

# **CHILD SAFETY AT EVENTS**

If you are organizing an event where there will be children present you need to think about their safety, you also need to plan to provide for children with special needs. These are legal requirements. The easiest way of dealing with this is to state, "Children must be accompanied by a supervising adult, as this event does not provide any form of child minding facility. Adults bringing children must take responsibility for them at all times". However if you wish to provide a space where children can be left in the care of others you need to provide for their safety.

This fact-sheet details what children should be protected against and how you should protect them.

## **ALL PEOPLE INVOLVED WITH THE CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES SHOULD READ AND UNDERSTAND THE DOCUMENT:**

- 1. To protect the children**
- 2. To protect themselves**
- 3. To protect the good name of the Festival/Event & it's organisers**

**We suggest** that these instructions be sent out to relevant Stewards, and anyone else involved with children's activities, at least two weeks before the event. Giving them plenty of time to study it so any questions they have can be raised, and answered, at the first Steward's meeting (see point 5 under STAFF).

At this meeting Stewards should sign a document stating that they have read and understood this document. The person in charge of children's activities should keep this list of signatures with a copy of the document.

## **WHAT DO CHILDREN NEED TO BE PROTECTED FROM:**

There are three main things you need to consider when planning for child safety at events

### **HARM**

- Injury
- Abduction
- Attack
- Emotional distress

### **ABUSE**

- Verbal
- Physical
- Sexual
- Bullying

### **EXPOSURE TO INAPPROPRIATE:**

- Attitudes
- Language
- Materials
- Actions

## **HOW DO YOU PROTECT CHILDREN:**

### **1. PARENTS/CARERS**

- Ensure, when children are left, that the depositing adult is aware of the time they should collect their child/ren and the importance of not being late.
- Ensure the depositing adult gives information on where they can be found in case of an emergency, if they provide a mobile number remind them that the phone should be set to vibrate if they are in a performance.
- Ask depositing adults if the children they are depositing have any allergies or special needs and if they have they should be noted down.
- Providing name labels for children helps the supervising adults.

### **2. VENUES**

Should have:

- Clearly labelled exits and fire exits.
- A register of all children in the venue in case of Fire or other emergency.
- A minimum of 2 Stewards on each entry/exit in case one is called away.
- Stewards should be on duty at outside events that are not ticketed to ensure children do not go near dangerous areas.
- Stewards should arrive at the venue at least 15 minutes before the children.
- Stewards should ensure there is no rubbish or loose objects on the flooring area and no dangerous objects within a child's reach.
- Clear boundaries and appropriate fencing of any hazard such as open water.
- Access to toilets and running water within a reasonable distance.
- Close to first aid.
- Indoors - adequate lighting, heating and ventilation
- Suitable furniture for the age range of the children
- Appropriate safety glass, handrails and non slippery floors
- Provision for the regular and safe disposal of rubbish
- Suitable levels of adult supervision at all times – at least one adult per 10 children for school aged children, one adult per 8 children for pre-school children.

### **3. ACTIVITIES**

- Each activity and event should have a maximum number of children
- Age guidelines should be defined for all activities
- Leaders of all craft and making things activities should be expected to adhere to the "Guidelines for Working in Craft Activities Within The Children's Festival/Events". See Appendix A
- You should have a commitment to the equality of opportunity for all children, including those with disabilities, to actively participate within its events. To achieve this parents should inform the organizers in advance of their children's special needs so the event organizer can ensure those needs are met.
- Workshop supervisors and stewards should be made aware if any of the children in the group suffer from allergies.

#### 4. ADULT SUPERVISION

Children's events must be arranged and managed by responsible and suitable adults who have relevant qualifications, expertise and experience. The person/s with designated overall responsibility for organising events for children, must have a clearly defined role including: before, during and after the Festival.

It appears to be neither practically possible nor legally required, for **all** artists and volunteer stewards working within the Children's Festival/Events, to be police checked or to have a Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure. However the Children's Festival/Events Organiser/Producer does need to fulfil these requirements.

- People working with children must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- People working with children must be deemed to be medically fit
- People working with children should wear appropriate clothing, i.e. no rude or derogatory slogans or swear words on T-shirts.
- The person with overall responsibility for children's activities should have been Police checked and have had some training on child protection which they can pass on to stewards working with children.
- The Festival will ensure that appropriate First Aid cover is as close as possible
- All people working with children should know the nearest First Aid point and all emergency procedures
- All people working with children should be fully briefed on all aspects of event safety and child protection issues
- No single adult should be in sole charge of any single child
- All accidents must be recorded on an *Accident Report* form
- Children under 8 years must not be left unattended
- It is inadvisable for children under 8 years to leave the event unless accompanied by a parent or carer, preferably the person who brought them in at the start of the session.
- Artists and stewards must take all possible steps to avoid the inappropriate handling or touching of any child.

Inappropriate contact – we would deem as: Having a child on your lap. Picking up a child. Watching a child in a toilet - children should do their own "toileting".

Hand holding is OK when: Holding hands in a circle, holding hands to listen to a story. Adults hands should be in sight of other adults. If a child comes up to you for a cuddle, keep your hands out and in line of sight, don't return the cuddle, but DON'T push them away!

Use common sense and consider how your actions would appear to an outsider.

