LANGTOFT PLAYERS

CHILDREN IN PERFORMANCE & ENTERTAINMENT POLICY

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Policy owner: Langtoft Players Committee
Safeguarding Lead: Marc Skinner
Chair: Michelle Marshall

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1. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

Langtoft Players is committed to providing children and young people with the opportunity to participate in amateur theatre in a safe, inclusive, supportive and enjoyable environment.

The welfare of every child is the organisation's first priority. Participation in theatre should be an enjoyable experience that builds confidence, creativity, teamwork, communication skills and self-esteem.

This policy sets out the standards and procedures that Langtoft Players will follow whenever children and young people participate in:

- rehearsals;
- auditions;
- performances;
- drama workshops;
- backstage activities;
- technical activities;
- costume and make-up activities;
- publicity and photography;
- theatre trips or activities organised by the group;
- social activities directly connected with a production.

This policy applies to all committee members, directors, choreographers, musical directors, adult cast members, backstage volunteers, technical volunteers, chaperones, parents/carers and any other adults involved in activities with children.

2. LEGAL AND STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

Langtoft Players will comply with all relevant legislation and statutory guidance relating to children participating in performance and entertainment.

This includes, but is not limited to:

Children and Young Persons Act 1933

Provides the underlying legal framework governing children taking part in public performances and employment.

Children and Young Persons Act 1963

Provides the legislative framework for licensing children involved in performances.

Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014

These regulations set out requirements concerning child performance licences, supervision, chaperones, performance and rehearsal hours, breaks, education, accommodation, dressing arrangements and welfare.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

Langtoft Players recognises safeguarding as a shared responsibility and will operate a child-centred approach to safeguarding.

The 2023 guidance emphasised that voluntary and community organisations have an important role within local safeguarding arrangements.

The organisation will also comply with any subsequent statutory updates to safeguarding guidance.

Equality Act 2010

Langtoft Players will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics.

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

The organisation will take reasonable steps to protect the health, safety and welfare of children, volunteers, cast and crew.

Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

Personal information relating to children and families will be collected, stored and shared appropriately and only where there is a legitimate reason to do so.

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3. LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL REQUIREMENTS

Where children participate in productions within Lincolnshire, Langtoft Players will follow the requirements of Lincolnshire County Council's Child Employment and Entertainment Team.

Lincolnshire County Council states that children may require a performance licence when participating in public performances, including stage performances, depending upon the circumstances. Children must also be appropriately supervised.

Before any production involving children begins, the committee will establish whether:

1. individual child performance licences are required; or
2. a Body of Persons Approval (BOPA) is appropriate.

Where a BOPA is used, Langtoft Players will comply fully with all conditions attached to the approval.

Lincolnshire County Council states that a BOPA application must be made at least 21 days before the first performance and that performances and rehearsals must take place in Lincolnshire and outside school hours. The organisation must also have a child safeguarding policy and no payment may be made to or on behalf of children other than permitted expenses.

The committee will therefore begin the licensing process as early as possible and will not assume that an amateur production is automatically exempt.

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4. CHILD PERFORMANCE LICENCES

The Production Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead will establish the licensing requirements for every production involving children.

Where a licence is required:

- the necessary application will be submitted to Lincolnshire County Council;
- required information will be obtained from parents/carers;
- required medical, school and welfare information will be provided;
- licence conditions will be followed;
- attendance and performance records will be maintained;
- required education arrangements will be observed;
- required breaks and rest periods will be provided.

No child will be permitted to participate in a performance where the required licence or approval has not been obtained.

Lincolnshire County Council confirms that child performance licences are free of charge.

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5. CHAPERONES

Where a child is not being supervised by their parent, carer or appropriate teacher, they must be supervised by an appropriately approved chaperone where required by law.

Lincolnshire County Council states that a parent, carer or registered chaperone must supervise a child taking part in a performance.

