

# Slot Machine Theatre Company Safeguarding Policy

## Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons

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Board Approved/Reviewed: May 2021

Next review: May 2022

<b>Audience</b>	Charity Trustees, Employees, public, parents, funders
<b>Date for renewal/updates/reviews</b>	Annually
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<b>Designated safeguarding lead</b>	Emma Dolman Emma@slotmachinetheatre.com

## POLICY STATEMENT

Slot Machine Theatre Company (SMTC) is committed to a practice which protects vulnerable people from harm. This Policy details organisational behaviour and best practice which is applicable to all SMTC 'Employees' - those who work with SMTC on a freelance and /or voluntary basis, to include SMTC's Board of Trustees.

Safeguarding is a matter of attitudes as much as policies, and SMTC is committed to an attitude that allows for client-friendly practice as much as client-safe practice. We will do all we can to limit risk, while maximising the engagement of our Employees with our client group.

### **Our safeguarding responsibilities apply to vulnerable persons, specifically children, young people and vulnerable adults.**

For the purposes of this Policy, a **child** is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

According to the Department of Health, a **Vulnerable Person** can be anyone:

- Who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

We also include, in our definition, anyone:

- Who is detained by Her Majesty's Government or in contact with probation services.

We will safeguard vulnerable people by:

- Adopting child and vulnerable person protection guidelines through a code of behaviour for Employees.
- Sharing information about child and vulnerable person protection with Employees and related persons, e.g. carers, parents, guardians, etc.
- Sharing information about concerns with relevant agencies who need to know, and involving related persons and vulnerable persons appropriately and doing so in a swift and appropriate manner.
- Following carefully the procedures for safer recruitment and selection of all company Employees.
- Providing effective management for Employees through supervision, support and training.
- This Policy will be made readily available to all Employees, and accessible on the SMTC website.
- Reviewing this Policy annually and reflecting on any reports made, reviewing the effectiveness of the reporting process every quarter.
- The Policy has been agreed with the Board and is fully supported by the Artistic Directors.

This Policy is accompanied by three appendices. Appendix A is an Incident Report Form, and Appendix B details definitions of abuse.

It is imperative that each SMTC Employee is aware of their responsibilities under current safeguarding legislation and has a working knowledge of SMTC procedures. Each Employee will receive this Policy when they start work at SMTC.

## **ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED PERSON FOR CHILD AND VULNERABLE PERSONS**

### **PROTECTION**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- Providing the 'first port of call' and offering advice and support to all Employees regarding safeguarding issues.
- Making referrals as necessary.
- Keeping up to date with changes and developments in safeguarding.
- Disseminating policy and good practice to all Employees, in particular:
  1. Ensuring that Employees understand their responsibilities for being alert to the signs of abuse and for referring any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
  2. Ensuring that all Employees have read and are aware of the specific SMTC Policies and Procedures
  3. Ensuring that new Employees receive induction about safeguarding procedures and existing Employees receive training as required.
  4. Organising information relating to safeguarding so that it is accessible to all Employees.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead should attend Level 2 Safeguarding Training.

### **CODES OF BEHAVIOUR - STATEMENT OF INTENT**

It is the policy of SMTC to safeguard the welfare of all vulnerable people by protecting them from all forms of abuse including physical, emotional and sexual harm.

This organisation is committed to creating a safe environment in which vulnerable persons can feel comfortable and secure while engaged in any of SMTC's programmes, training events, workshops or other activities. Employees should, at all times, show respect and understanding of individual's rights, safety, and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the ethos and principles of SMTC.

## **ATTITUDES**

Guidelines for all SMTC Employees:

- Employees should be committed to treating vulnerable persons with respect and dignity
- Always listening to what a participant is saying
- Valuing each participant
- Recognising the unique contribution each individual can make
- Encouraging and praising each participant

## **EMPLOYEE CONDUCT**

Employees should:

- Endeavour to provide an example which we would wish others to follow
- Use appropriate language with vulnerable persons and challenge any inappropriate language used by a vulnerable person or any individual working with vulnerable persons
- Respect a vulnerable person's right to privacy
- Always dress professionally and appropriately at all times
- Be aware that someone might misinterpret our actions no matter how well intentioned
- Never draw any conclusions about others without checking the facts
- Never allow themselves to enter or become embroiled in inappropriate situations, including tantrums or crushes
- Never exaggerate or trivialise abuse issues or make suggestive remarks or gestures about or to a vulnerable person.

