checked for accessibility and access.

- Echo Theatre will endeavour to employ people who can better accommodate children and young people with additional needs.

If any child or young person feels discriminated against, they should follow the complaints procedure below.

### **Complaints and Whistleblowing**

It is not the responsibility of Echo Theatre or any employed facilitator to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However, it is their responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure of abuse.

Echo Theatre takes all complaints seriously and assures all members, employed facilitators and volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports concerns regarding a colleague's behaviour towards a child, young person or vulnerable adult. Any concerns may be shared in confidence with the Child Protection Officer.

### **Photographs and Video Footage**

Echo Theatre will endeavour to ensure that any photographs or video footage taken will have the permission of the participants, parents/carers as appropriate. Should Echo Theatre use any photographic or video footage for promotional purposes, written permission from parents or carers, will be obtained.

### **Health, Safety, Accident and Injury**

All staff hold up to date First Aid Training Certificates.

It is the responsibility of those undertaking projects with Echo Theatre and of all parents/carers to ensure Echo Theatre is fully informed of any health issues or additional needs they or their child or young person may have.

All reasonable precautions will be taken, including informing members of fire drill procedures and where necessary, additional risk assessments will be carried out for projects undertaken by Echo Theatre outside of the regular drama sessions.

In situations where parents or carers are not present, Echo Theatre will hold health, accident and emergency contacts for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Echo Theatre is committed to the development and implementation of Safeguarding policies and procedures.

Echo Theatre believes in the right all children and young people have in being encouraged as artists.

It is the duty of all employed facilitators (paid or voluntary), members of Echo Theatre and visitors to the group to uphold this policy and safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Echo Theatre will review its Risk Assessment for each new project it engages in with children and young people.

Copies of this policy will be made available to all facilitators (paid or voluntary), any members of Echo Theatre and their parents/carers. This document is available on the staff google drive.

Any questions or concerns regarding this policy should be forwarded to:

Shannon Toyne  
E: [shannon@echotheatre.co.uk](mailto:shannon@echotheatre.co.uk)  
07405082781

**Policy last reviewed: 1st October 2025**

**Policy reviewed by: Shannon Toyne**



**Next review date: 1st October 2026**

## **Definitions**

“Children” and “Young People”

Throughout this document we refer to 12 year olds and younger as ‘children’; and thirteen year olds and older as ‘young people’. In general ‘children’ are always accompanied by adults whereas ‘young people’ prefer to be accompanied by their peers in terms of leisure pursuits.

“Vulnerable adults”

Vulnerable adults are people who are, or may be, in need of community care services because of mental disability or other disability, age or illness, and who are, or who may be, unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

## **Important Numbers**

Children's safeguarding - 01522 782111 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm)

Adults safeguarding - 01522 782155 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm)

or 01522 782333 (outside office hours)

If there is an immediate risk of danger, call the police on 999

If there is no immediate danger, call the police on 101.

For concerns about domestic abuse call EDAN Lincs on 01522 510041.