Langtoft Players will ensure that:

- appropriate chaperones are appointed before rehearsals and performances;
- chaperones understand their responsibilities;
- children remain under appropriate supervision;
- children are never left alone with an unrelated adult;
- children are not permitted to leave the venue without an authorised adult;
- attendance and collection arrangements are recorded;
- chaperones know where emergency information is kept;
- chaperones know the safeguarding reporting procedure.

A chaperone's primary responsibility is the welfare of the children in their care and not the production itself.

A chaperone must not undertake other production duties that prevent them from supervising children.

Lincolnshire County Council specifically states that a chaperone's first duty is to the child and that they must not undertake other production duties such as technical work or directing while acting as chaperone.

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6. ADULTS WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Adults involved with children must behave appropriately and maintain professional boundaries.

Adults must:

- treat children with dignity and respect;
- use appropriate language;
- avoid favouritism;
- avoid humiliating, threatening or intimidating behaviour;
- maintain appropriate physical and emotional boundaries;
- never use a child's participation to gain personal advantage;
- never engage in inappropriate private communication with children;
- report safeguarding concerns promptly;
- follow the group's safeguarding procedures.

Adults must never:

- bully or ridicule a child;
- shout aggressively at a child;
- threaten a child with removal from a production as a punishment;
- deliberately embarrass a child;
- make inappropriate comments about a child's appearance, body or ability;
- use physical punishment;
- engage in unnecessary physical contact;
- ask children to undertake personal errands;
- arrange inappropriate one-to-one meetings with children.

Lincolnshire County Council recognises that adults working with children are in a position of trust and stresses the importance of professional boundaries.

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7. POSITIVE ROLE MODELS

Langtoft Players recognises that adult members are role models for younger performers.

Adults are expected to demonstrate:

- kindness;
- patience;
- respect;
- inclusion;
- good sportsmanship;
- appropriate language;
- reliability;
- teamwork;
- constructive criticism;
- respect for different abilities and backgrounds.

The behaviour of adults towards one another is also important.

Arguments, shouting, swearing, bullying, public criticism or undermining of other adults should not take place in front of children.

Children should see theatre as a collaborative environment in which people are able to make mistakes, learn and improve without fear of humiliation.

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8. ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Langtoft Players operates a zero-tolerance approach to bullying.

Bullying includes:

- physical bullying;
- verbal bullying;
- emotional bullying;
- exclusion;
- intimidation;
- name-calling;
- repeated teasing;
- threatening behaviour;
- discriminatory behaviour;
- online bullying;
- deliberately humiliating another person;
- spreading rumours;
- deliberately excluding someone from the group.

Bullying may occur between children or may involve adults.

Theatre-specific bullying

The following are specifically prohibited:

- repeatedly mocking someone's performance;
- deliberately undermining another performer;
- making fun of mistakes;
- ridiculing someone's costume, appearance, accent or ability;
- excluding a child because they were not given a particular role;
- encouraging other children to ignore or exclude another child;
- comparing children negatively with one another;
- making a child feel that they are only valued because of their role.

Managing auditions and casting

Casting decisions will be based on the needs of the production and suitability for the role.

Children must never be told or made to feel that not receiving a particular role means they are not talented, valued or welcome.

Where appropriate, children will be encouraged to understand that theatre involves teamwork and that every role contributes to the success of a production.

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9. REPORTING BULLYING OR CONCERNS

Children should be encouraged to speak to:

- their parent/carer;
- the designated safeguarding lead;
- a chaperone;
- the director;
- another trusted adult within the organisation.

Adults must take concerns seriously.

A child who reports bullying must not be blamed or told to simply "ignore it".

Concerns will be investigated proportionately and confidentially.

Where a concern may constitute a safeguarding matter, it will be dealt with under the group's safeguarding procedures rather than solely as a behaviour issue.

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10. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Langtoft Players will undertake appropriate risk assessments for activities involving children.