#### 5. BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT OF CHILDREN

- The stewards are responsible for behaviour management and should discuss what is required with the entertainer/workshop leader.
- All artists and stewards must be conversant with procedures for discipline and dealing with uncooperative children.
- Speak gently and reason with the child or children involved.
- Corporal punishment (smacking, slapping and shaking) is illegal.
- Practices that threaten, frighten or humiliate children must not be used.
- Bullying and physical abuse from one child to another, will not be tolerated .
- Do not accept disruptive or unruly behaviour from any child which spoils the enjoyment of others.

- Children who do not respond to reason should be returned to their parents with an explanation of why they have been removed from the children's activities.
- Stewards should be given training/information on dealing with children suffering from increasingly common special needs including sight and hearing problems, ADHD, aspergers, autism, downs syndrome, muscle problems, dyspraxia and dyslexia.

## **6. LOST CHILDREN**

- Designate a suitable place with plenty of supervision where lost children can be looked after.
- Ensure parents or carers bringing children know where to go if their child is lost.
- Ensure stewards know where to take lost children.
- Arrange for an announcement to be made in the adult venue/s at the earliest convenient moment.

## **7. STAFF**

To ensure that children are protected from both sexual and all other types of abuse, you must reserve the right not to employ in any capacity:

- Any person with a known history of sexual abuse to children
- Any other person that we feel presents a danger or threat to the safety of children
- Endeavour to take all reasonable steps possible, to ensure that there are no situations where any artist or volunteer steward is working within a situation where they have sole charge and unsupervised access to children.
- If any person reports any incident of unacceptable behaviour towards any child, you should be committed to taking immediate and appropriate action, to ensure the safety of children within the Event/Festival.
- It would be a good idea if at the start of a Festival stewards and workshop leaders could be brought together to be given some training information on dealing with children

## **PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM EXPOSURE TO INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES, ACTIONS, LANGUAGE AND MATERIALS**

You should be committed to:

- Booking performers whose acts have been viewed or who provide creditable references
- Ensuring that performers or stewards do not swear, use lewd actions or make inappropriate references to sexual or illegal activities
- Ensuring that artists and stewards avoid overt criticism or sarcasm to any child
- Providing artists with guidance about the age range of children
- Ensure that all artists and stewards avoid stereotypical attitudes, racist terminology or gender bias

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Events organisers should provide:

Main event contact details, Children's Festival/Events Organiser/Producer's contact details, Professional qualifications, Relevant experience & expertise, Date of police check/CRB Disclosure Certificate

This Fact-sheet is modelled upon the exemplar Safe Child Policy produced by the AFO. The AFO's exemplar policy has been produced, following detailed research into aspects of Child Protection and the Prevention of Unsuitable People from Working with Children and Young Persons.

Documentation consulted for the research included:

- DfES Guidance 0278/2002: Child Protection: Preventing Unsuitable People from Working with Children and Young Persons in the Education Services
- DfES Guidance 0780/2002:Criminal Records Bureau: Managing Demand for Disclosures
- The Criminal Justices and Court Services Act 2000
- Chapter 22 of the HSE The Event Safety Guide
- Out of School Care: Guidance to the National Standards published by OFSTED

### **APPENDIX A**

## **GUIDELINES FOR WORKING IN CRAFT ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL/EVENTS**

**It is not possible to remove risk altogether in craft activities, but it is essential to reduce any such risk to acceptable levels by careful planning and selection of materials to be used.**

- **All** people working in craft activities must be safety conscious at **all** times and activity leaders should carry out a basic Risk Assessment on their activity before arriving at the Festival.
- Stewards are present to help with activities and to minimise risk.
- Stewards will carry out regular checks on materials being used. If they are not happy with materials being used they must be withdrawn from use immediately.

### **THE USE OF MATERIALS AND TOOLS**

1. Ensure that **all** adhesives, paints, varnishes, etc. are suitable for use with children i.e. are **non-toxic** and **non-allergenic**.
2. Check all **materials**, especially re cycled junk materials, thoroughly for cleanliness, staples etc.
3. Be aware that some children are **allergic** to unexpected substances like sandpaper and some even react to substances, which are generally considered to be safe. The Festival informs parents via the Children's Programme that substances like sandpaper and PVA may be used.
4. Be especially careful with the use of "**sharps**" e.g. scissors, craft knives. It is best to use only round ended scissors and restrict use of real "sharps" to adults. Consider carefully the need to use tools in your sessions, it may be safer to pre-cut the items.

5. Be constantly aware of the location of **tools**, and at the end of each session make sure that all are accounted for.
6. Hot glue guns, staple guns and other similar tools should be **kept away** from children and should only be used by adults.
7. Any possible sources of **heat** e.g. hot water, hot irons, should be kept out of the reach of children and supervised at all times. Always consider how essential such things are to the success of the activity and plan for their safe use.

**ORGANISATIONS WHICH CAN PROVIDE USEFUL SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

DfES: [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)  
 HSE: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)  
 Home Office: [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)  
 Kids' Club Network: [www.kidsclubs.co.uk](http://www.kidsclubs.co.uk)  
 OFSTED: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE CHILD SAFETY DOCUMENT.  
 I UNDERSTAND IT IS THERE :  
 TO PROTECT THE CHILDREN  
 TO PROTECT MYSELF  
 TO PROTECT THE GOOD NAME OF THE FESTIVAL.

Signed..... Date.....

Name (in capitals).....