## **CONTACT WITH VULNERABLE PERSONS**

Employees should:

- actively avoid spending any time alone with vulnerable person, away from others
- In the unlikely event of having to meet with an individual child or vulnerable person this meeting must be as open as possible, and other SMTC Employees and /or responsible persons will be informed of the location and approximate length of the meeting. If no responsible person is available to join the meeting, the vulnerable person will be encouraged to bring a friend.

Physical Contact:

- Employees should never engage in any type of physical contact with any vulnerable persons without first asking permission.
- Employees should never allow inappropriate touching of any kind.
- SMTC will always require a responsible person to accompany any vulnerable person or groups of vulnerable persons.
- If a vulnerable person is reliant upon a responsible person for any aspect of personal care, for example going to the toilet or help with moving from one place to another, SMTC will engage a responsible person other than an Employee to help.

#### Online Contact:

- SMTC will only contact a vulnerable person directly via email, telephone or designated private Facebook pages (where relevant) in reference to workshops, performances or related SMTC work.
- Where possible, all contact with vulnerable persons will be conducted via schools, care centres or relevant and responsible persons.
- SMTC will not contact a vulnerable person directly in regards to non-professional or personal matters. SMTC Employees will never issue or accept “friend requests” or equivalent from social networking sites from a vulnerable person.
- If a vulnerable person makes contact with an Employee via social media, the Employee should report it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will ensure it is followed up and the appropriate action taken. On no account should the Employee respond of their own volition.
- SMTC Employees will not take or share photos or video footage of vulnerable people without confirmation from the Designated Safeguarding Lead that the appropriate permissions have been sought and received.
- The Employees on any given project are responsible for distributing and collating photo permission forms to schools or other organisations as appropriate and for discussing how best to document projects, and will circulate this information
- Confidential data that is collected on vulnerable persons, including addresses, dietary needs, medical conditions etc. should be treated in confidence and with respect and should be shared between responsible persons only on a need-to-know basis.
- SMTC complies with the EU General Data Protection Regulations (2018) GDPR relating to child privacy law and the new Age Appropriate Design Code (2021) introduced by the Information Commissioners Office. Please refer to SMTC’s Privacy Policy for information on the storage and access to data held by the Company, available at [www.slotmachinetheatre.com](http://www.slotmachinetheatre.com)
- All vulnerable persons have a right to know and have sight of any information SMTC holds on them.
- SMTC may at times issue further guidelines in relation to online contact as required - i.e. Online Safeguarding Guidelines document (March 2021).

# PROVIDING EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT FOR EMPLOYEES & VOLUNTEERS THROUGH SUPERVISION, SUPPORT & TRAINING

## GUIDELINES ON RECRUITMENT

All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with vulnerable persons.

The same recruitment procedure will be adopted whether the company members are paid or unpaid, full, part-time or freelance.

Recruitment procedure:

This process will be adhered to for any role at SMTC that directly relates to working with vulnerable persons.

- Advertisements for roles that involve work with vulnerable persons will state that applicants will be expected to have a current DBS check. In most circumstances, company members will have obtained their own check, which should have been undertaken within the last 3 years. In particular circumstances SMTC may arrange this. They may not work with vulnerable persons until a clean check is received.
- All applicants must submit a CV or application form detailing their experience relevant to the role.
- Successful applicants, including volunteers, will be interviewed to assess suitability for the role.
- Substantial gaps in employment will be queried.
- Two references should be taken up before appointing paid company members.
- For posts in which there will be direct contact with vulnerable persons, one reference should be regarding previous work with vulnerable persons.

On appointment:

- An enhanced DBS check must be held by SMTC Employees who will be working directly with vulnerable persons.
- The DBS check must be cleared before work commences. If this is not possible, the individual must always be accompanied by a DBS checked responsible person in carrying out their duties in working with vulnerable persons.
- Individuals who have a valid DBS check in place on appointment should have had their DBS check issued within the last 3 years and must present a copy of their DBS to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for verification.
- Please refer to SMTC's Privacy Policy for information on the storage and access to data held by the Company, available at [www.slotmachinetheatre.com](http://www.slotmachinetheatre.com)

## **PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE**

Where an Employee at SMTC has concerns or an allegation is made, a record will be made using a standardised format [Appendix A].