Risk assessments are in place for all shows, including but not exhaustive

- the venue;
- entrances and exits;
- fire safety;
- evacuation;
- lighting;
- electrical equipment;

- cables;
- staging;
- steps;
- scenery;
- props;
- costumes;
- special effects;
- smoke/haze;
- loud music;
- hot equipment;
- tools;
- backstage areas;
- dressing rooms;
- audience access;
- transport;
- supervision;
- individual medical or accessibility needs.

Children will not be expected to undertake activities that are unsuitable for their age, ability or level of experience.

Children must not operate potentially dangerous equipment unless this has been specifically risk assessed and appropriate supervision is provided.

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11. ACCIDENTS AND FIRST AID

A suitable first aid kit will be available at rehearsals and performances.

At least one responsible adult will know:

- where the first aid kit is;
- how to contact emergency services;
- the location of the nearest appropriate medical facility;
- emergency contact arrangements.

All accidents and significant incidents involving children must be recorded.

Parents/carers will be informed of significant accidents, injuries or illness.

In an emergency, the child's welfare takes priority and emergency medical assistance will be obtained.

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12. CHILDREN WHO ARE UNWELL

A child should not attend a rehearsal or performance if they are too unwell to participate safely.

Children must not be pressured to perform when ill or injured.

If a child becomes unwell during a rehearsal or performance:

1. they will be removed from the activity where appropriate;
2. the chaperone or responsible adult will assess the situation;
3. the parent/carer will be contacted where appropriate;
4. medical assistance will be obtained if necessary;
5. the incident will be recorded where appropriate.

Lincolnshire County Council's chaperone guidance states that children should not perform when unwell and that parents/carers should be informed where a child becomes ill or injured.

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13. DRESSING ROOMS AND CHANGING

Dressing rooms are private areas and must be treated as such.

Where children are involved:

- children should be provided with an appropriate designated changing area;
- children aged five and over should only dress with children of the same sex where the regulatory requirements apply;
- adults must not change clothes in front of children;
- children must not be required to change in public areas;
- adults should not enter children's changing areas unnecessarily;
- where an adult must enter for safeguarding or operational reasons, they should, wherever possible, be accompanied by another authorised adult;
- children should be encouraged to change independently where age appropriate;
- assistance with costumes should be provided sensitively and only where necessary.

The 2014 Regulations specifically require suitable arrangements for children aged five and over to dress only with children of the same sex.

Where a child requires assistance with a costume because of age, disability or another need, this should be discussed with the parent/carer wherever possible.

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14. PHYSICAL CONTACT

Theatre can sometimes require physical contact as part of performance, choreography or direction.

Any physical contact must:

- be necessary;
- be appropriate;
- be proportionate;
- be explained in advance;
- respect the child's wishes and boundaries;
- be appropriate to the child's age and understanding.

Where choreography involves close physical contact, lifts, simulated fighting, kissing or other intimate material, this must be carefully considered and risk assessed.

Children should never be pressured to participate in physical contact that makes them uncomfortable.

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15. COSTUME, HAIR AND MAKE-UP

Costumes must be suitable for the child's age, size and role.

Costumes must:

- allow appropriate movement;
- not create unnecessary trip hazards;
- not restrict breathing;
- not expose children inappropriately;
- be suitable for the temperature of the venue;
- be checked for potential hazards.

Make-up and cosmetic products used on children should be appropriate and hygienic.

Where possible, parents/carers should be informed of any significant make-up, hair or costume requirements before the production.

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16. REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE HOURS

Children's rehearsal and performance hours must comply with the relevant legislation and any conditions imposed by the licensing authority.

The 2014 Regulations prescribe permitted attendance, performance and rehearsal periods, as well as breaks and rest requirements.

Langtoft Players will not schedule children simply around the convenience of the adult cast.

When planning rehearsals, the committee and director will consider:

- the child's age;
- school commitments;
- travel;
- required rest;
- performance requirements;
- licensing conditions;
- breaks;
- the child's individual needs.

