

## **Somerstage Safeguarding Policy (Updated Jan 2024)**

**This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy applies to all staff, volunteers/parents, guest teachers, students/children or anyone working on behalf of Somerstage and The McMillan Theatre.**

### **Safeguarding:**

Protecting children (everyone under the age of 18) from maltreatment

Preventing impairment of children's health or development

Taking action where a child is suffering significant harm, or is likely to do so

Taking action to promote the welfare of a child in need of additional support, even if they are not suffering harm or are at immediate risk

### **Safeguard leads**

All concerns or discussions of welfare/safeguarding should be reported to Designated Safeguard Leads Lisa Bonser and/or Timothy Bonser (c/o Somerstage). Wider concerns about the organisation should be reported to the theatre manager Anthony Bruton. All teachers for Somerstage are responsible for reporting possible concerns immediately to the DSL.

### **Purpose and aim of the policy**

Somerstage and The McMillan Theatre provide a safe, positive and encouraging environment for children to practice, progress and flourish in the main disciplines of performing arts. We believe that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people under the age of 18, and to keep them safe. The intent of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is to ensure that:

1. A safe environment is provided with Somerstage at The McMillan Theatre for children and vulnerable adults at all times, including every effort being made to help keep children safe online (if applicable).
2. Somerstage and The McMillan Theatre will take every step possible to ensure the safety and safeguarding of students and teachers.
3. Somerstage and The McMillan Theatre are committed anti-discriminatory practice. We will give equal priority to keeping all children and young people safe regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion/belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
4. Somerstage and The McMillan Theatre are able to take appropriate action to protect young people who are suffering or at risk of suffering harm including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse; sexual harassment; bullying in all its forms; neglect; radicalisation; female genital mutilation; forced marriage; slavery; honour-based violence; sexual and criminal exploitation (this list is not exhaustive). Action will be taken whether or not the risk of harm occurs in the physical world or online.
  - 4a. Somerstage and The McMillan Theatre are able to take appropriate action to protect young people who are suffering or at risk of suffering harm from child on child abuse. This form of abuse is when there is any kind of physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse or coercive control exercised between children/young people both on and offline. Somerstage is committed to creating a culture of acceptable behaviours and a healthy, safe environment based on equality and informed choice allowing children and young people to know their rights and responsibilities, what to do if they are unhappy with something and what it means to give true consent.

5. Safe recruitment practices check the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with or in proximity to children. All staff will have a relevant and up to date Enhanced DBS. Somerstage staff also have Level 2 CPD safeguarding certificates (Lisa Bonser & Tim Bonser). Dean Brammall & Phoebe Petrov (Level 1). Affiliate training with BTC (Safeguarding Essentials - Tim Bonser). All in-house staff of The McMillan Theatre have relevant checks in line with the BTC recruitment and Safeguarding policies.

6. Staff are trained to recognise the different types of harm and take appropriate action in line with BTC/McMillan Theatre procedures and with Keeping Children Safe in Education. Staff are also made aware of their Duty of Care towards all learners irrespective of age and swift action is taken on the rare occasion when there seems to have been a breach or abuse of trust.

7. Somerstage and The McMillan Theatre takes steps to support and protect the most vulnerable learners, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, and will support other organisations such as the police in the case of students becoming missing children.

8. Somerstage and The McMillan Theatre recognises its duty in this area and seeks to meet and exceed the welfare and safeguarding needs of children and vulnerable adults, as well as ensuring appropriate practices for staff recruitment and selection and providing a safe and secure environment in which to learn and progress.

9. Any concerns/disclosures are to be reported to the safeguard leads and then documented, dated and signed. Children will be made aware that any information disclosed will need to be reported to the appropriate management/authorities.

10. All students, whatever their personal, familial and social circumstances have the potential to be victims of abuse or harassment and staff should be vigilant to this possibility. Somerstage will ensure that students know how to report harassment, abuse or welfare concerns, whether taking place on the Theatre premises or externally, and whether historic or current. Students/children who do so will be supported and will not be made to feel ashamed or embarrassed, nor have fears of retribution.

