

Safeguarding Policy

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Person responsible: Emily Eversden

Tangled Feet actively encourages the safety and well-being of children and young people and promotes a culture and environment to support this. Through our projects and material, we aim to create a safe environment where children and young people can enjoy rewarding and stimulating experiences.

We recognise that children and young people should be:

- listened to and heard
- valued and respected as individuals
- respected for their identity and uniqueness
- encouraged and praised
- involved in decisions as appropriate regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

- Tangled Feet believes that the promotion of safeguarding within all areas of the company's work is integral to the core of our company ethos.
- Tangled Feet clearly communicates to all staff that it is the responsibility of every adult who is working for the company to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or neglect, of children and young people and to report any suspected or actual abuse that comes to their attention.
- Tangled Feet regards any breach of its Safeguarding Policy as misconduct and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who is deemed to have breached this policy.

All members of our group and any co-opted, volunteer or 'employed' individuals accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children and young people harm. We all recognise as a group that clear safeguarding guidelines are established and adhered to at all times. It is the responsibility of all Tangled Feet staff to remain vigilant and alert with regards to child safety and protection issues. It is the responsibility of the Director of Participation, in conjunction with the Artistic Directors of the company, to assess, update and implement any changes in the policy and communicate these changes to all employees of Tangled Feet. Such changes will need to be ratified by the Board of Trustees.

We endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

1. Adopting child protection and safeguarding guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct, which all staff and volunteers must be given before working with children or young people.
2. Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and young people, parents and carers, staff and volunteers.
3. Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children and young people appropriately.

4. Following carefully the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers.
5. Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
6. Regularly monitoring and reviewing our policy and good practice

The definition of 'child' or 'young person' relates to anyone under the age of 18, and also to those above the age of 18 who are vulnerable for reasons of mental and physical ability.

Tangled Feet: Safeguarding Policy

Responding to abuse

1. What is Child Abuse?

The following are the main categories of abuse as defined in the *Children's Act 1989, Luton Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, Registration Requirements and Inspection Criteria for the Provision of Sessional Day Care* and are in line with Luton and Beds, Herts Area Child Protection Committee 'Protecting Children' – Child Protection Procedures:

1.2 Neglect - Severe and persistent neglect of a child, such as deprivation of food, clothing, warmth and medical care.

1.3 Physical abuse - Physical injury to a child, such as to cause bruising or burn marks through physical contact, scarring or biting a child.

1.4 Sexual abuse - Involving a child in sexual activities, either directly or indirectly.

1.4.1 Sexual exploitation - Sexually exploiting a child in return for money, goods, power or status. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen through online grooming (building an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation).

1.5 Emotional abuse - Persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment, such as threats, taunts, rejection, 'scape-goating' or verbal attacks, which can severely damage behaviour and emotional development.

1.6 The Definition of 'harm'

Children who do not fit the above categories may also be at risk of significant harm. This could, for example, be in a situation where another child in the household has been harmed, or the household contains a known abuser.

The *Protection of Children Act 1999* explains that 'harm' has the same meaning as in section 31 of the *Children's Act (1989)*:

'ill treatment or the impairment of health or development, including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another;

'development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development;

'health' means physical or mental health; and

'ill treatment' includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical.

In addition, Section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 amends the Children Act 1989 by expanding the definition of 'harm' to include witnessing domestic violence and substance abuse.

Child abuse can take place in a number of different settings. The following are some examples:

- Most commonly where the child knows the individual(s) and trusts them. This can be a parent, carer, babysitter, sibling, relative, or friend of the child or the family
- The abuser is sometimes someone in authority such as a teacher, youth leader or children's worker
- The abuser is sometimes a paedophile, or other person who sets out to join organisations to obtain access to children

1.7 The Definition of 'worker'

'A worker with children or young persons is a person who is not a teacher, but whose work brings him or her into regular contact with persons under the age of 19. This can include people such as classroom assistants, school caretakers, care workers in special or residential schools, or youth workers in the youth service.'

A worker could be a workshop leader, director or designer.

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000) Protection of Children Guidance.

What to do and who to inform if abuse is disclosed or discovered?

2. What to do if you suspect that abuse has occurred?

Tangled Feet adheres to the guidelines set out in the *Safe from Harm: A Code of Practice for Safeguarding The Welfare of Children in Voluntary Organisations in England and Wales* document (1993).

2.1 It is the responsibility of anyone working for Tangled Feet to act on any concerns of suspected abuse. Concerns should be reported as soon as possible to the Director of Participation in conjunction with the Artistic Directors, who is required by the Council of Management (board of trustees) to act on their behalf in referring all allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities.

2.2 If the allegations or suspicions involve any member of Tangled Feet's senior staff team, then the report should be made to the Chair of the Council of Management, who is

mandated to undertake this role on behalf of the Trustees. Details of how to contact the Chair can be obtained from any other member of Tangled Feet core staff.

2.3 If the suspicions in any way implicate both the Chair and a member of Tangled Feet's senior staff team, then the report should be made to another member of the Council of Management.

