



Child and Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy

Child Protection Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

Thurso Players (hereinafter referred to as 'the organisation') recognises that Child Protection should not be treated in isolation - we will follow guidance given by Highland council on recruiting volunteers by doing the following:

- Accepting its responsibility, as a group, to check that all adults with regular access to children have been appropriately vetted.
- Interviewing all prospective adult volunteers and members.
- Noting at interview all previous relevant experience of volunteers.
- Carrying out disclosure checks for all potential adult volunteers and members when necessary and where relevant.

The organisation believes that every child regardless of age has at all times and in all situations a right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice that results in a child being physically or psychologically harmed. If the organisation has suspicions about a child's physical, sexual or emotional well-being, then action will be taken in compliance with current legislation i.e., Protection of Children [Scotland] Act 2003. All volunteers or members are encouraged to share concerns with the group's Designated Officer. If the situation is clearly urgent or if you have concerns about the child's safety contact Social Work Services or the Police.

1. Junior Members of the organisation shall not be younger than 8 years and not older than 18 years. Where children under the minimum age limit are in attendance at a rehearsal or performance, they must be accompanied at all times by an adult family member. The organisation will not accept responsibility for children below the minimum age limit.
2. In the terms of The Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003, a child is defined to be a person under the age of 18 years. For the purposes of this document, children are deemed to be Junior Members while they are between the ages of 8 and 18 years.
3. The organisation shall appoint a Child Protection Officer, (Designated Officer) with responsibility for producing and maintaining a Child Protection Policy. This officer will be responsible for ensuring that all adult members who have contact with children have been disclosed. He will be the point of contact for all matters relating to Junior Players activities.
4. All children involved in the organisation's activities must be members of the organisation, having completed a Membership Application and paid the appropriate fee.
5. Full adult members of the organisation shall, when necessary and where relevant, be subject to Disclosure checks. Extreme vigilance from all members is essential and any suspicious acts must be brought to the immediate attention of the Designated Officer.

6. Parents/Guardians will be advised, usually in writing, of club activities with dates and times. A signature may be required in agreement to permit involvement in certain events. e.g. Late night activities.
7. Allegations will be referred to and involve the support and advice of external agencies.
8. All new members of the organisation will be issued with a copy of this Policy.
9. This Policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate.

Policy on Protecting Vulnerable People

Thurso Players (hereinafter referred to as 'the organisation') aims to ensure that any vulnerable people, whether children, young people or vulnerable adults, are protected and kept safe from harm while they are with staff and volunteers in this organisation. To achieve this we will ensure our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised.

Selection

- All applicants to our organisation will complete an application form.
- Applicants will be asked to attend interview.
- Applicants will be asked to provide references and these will always be taken up prior to confirmation of an appointment.

Screening

- Where relevant to the post, the successful applicant will be asked to agree to an appropriate disclosure. Disclosures will be requested prior to the applicant taking up post.

Training

- The successful applicant will receive induction training, which will give an overview of the organisation and ensure they know its purpose, values, services and structure.
- Continuing relevant training and support will be provided and will cover information about their role, and opportunities for practicing skills needed for the work.
- Training on specific areas such as health & safety procedures, identifying and reporting abuse, and confidentiality will be given as a priority to new staff and volunteers, and will be regularly reviewed.

Supervision

- All staff and volunteers will have a designated supervisor who will provide regular feedback and support.

The organisation will ensure that all staff and volunteers involved in recruitment, training and supervision, are aware of this policy and have received appropriate training and support to ensure its full implementation.

Policy on the Recruitment of Ex Offenders

Thurso Players undertakes to treat all applicants for positions within the organisation fairly and not to discriminate unfairly against the subject of a disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

An Enhanced disclosure will always be requested where it is necessary and relevant to the position sought.

Where a position requires a disclosure the organisation will make this clear on the application form, job advert and any other information provided about the post.

At interview the organisation will ensure that open and measured discussions can take place on the subject of offences. Failure to reveal information at interview, that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

At interview or when receiving a disclosure which shows a conviction, the organisation will take into consideration:-

1. Whether the conviction is relevant to the position being offered.
2. The seriousness of the offence revealed.
3. The length of time since the offence took place.
4. Whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour.
5. Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since offending took place.

The organisation will ensure that all our staff involved in the recruitment process are aware of this policy and have received relevant training and support.

The organisation undertakes to make a copy of this policy available to any applicant for a post with the organisation that requires a disclosure.

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Points of Contact and Reporting Procedures

Provided these policy guidelines are followed it is unlikely that there will be any complaint from or about any member of Thurso Players.

General concerns about a member's conduct, a child or vulnerable person's welfare or the operation of this Policy should always be discussed with the Designated Officer who may in turn make a referral to the Designated Social Worker. In the event of an actual allegation, a referral will be made. Should there be urgent need for action then either Social Services or the Police should be contacted.

Thurso Players Designated Officer

Neil MacDonald - Tel. 01847-896956/07882-201263

Designated Social Worker

Ian McElroy - 01847-893835

Designated Police Officer

Elizabeth Goskirk - 01847-893222

(Police Confidential Line) – 01463-720367

Written notice of any allegation must be made. It must include full details including the time, date and locus of the event and the substance of the allegation.

Should the Designated Officer be unavailable then the Chairman should be advised.

ALL ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE MUST BE REFERRED TO THE SOCIAL SERVICES AND THE POLICE.

The Chairman will be advised by the Designated Officer that an action has been raised but the identity of those involved will not be disclosed.

NO INVESTIGATION IS TO BE TAKEN BY INDIVIDUALS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

ALL CONTACTS WILL BE TREATED IN STRICT CONFIDENCE.