## **Procedures**

**\* If a student is in immediate Helping the child in immediate danger or in need of emergency medical attention remain with them and call 999. If the child is elsewhere, contact the police and explain the situation to them. If he/she needs emergency medical attention, call an ambulance and, while you are waiting for it to arrive, get help from your first aider. You also need to contact Tim Bonser or Lisa Bonser as Designated safeguarding officers for Somerstage to let them know what is happening.**

*Guidance for staff on spotting signs of abuse, types of disclosures and referral procedures can be found in the Somerstage guidance document available as an appendix A at the bottom of this document.*

## **Disclosure and Referral**

If a student discloses harassment or abuse to a member of staff, the member of staff should reassure the young person that they have done the right thing, and assess whether there is immediate risk to the young person or, for example, a sibling.

It is vital not to give the student the impression that they are nuisance or that it is a problem that they have disclosed. Inform Somerstage Principals/DSL Lisa Bonser or Timothy Bonser or The Theatre Manager Anthony Bruton if available. The Designated Safeguard Leads will quickly decide whether the concerns should be referred to Children's Services. If it is decided to make a

request for involvement to Children's Services this will be discussed with the parents, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm.

Any staff member can make a referral to Children's Services. If a young person is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made to Children's Services and/or the Police immediately. Where referrals are not made by the DSL, the DSL/Somerstage must be informed as soon as possible.

### **Recording the disclosure**

The member of staff must record information (write it down) regarding the concerns on the same day. The recording must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations.

Attention must also be paid to the attendance and development of any young person about whom the Somerstage has concerns.

When a member of staff discovers that an act of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, or there is a risk this might occur, the teacher must report this to the police and should talk to the Principals/DSL immediately. This is a mandatory reporting duty.

A Somerstage safeguarding incident form is available for recording information on request or online here:

FOLLOW LINK TO: [Safeguarding Disclosure Form](#)

### **Record keeping**

When a young person has made a disclosure, the member of staff receiving this should:

- Record the conversation as soon as possible
  - Keep the original notes in case they are needed by a court
  - Record the date, time, witness, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child
  - Indicate the position of any injuries
  - Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions
  - Agree and record actions and outcomes.
- All records need to be given to the DSL who will also inform Theatre Manager

### **Confidentiality**

Safeguarding and protecting young people raises issues of confidentiality that must be clearly understood by all staff.

If a young person discloses to a member of staff and asks that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the young person, clearly and sensitively, that they cannot promise complete confidentiality – instead they must explain that they may need to pass information to other staff to help keep the young person safe. In this situation refer as quickly as possible to the DSL.

### **Varied Settings**

This policy will apply in all settings where Somerstage runs classes including both The McMillan Theatre and Northgate School. The same staff members will be present and the procedures remain the same for either venue. If in doubt always consult Lisa or Timothy Bonser as DSL. The policy will also apply at 1610 (Robert Blake School) for Monday classes in 2024

### **Reporting Staff Members**

All Somerstage staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice within Somerstage and potential failures in the safeguarding arrangements without prejudice or fear of retaliation.

An NSPCC whistleblowing advice line is available for those who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff or parents can call: 0800 028 0285, or email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

## **Bridgwater & Taunton College Safeguarding Practices**

The McMillan Theatre is under the umbrella of BTC which also has its own safeguarding practices and procedures (of which Somerstage is derived) . Any wider/higher concerns about Somerstage as an entity can be raised in confidence with the theatre Manager The McMillan Theatre Anthony Bruton: [brutona@mcmillantheatre.co.uk](mailto:brutona@mcmillantheatre.co.uk)

McMillan Theatre staff are also trained in safeguarding and work in tandem with Somerstage to provide the safest environment while in the building. The BTC policy can be found here for reference: <https://www.btc.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Safeguarding-Policy-22-23.pdf>

## **Recruitment**

1. Recruitment procedures will seek to reflect the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education and will aim to 'prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children' (Section 71).
2. Somerstage will ensure that procedures are in place to ensure that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff and volunteers who have substantial access to children and vulnerable adults, including enhanced DBS checks, and that a single central record is kept of such checks.
3. Somerstage DSL Lisa Bonser and Tim Bonser have completed Safeguarding Training to Level 2 and all other staff members are required to be at least Level 1 safeguarding trained.