2.4 The procedures in the following paragraphs should be followed according to the type of abuse suspected. Where physical abuse, neglect, or emotional abuse is suspected, the co-operation of parents/carers should normally be sought, except where this would place the child at greater risk, or where emergency attention is required.

2.5 Where any form of abuse is suspected the Director of Participation in conjunction with the Artistic Directors, will not speak to the parents/carers, as this may make the task of investigation by Police or Social Services more difficult, especially in the case of suspected sexual abuse.

3. Allegations of neglect, physical or emotional abuse

If the child discloses information about any abuse, the Director of Participation in conjunction with the Artistic Directors, and in consultation with the adult that the child may have disclosed to, will contact the appropriate agency, e.g. social services, or the school.

3.1 Where emergency medical attention is necessary, this must be sought immediately. The Director of Participation, in conjunction with the Artistic Directors, will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.

3.3 Where there are suspicions of abuse, consideration should be given to referring the matter to Social Services Department. If the Director of Participation, in conjunction with the director, is unsure whether or not to refer a case to the Social Services, then s/he can always contact the local Social Services Department for advice, or to discuss the case in confidence.

4. Allegation of sexual abuse

4.1 In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Director of Participation in conjunction with the Directors, will contact Social Services Assessment and Advice Teams or the Police Child Protection team directly. The Director of Participation, in conjunction with the Directors, will not speak to the parent/carer or anyone else directly, as there is always a possibility that they could be involved. If named people are innocent, talking to them before contacting the authorities may make it more difficult for them to be cleared.

4.2 If sexual abuse has occurred in the immediate past, or very recently, then contact the police immediately and make this clear to them. If the allegations concern events which have taken place previously, then the Police or Social Services must be informed at the earliest opportunity.

4.3 Under no circumstances must the Director of Participation, or the Artistic Directors, attempt to carry out any investigation into allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse. The role for the Director of Participation in conjunction with the Artistic Directors, is to collect and

clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to Social Services Department, whose task it is to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act (1989).

4.4 Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse will normally be reported to the Director of Participation or the Artistic Directors, the absence of the Director of Participation or Artistic Directors should not delay referral to the Social Services Department.

4.5 Should there be any disagreement between the person in receipt of the allegation or suspicion and the Director of Participation or the Artistic Directors, as to the appropriateness of the referral to Social Services, that person retains a responsibility as a member of the public to report serious matters to the Social Services Department and should do so without hesitation.

4.6 The Council of Management will support the Director of Participation and the Artistic Directors in this role, through the Chairman and any other appropriate Trustees, and accept that any information they may from time-to-time have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way, on a need to know basis.

5. Suspicions of susceptibility to, or involvement in, extremism

These guidelines are based on the Home Office Prevent Strategy.

Home Office Prevent Strategy: 'Safeguarding vulnerable people from radicalisation is no different to safeguarding them from other forms of harm'. All allegations or suspicions should therefore be reported to the Director of Participation or the Artistic Directors, in the same way as other forms of harm (as listed above). The Director of Participation or the Artistic Directors can expedite all suspicions of extremism or radicalisation straight to a Local Police officer or the Police Child Protection Team.

Further details on how susceptibility to extremism are below to help workers understand this growing phenomenon:

Why might a young person be drawn towards extremist ideology?

- Answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging
- Desire for 'adventure' and excitement; self-esteem or 'street cred'
- Identification with a charismatic individual/group which offers identity, social network and support
- Fuelled by a sense of grievance, triggered by personal experiences of racism or discrimination

Early indicators may include:

- Showing sympathy for extremist causes and extremist groups
- Glorifying violence
- Evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature (online or print)
- Out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships
- Secretive behaviour

Establishing good working practice

6) Boundaries and good practice

All staff and workers are responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries and good practice. Tangled Feet will encourage its entire staff and workers to demonstrate exemplary practice, both to provide a safe and positive working environment and to avoid and protect them from false allegations.

Tangled Feet is committed to the on-going training and appropriate line management/supervision of staff with regards to Child Protection and behaviour when working with children.

6.1 Risk assessment, management and conduct within the physical environment

Risk Assessment is an essential part of planning any Tangled Feet project and will always cover risks in relation to the protection and safeguarding of children. Any such risks will be monitored and managed throughout the project by the Director of Participation in conjunction with the Artistic Directors.

Staff and workers should always work in an open environment and avoid unobserved situations, particularly outside of the professional space (e.g. toilets, or changing rooms).

6.2 Physical contact

All staff and workers should keep any physical contact public and visible, and should be aware of an appropriate context regarding physical contact, e.g. handshakes and 'high-fives' would be appropriate, however, a hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors. Touch should be related to a child's needs, not the staff or workers. Touch should be age appropriate and generally be initiated by the child, rather than the staff or worker. In the context of a physical theatre workshop, for any physical contact necessary to safely implement an activity (for example in physical improvisation) the facilitator must first ask the child if they can make physical contact.

Any form of physical response to misbehaviour is unlawful, unless it is by way of restraint. On those occasions when it proves necessary for workers to restrain a child physically to prevent him/her from inflicting injury to others, or damage to property, only the minimum force necessary should be used. Staff and workers should take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to constructively challenge a colleague, if necessary.

