

**SKIMSTONE  
PERFORMANCE COMPANY Ltd.**

**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN  
And  
VULNERABLE ADULTS  
POLICY**

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# **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY**

## ***SKIMSTONE PERFORMANCE COMPANY Ltd***

The policy outlined here has been specifically designed for Skimstone Performance Company Ltd. and is restricted to implementation on all of Skimstone's projects and activities involving children, young people and vulnerable adults. It does not supersede individual organisational policies designed by outside agencies, groups and individuals who become involved in Skimstone's activities.

### **Introduction**

Skimstone's Board of Directors, Artistic Director and all other company members recognise that the term 'young people' has no legal basis, but employ it to more accurately reflect the ages of a specific age group we work with (0-25). However this policy also includes vulnerable adults. Skimstone demonstrate a commitment to working with people in this particular age group and feel it is a privilege to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults; it is also a great responsibility. Parents, guardians and carers trust us to look after their children, young people and vulnerable adults to care for them, empower them, challenge them and ultimately keep them safe.

Skimstone acknowledges recommendations from the Home Office ("Safe from Harm") and work undertaken by Arts Council England with the NSPCC (National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children) which examines some of the specific issues affecting those who use the arts in their work with young people ("Keeping Arts Safe"). Skimstone is therefore committed to the promotion of young people's and vulnerable adults welfare and the prevention of abuse, in various forms, taking place. We strive for best practice in all activities and work involving children, young people and vulnerable adults.

This policy aims to safeguard everyone under the age of 18 who become involved in Skimstone's activities. Skimstone is, however, a performance company for everybody so work may extend to those who are aged over 18. Skimstone therefore recognise a duty of care to all children, young people involved in our work and this also includes those who could be described as vulnerable adults (those adults who may need community care services

by reason of mental or other disability, age and/or illness and who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation).

Whilst Skimstone recognises that legal frameworks may differ within other organisations, the spirit of the procedures should be applied in respect of all children, young people and vulnerable adults. There may also be occasions when the duty of care extends to the children, young people and vulnerable adults of those who work with Skimstone.

### **Policy aims:**

- To ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults in Skimstone's care are protected from harm
- To facilitate appropriate response should abuse be discovered, or disclosed. This may include notifying the police immediately and placing alleged victim in a place of safety until the appropriately informed authorities and or parents/ carers arrive.
- To clarify appropriate behaviour for company members and provide guidance on avoiding situations where a company member's actions may be misunderstood (this point covers both the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults and the protection of company members from false allegations).

It is part of the Artistic Director's duty of care to ensure that company members are never placed in situations where abuse might be alleged.

***NB: it is not intended that the policy should restrict company members from normal ways of working, but company members always need to consider how an action or activity may be perceived as opposed to how it is intended.***

Skimstone's Board of Directors, Artistic Director and company members strongly support the following key safeguarding statements:

- The welfare of the children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount
- All children, young people and vulnerable adults 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
- Company members and those who become involved in an organisation's activities should be clear on how to respond appropriately .e.g following company procedures where alleged victims are listened to, supported and given a place of safety and security.

- Working in partnership with children, young people and vulnerable adults ,their parents, carers and other agencies is key in promoting young people's welfare.

### **To Whom the Policy Applies:**

This policy applies to the Board of Directors, Artistic Director, current company members and all of those who become involved in Skimstone's projects and activities.

***Each of those individuals involved with Skimstone should familiarise themselves with the Skimstone Performance Company Ltd. Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy.***

### **Definitions of Abuse:**

Abuse can be defined as:

An act of omission or commission judged by a mixture of community values and professional expertise to be inappropriate or damaging

#### **Sexual Abuse**

Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. May involve physical contact, penetrative or non-penetrative acts. Also included is subjecting children, young people and vulnerable adults to watching pornographic material or watching sexual acts.

#### **Physical Abuse**

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning or suffocating.

#### **Emotional Abuse**

Persistent ill treatment, which is likely to cause serious harm to the child's, young person and vulnerable adult's emotional development. May involve conveying to a child, young person and vulnerable adult that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate.

#### **Neglect**

The persistent failure to meet a child, young person and vulnerable adult's basic physical and/ or psychological needs, which is likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. May involve failing to provide food, shelter and clothing or allow access to medical care or treatment.

#### **Discriminatory Abuse**

Including racial or sexual harassment and also abusive treatment based on a

child's, young person's or vulnerable adult's disability.

Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence and ignorance. It may be perpetrated by a wide range of people including family members, trusted adults, friends, peers, neighbours, people in positions of power and authority and volunteers as well as by strangers. There is particular concern when abuse is perpetrated by someone in power or authority who use their position to the detriment of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

Company members should always be alert to situations where they may be witnessing '**ABUSE OF TRUST**'. This must be brought to the attention of the Artistic Director immediately.

### **Procedures to follow:**

Skimstone is committed to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults from physical, sexual or emotional harm. In order to achieve this, company members and all of those who become involved in company activities need to value young people and take time to listen to them when they choose to talk about their experiences and concerns. It is important that company members and all of those involved in company activities know how to respond if abuse is disclosed or suspected.