The latest permissible time and maximum attendance permitted by the relevant licence or regulations must always be followed.

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17. BREAKS, FOOD AND DRINK

Children will receive appropriate breaks during rehearsals and performances.

They must have access to:

- drinking water;
- appropriate food;
- suitable rest areas;
- toilet facilities.

Children should not be expected to remain in costume for unnecessarily long periods.

Where children have allergies or dietary requirements, information will be obtained from parents/carers and appropriate arrangements made.

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18. COLLECTION AND DROP-OFF

Parents/carers remain responsible for transporting children to and from activities unless alternative arrangements have been formally agreed.

At the end of rehearsals and performances:

- children will remain supervised until collected;
- children will only be released to an authorised adult;
- the organisation will maintain appropriate collection arrangements;
- children will not be permitted to leave the venue alone unless this has been specifically agreed and is appropriate.

Suitable arrangements must be made for children to get home after their final performance or rehearsal.

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19. PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Photographs and video recordings of children must only be taken and used in accordance with parental/carer consent and the organisation's privacy arrangements.

Parents/carers will be informed about intended publicity use.

Adults must not:

- take inappropriate photographs;
- photograph children while changing;
- photograph children in private changing areas;
- share children's personal information unnecessarily;
- contact children privately through personal social media accounts.

Official production social media should be managed by designated adults.

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20. SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE COMMUNICATION

Communication with children should wherever possible take place through official group channels or through parents/carers.

Adults should avoid private direct messaging with children unless there is a legitimate reason and the communication is transparent and appropriate.

Group chats involving children should have appropriate adult moderation.

Children must be treated with the same respect online as they are in person.

Online bullying connected with the group will be treated seriously.

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21. CASTING AND AUDITIONS

Auditions will be conducted fairly and respectfully.

Children will not be humiliated or required to perform material that is inappropriate for their age.

Directors should provide constructive feedback.

Where a child is unsuccessful in obtaining a particular role, the organisation should seek to maintain their confidence and encourage continued participation where appropriate.

No child should feel that their value to Langtoft Players depends upon the size or importance of their role.

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22. INCLUSION AND EQUALITY

Langtoft Players welcomes children of different backgrounds, abilities and circumstances.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered for children with disabilities or additional needs.

No child will be excluded or treated unfairly because of:

- disability;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- gender identity;
- pregnancy or maternity;
- family circumstances;
- socio-economic background.

Lincolnshire County Council's chaperone guidance similarly requires children to be protected from discrimination across the protected characteristics.

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23. SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

All adults have a responsibility to report safeguarding concerns.

A concern may relate to:

- physical abuse;
- emotional abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- neglect;
- bullying;
- online harm;
- exploitation;
- inappropriate adult behaviour;
- a child's behaviour or disclosure;
- concerns about another adult working with children.

Adults must:

1. listen calmly;
2. take the child seriously;
3. avoid leading questions;
4. not promise confidentiality;
5. record concerns accurately;
6. report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

The organisation will follow the appropriate Lincolnshire safeguarding procedures where a concern requires referral to external agencies.

Lincolnshire County Council states that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that chaperones have a role in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking appropriate action.

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24. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST ADULTS

Any allegation that an adult has harmed, abused or behaved inappropriately towards a child must be treated seriously.

The adult concerned must not investigate the allegation themselves.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will determine the appropriate reporting route and, where required, contact the relevant safeguarding authority/police.

The organisation will cooperate fully with any investigation.

No adult should be treated as automatically guilty, but the child's safety must remain the priority.

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25. CONFIDENTIALITY

Information concerning children must be handled sensitively.

Personal information should only be shared with those who need it for safeguarding, welfare, licensing or legitimate organisational purposes.

Information about a child must not be discussed casually with other cast members, parents or members of the public.