6.3 Intimate care

Intimate care is any personal care that most people usually carry out for themselves but some people may be unable to do so because of an impairment or disability. Children or young people might require help with eating, drinking, washing, dressing, toileting and dealing with menstruation.

Tangled Feet has a procedure in place with regard to the provision of intimate care. This procedure highlights three guiding principles which underpin the provision of intimate care for children and young people with disabilities:

- 1) The exchange between all those involved in any intimate care procedures must be one of mutual respect.
- 2) Every plan supporting intimate care must demonstrate how the child/young person can be enabled to develop their autonomy.
- 3) The number of adults engaged in the care should only reflect the minimum needed to perform the task safely and respectfully. Each situation should reflect both the safety and vulnerability of the child/young person and staff.

Tangled Feet is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children/young people will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. We recognise that there is a need to treat all children/young people with respect when intimate care is given. No child or young person should be attended to in a way that causes distress, embarrassment or pain. The published guidelines are: *Advice and Guidance for Staff and Volunteers Providing Intimate Care for Children and Young People with Disabilities*

6.4 Interpersonal interaction

Staff and workers should treat all children equally, with dignity and respect and consider attitude, language used and actions taken. Balanced and empowering relationships between staff, workers, and children should be built on a basis of mutual trust and respect. Children should be actively encouraged to share in the decision-making processes. An environment of positive and constructive criticism should be nurtured and developed.

Staff and workers should avoid any personal (i.e. non-professional) contact with children, including the exchange of personal contact details, including online and social networking. Primary contact should be made with parents, rather than children.

Under no circumstances should children be invited to a staff member or worker's home. In the event of a child arriving uninvited to a worker's home, the child should not be allowed to stay or invited inside. It is recommended workers accompany the child to a safe, public place and inform their line manager of the event.

6.5 Venues and Transport

If a worker arranges an activity with a child or young person outside the usual group time, this must be with knowledge and consent of their line manager, in the first instance, and the Director, if appropriate, as well as that of the parent. Parental consent will be obtained for all organised activities and outings, which are outside the usual group times. Arrangements for transporting children and young people must also be with the knowledge of the nominated person and with parental approval. Transport or activities should not be arranged to leave from, or take place in a worker's home.

6.6 Photography and Filming

Permission in writing for photography and/or videoing should be sought in advance from parents/carers. For other arts activity it is the staff and workers' responsibility to ensure the host organisation is made aware of the need to obtain written permission from the parents/carers.

Guidelines for communication with a child or young person who discloses any form of abuse

- Always stop and listen straight away
- If you can, write brief notes of what they are telling you whilst the conversation takes place.
- Clearly explain that as a member of Tangled Feet staff team you cannot promise to 'keep a secret', but that you will only communicate with the appropriate people who need to know.
- Don't ask leading questions that might give your own ideas of what might have happened.
- Reassure the child/young person that they have done the right thing in telling someone.
- Explain to the child/young person the next steps that you will be taking.
- Make a written record of your interaction. The Director of Participation can provide you with a cause for concern reporting form, which will include;
 - The date and time
 - Your name and role within this context
 - The name and DOB of the child/young person
 - Contact details for the child/young person
 - An outline of the concern
 - Where possible record the testimony, or parts of it, in the child/young person's own words
 - Note the names and role of any witnesses
 - Note who else has been informed
 - Record the name and details of the alleged abuser

The record should be signed and dated by both the author and the Director of Participation or Artistic Directors, of Tangled Feet, and will include what action the Director of Participation will do with the information. Such records are filed securely in line with the company's procedures on the storage of confidential documentation.

Important contact numbers

If concerns regarding the welfare of a child come to light, and it is unclear if they should be referred to Social Services, the Director of Participation or Artistic Directors of Tangled Feet should contact the designated **Child Protection Advice Line for the location of the work** as an alternative to the Social Services Advice and Assessment teams. It is the responsibility of the Director of Participation to ensure s/he is aware of how to contact the Local Authority Designated Officer for each borough in which Tangled Feet works with children. This currently (August 2016) includes:

Croydon - 020 8726 6000

Greenwich - 0208 921 4477

Tower Hamlets - 020 7364 2063 / 0390

Luton - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) - 01582 547653

Bedfordshire Police Specialist Public Protection enquiries - 01234 846960

Other useful numbers:

NSPCC (Help line) Tel: 0800 800 500

Police Child Protection Team Tel: 020 8217 4941

Childline Tel: 0800 1111

List of relevant publications

- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and Exceptions Order - Home Office.
- Education Reform Act 1988 – Department for Education and Employment
- Children Act 1989 – Department of Health
- Safe from Harm: A Code of Practice for Safeguarding The Welfare of Children in Voluntary Organisations in England and Wales 1993 – Home Office.
- Education Act 2002 - Department for Education and Employment
- Employment Rights Act 1996 - Department for Education and Employment
- Protection of Children Act 1999 – Department of Health
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 – Home Office.
- Child Protection & Reviewing Service 2002– London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006/Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- The Prevent Strategy 2011 – Home Office
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018



- Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners 2018