- Remain calm and in control
- Listen carefully to what has been said
- Ask questions only for clarification
- Don't promise to keep it 'a secret'
- Say you will need to share with others, but explain this is to the Artistic Director, and they may pass this information on
- Reassure the child or young person that they did the right thing
- Make sure that the child or young person knows what will now happen
- Speak to Artistic Director about the child ASAP
- Make notes ASAP afterwards using child/ young person's words
- Seek appropriate support from the Artistic Director if you have found the incident stressful

### **Subsequently:**

The Artistic Director is responsible for referring information to the statutory authorities (Social Services or Police).

The details of the disclosure or concern must not be discussed with anyone other than the young person, the Artistic Director and the statutory authorities.

If the disclosure, or concern is about a Skimstone company member the person

must be suspended from any activities involving young people until the matter has been investigated.

In the instance that the disclosure or concern is about the Artistic Director, a second company member is responsible for referring the matter directly to the statutory authorities and notifying the Chair of the Board of Directors.

### **The selection of company members and their responsibilities:**

Where relevant, Skimstone will recruit all company members following appropriate equal opportunity procedures (refer to Skimstone Performance Company Ltd. Equal Opportunities Policy)

Interviews will be carried out by Artistic Director and a minimum of one other company member and relevant questions regarding work with, experience of and attitudes to children and young people will be addressed to all candidates where relevant.

Recent, relevant and reliable references will be sought for all workers whenever possible and wherever applicable

Until relevant Disclosures from the CRB have been seen, company members and those who wish to become involved in Skimstone's activities will not have unsupervised direct contact with young people.

The roles of all company members must be established and clearly explained to them by the Artistic Director.

Company members and those involved in company activities must not be expected to perform duties for which they are not adequately trained or experienced.

### **Roles and Responsibilities -**

#### **a) Artistic Director**

The Artistic Director will ensure that;

- when any company member or individual involved in Skimstone's activities is required to have unsupervised contact with children and/or young people (for example training, regular mentoring, being in sole charge), they are required to produce a relevant and recent CRB Disclosure certificate (no more than 1 year old)
- Where possible the relevant level of 'Disclosure' will be sought from the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). Existing CRB Disclosure certificates will be seen by the Artistic Director and references taken up when appropriate.
- The Artistic Director will issue company members and those involved in company activities a copy of the Safeguarding Children, Young People

and Vulnerable Adults Policy and make themselves available to provide further advice or support if required.

- Any filming or taking photographs of children, young people and vulnerable adults as part of any Skimstone project or activity requires the consent of the child / young person / vulnerable adult and a parent or guardian (if under the age of 18) when relevant. Written consent must be given and a signed consent form returned. This is the responsibility of the Artistic Director and company members.
- Any personal data relating to children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in Skimstone's projects and activities must be kept secure and not passed on to an outside party. It must be securely deleted once the project is finished. This is the responsibility of all company members.

**All company members must ensure that the following guidelines are followed:**

- Ideally at least two company members should conduct any young people's activity if the young people are under the age of 18.
- As far as possible a company member will not be left alone with a young person
- If privacy or confidentiality is required, another company member should be told, doors should be left open and the company member and young person should be checked on periodically, the young person should be told about this arrangement.
- Company members need to check that access to and from any buildings used for project work are safe and well lit
- Treat all children, young people and vulnerable adults with respect and dignity and without discrimination
  - Be careful with speech, tone of voice and body language
  - Respect the privacy of young people (e.g. when changing)
  - Avoid games/ exercises whose rules do not prevent the possibility of physical aggression, or inappropriate touching
  - Refrain from any sexually suggestive comments, ridiculing, or rejection of a young person, even in fun
  - Avoid inappropriate touching in any form and exercise caution when comforting a distressed or injured young person
  - Avoid all situations where the company member is alone with a group exclusively of the opposite sex, a second company member of the same sex as the group must be present if possible.
  - Not let young people involve him or her in excessively attention seeking behaviour, especially if it is of an overtly sexual or physical nature
  - Not invite a young person to his or her home

- Avoid engaging with young people via text/ mobile phone calls/ email/ MSN or equivalent unless absolutely necessary
- Ensure that parents, guardians and carers know where the young people are, obtain written parental consent for non-routine events or visits
- Avoid giving lifts to individual young people, if this is unavoidable make sure they sit in the rear of the car
- Not provide lifts to passengers exclusively of the opposite sex

### Visits to Toilets

As the male and female toilets are outside the Skimstone Premises i.e. along the corridor, children, young people and vulnerable adults must ask, for fire and safety reasons. to notify a Skimstone member when they are going to the toilet and when they have returned

### **Good practice amongst company members:**

Company members must support each other in their work with young people and encourage the use of the guidelines at all times

If a company member has a concern about the behaviour or suitability of another company member they must speak, in confidence, to the Artistic Director as soon as possible.

Artistic Director should take opportunities to observe company members in activities with young people, and discuss what they have observed with the company member

Company members should accept such observation as part of Skimstone's commitment to safe and good quality activities with children, young people and vulnerable adults .

As part of supervision, Artistic Director should discuss with the company member their role, performance and any concerns they have about their work with young people

### **Safe Touch**

Skimstone recognises that it is advisable to avoid direct physical contact with young people to safeguard the young person from possible abuse, and to protect company members from false allegations of abuse. However use of some art forms (dance/ drama etc) may on some occasion necessitate the 'touching' of young people. Relevant company members will be expected to familiarise themselves with the concepts of 'safe touch', advice on which can be sought from the Artistic Director.