Safeguarding concerns must never be discussed on general WhatsApp groups or social media.

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26. CHILDREN'S VOICE

Langtoft Players recognises that children should have an opportunity to express their views about their experience.

Children will be encouraged to:

- say if something makes them uncomfortable;
- ask questions;
- suggest improvements;
- raise concerns;
- speak to a trusted adult.

Where appropriate, children may be asked for feedback following a production.

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27. POSITIVE THEATRE CULTURE

Langtoft Players aims to create an environment where:

Everyone is welcome.
Everyone is respected.
Everyone has a voice.
Everyone is allowed to make mistakes.
Everyone contributes to the production.

Theatre should build confidence rather than damage it.

Adults should praise effort, teamwork, improvement and commitment rather than focusing solely on performance ability.

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28. RECORD KEEPING

The organisation will maintain appropriate records including, where applicable:

- parental consent;
- emergency contact details;
- medical information;
- attendance;
- collection arrangements;
- licence documentation;
- BOPA documentation;
- chaperone information;
- risk assessments;
- accidents and incidents;
- safeguarding concerns;
- relevant correspondence with the local authority.

Records will be stored securely and retained in accordance with applicable data protection and record-retention requirements.

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29. CHAPERONE AND VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Anyone undertaking a formal chaperone role must meet the requirements of the relevant local authority.

Lincolnshire County Council requires chaperones to complete the relevant application, training and safeguarding/DBS requirements. Its current chaperone licence lasts three years.

Langtoft Players will encourage adults regularly working with children to undertake appropriate safeguarding training.

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30. DRESSING ROOM AND BACKSTAGE RULES FOR CHILDREN

Children will be given clear rules before production week.

These include:

- no running backstage;
- no entering areas without permission;
- no touching technical equipment;
- no entering another person's changing area;
- respect other people's privacy;
- appropriate language;
- no filming or photography in changing areas;
- no food or drink near electrical/technical equipment;
- tell a chaperone if they feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

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31. DISCIPLINE

Discipline will be proportionate, fair and age appropriate.

The organisation will never use:

- physical punishment;
- humiliation;
- threats;
- shouting as a disciplinary technique;
- deliberate exclusion;

- public embarrassment.

Persistent, serious behaviour may result in a discussion with the child's parent/carer and, where necessary, removal from a particular activity.

Safeguarding concerns will not be treated simply as disciplinary matters.

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32. PARENTS AND CARERS

Parents/carers are expected to:

- provide accurate emergency and medical information;
- inform the group of relevant changes;
- follow collection arrangements;
- support appropriate behaviour;
- raise concerns respectfully;
- ensure children attend appropriately prepared;
- inform the group if their child is unwell;
- support the organisation's safeguarding arrangements.

Parents/carers will be provided with relevant information about rehearsal and performance arrangements.

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33. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and whenever there is:

- a significant change in legislation;
- new statutory safeguarding guidance;
- a change in Lincolnshire County Council requirements;
- a significant safeguarding incident;
- a change to the organisation's activities.

The committee will ensure that the policy remains current and accessible to members and parents/carers.

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34. KEY CONTACTS

Langtoft Players Designated Safeguarding Lead:
Name: Marc Skinner
Telephone: 07399 370945
Email: mskinner447@gmail.com

Chair:
Name: Michelle Marshall
Telephone: 07730 458998
Email: shelliebabes65@hotmail.com

Lincolnshire County Council – Child Employment & Entertainment Team:
Telephone: **01522 782030**
Email: **cee@lincolnshire.gov.uk**

Emergency: 999

POLICY ACCEPTANCE

All adults working with children on behalf of Langtoft Players are expected to read, understand and comply with this policy.

Failure to comply may result in removal from duties involving children and, where appropriate, referral to the relevant safeguarding or licensing authority.

Approved by Langtoft Players Committee: via online vote

Date: 6th October 2026

Review date: 6th October 2027