## **Site safety**

All staff have a responsibility to ensure the Theatre/School provides a safe environment for students, and all staff should be vigilant to intruders and any risk of harm to young people. Specific actions that Somerstage will take include:

Maintaining suitable and reasonable physical boundaries and barriers such as locks on main doors, locks on the studio door, limiting site access and channelling visitors to Reception/foyer areas. Specifically the main doors remain shut at both venues during classes. At The McMillan Theatre only the Box office will be manned at certain occasions and visitors are admitted to the foyer only at the discretion of theatre staff. In this case the dance studio doors are locked and accessed by fob only held by approved staff.

Ensuring all legitimate users of the Theatre can be recognised by an ID card and lanyard, or by a visitor badge.

Asking contractors, visitors and volunteers using the premises to sign in at The box office, understand the Theatre/Somerstage's approach to Safeguarding, and wear a visitor's badge or lanyard. This is the responsibility of the McMillan theatre staff to maintain while on site. No other persons will be admitted to Northgate School other than students or parents. Responsibility for the premises lies with the caretaker though Somerstage will mitigate access.

Ensuring risk assessments are in place for hazardous areas used by young people as part of their curriculum or enrichment e.g the theatre stage.

Carrying out, and maintaining records of, Fire Drills, operate an effective First Aid service, and ensure steps are taken to minimise the transmission of viruses such as COVID-19.

## First Aid

Trained first aiders include Anthony Bruton, Dean Brammall and Lisa & Timothy Bonser of which at least 2 are on site at all times. Certificates are available on request or from the dropbox link at the bottom of the document.

## Run-hide-tell

In the light of the concern that the Theatre or school might be perceived of as a potential target for a terrorist attack, Somerstage will promote the run-hide-tell response to students and staff, and ensure the necessary authorities are immediately notified in the event of an attack.

## Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually and will be available on the Theatre/Somerstage website or requested from the box office.

Somerstage Principals Lisa & Timothy Bonser and The McMillan Theatre manager Anthony Bruton will monitor and review this policy annually to stay in line with latest recommendations.

## Somerstage will meet their commitment to keeping children safe by:

- Listening to children and respecting them
- Appointing Timothy & Lisa Bonser as Designated Safeguard Leads, who take responsibility for safeguarding at the highest level in the organisation.
- Working in partnership with The McMillan Theatre who also have a stringent BTC Safeguarding policy and deliver training to their staff.
- Writing & reviewing detailed safeguarding and child protection procedures
- Making sure all staff and volunteers understand and follow the safeguarding and child protection procedure outlined above.
- Ensuring children, young people and their families know about the organisation's safeguarding and child protection policies and what to do if they have a concern.
- Building a safeguarding culture where staff, volunteers and children know how they are expected to behave and feel comfortable about sharing concerns.

## **Effective for staff, students, teachers and volunteers on or after 1 January 2024)**

Signed



DSL Timothy Bonser



DSL Lisa Bonser

Signed

Anthony Bruton (on behalf of The McMillan Theatre)

Date: 01/01 / 2024

For more information on safeguarding in Somerset please visit:

<https://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk>

**All Somerstage safeguarding documents (Safeguarding training certificates, First Aid certificates, Policies, Procedures and Risk Assessments) can be found at:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/evjhxtwr04hjjvzk5tyc/h?dl=0&rlkey=t7azz3laa3jxhxg2mjopgx68a>