Policy on the Secure Handling, Use, Storage and Retention of Disclosure Information

In accordance with the Scottish Executive Code of Practice, for registered persons and other recipients of Disclosure Information, Thurso Players will ensure the following practice.

- Disclosures will be requested only when necessary and the information provided on a disclosure certificate will be used only for recruitment purposes.
- The organisation will ensure that an individual's consent is given before seeking a disclosure.
- Disclosure information will be shared only with those authorised to see it in the course of their duties.
- Where additional disclosure information is provided to the organisation and not to the disclosure applicant, the organisation will not disclose this information to the applicant, but will inform them of the fact that additional information has been provided, should this information affect the recruitment decision.
- Disclosure information will be stored in a locked non-portable container, for a maximum of 90 days. Only those authorised to see this information in the course of their duties will have access to this container.
- Disclosure information will be destroyed by shredding.
- No image or photocopy of the disclosure information will be made, however the following details will be retained:-
 1. Date of issue of disclosure
 2. Name of subject
 3. Disclosure type
 4. Position for which disclosure was requested
 5. Unique reference number of disclosure
 6. Recruitment decision taken.
- The organisation will ensure that all persons with access to disclosure information are aware of this policy and have received relevant training and support.
- The organisation undertakes to make a copy of this policy available to any applicant for membership of the organisation that requires a disclosure.

Child Protection Policy – Guidelines

Dealing with an Allegation

In the event of a complaint of abuse the following procedures should be adhered to:

1. Listen attentively to the child but do not ask questions.
2. Do not promise 'not to tell anyone'. Use expressions such as 'I might need to take advice from others'.
3. As soon as possible after the event, make written notes on what was said by the child and how you responded.
4. Advise the Designated Officer, or in his absence, the Chairman, as they are the only point of contact of the Child Protection Agencies.
5. Do not contact the parent or guardian of the child. If this is deemed necessary it will be done by the Designated Officer.
6. The Designated Officer will contact Social Service or the Police and advise them of the allegation.
7. Where the circumstances are deemed appropriate and in consultation with the outside agencies, the Designated Officer will arrange with the Chairman to contact any adult who is the subject of an allegation following commencement of the investigation. The child's name must not be disclosed.
8. The organisation shall take advice from the Child Protection Agency on appropriate action.

Remember:

Do not ask questions.

Refer all allegations.

Do not make any investigation.

Keep all matters confidential

Keep a written record

Child Protection Policy - Guidelines

General & Rehearsals

1. There should be a minimum of two adult members of the organisation present at all rehearsals and workshops which involve children.
2. An adult member, preferably a Committee Member, should be nominated as the session contact and take charge of any reported incident.
3. All visitors to rehearsals should be brought to the attention of the session leader.
4. Casual visitors should be discouraged and monitored. Any suspicious behaviour should be reported to the Police.
5. Parents/Guardians should be advised of start and finish times and these should be adhered to so that appropriate transport arrangements can be made.
6. Avoid all forms of physical contact. If essential for dramatic reasons this must be clearly understood by all concerned.
7. Avoid suggestive or lewd language.
8. No favouritism should be shown to any individual.
9. Avoid one-to-one coaching anywhere other than an open environment.
10. Do not invite small groups to rehearse in private homes.
11. If a child or member's actions give cause for alarm, speak sensitively to them. Record your actions and pass all details to the Designated Officer as quickly as possible.
12. Listen in a non-judgemental but supportive way. Do not ask questions.
13. Make a note of the allegations and any comments made by the child or yourself.
14. If possible advise the Designated Officer. Do not delay contacting the appropriate child protection agency.
15. On no account should any discussion take place with parents or guardians following an allegation.

Child Protection Policy - Guidelines

Performances

1. Parents/Guardians should be advised in writing of dates, times, locations and general arrangements. The organisation can accept no responsibility for children outwith these times.
2. Written parental approval must be obtained where a 'later than usual' finish time is expected. Common sense should prevail in this instance.
3. A minimum of two adult members (one male and one female) should be available to look after children in the backstage areas.
4. No unauthorised persons should have access to the dressing room.
5. No unauthorised persons should have access to the backstage areas. This includes non-members, parents/guardians and other relatives.
6. If a child or member's actions give cause for alarm, speak sensitively to them. Record your actions and pass all details to the Designated Officer as quickly as possible.
7. Listen in a non-judgemental but supportive way. Do not ask questions.
8. Make a note of the allegations and any comments made by the child or yourself.
9. If possible advise the Designated Officer. Do not delay contacting the appropriate child protection agency.
10. On no account should any discussion take place with parents or guardians following an allegation.

Child Protection Policy - Guidelines

Overnight Stays

1. All accompanying adults must be members of the organisation and known to the children. Supporters of the organisation's aims are encouraged to attend events.
2. A written itemised itinerary should be provided for parents/guardians.
3. The names of the accompanying adults should be provided for parents/guardians.
4. One adult shall be nominated as group leader for contact purposes.
5. A list of all home telephone and emergency contact numbers must be carried, at all times, by the nominated group leader. A copy of this list will be given to the Secretary prior to departure.
6. Accommodation arrangements must respect the privacy of the children.
7. Adults should never enter a child's room unaccompanied.
8. Access to rooms by other children should not normally occur and is to be discouraged.
9. In the event of a medical or other emergency the first priority must always be the child. Call for assistance.
10. Do not delay in providing help even if this means being alone with the child.
11. If a child or member's actions give cause for alarm, speak sensitively to them. Record your actions and pass all details to the Designated Officer as quickly as possible.
12. Listen in a non-judgemental but supportive way. Do not ask questions.
13. Make a note of the allegations and any comments made by the child or yourself.
14. If possible advise the Designated Officer. Do not delay contacting the appropriate child protection agency.