Details must include:

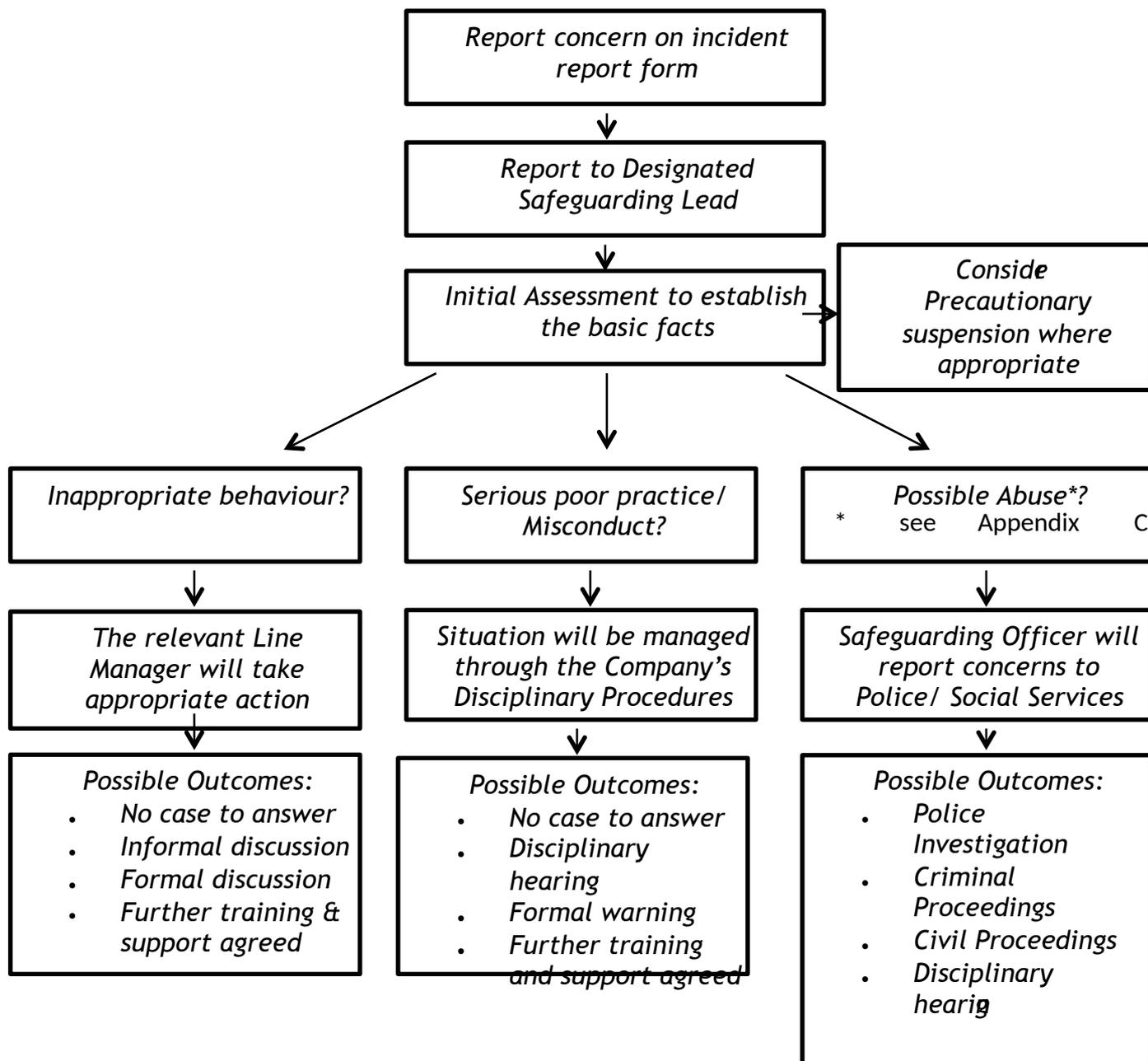
- Name of vulnerable beneficiary
- Date of Birth of vulnerable persons (if available)
- Approximate Age vulnerable persons if Date of Birth is not available
- Name of Employee completing the form
- Date the incident took place
- Time the incident took place
- Location the incident took place
- Names of others involved, or others who witnessed the incident
- Details of the incident as a statement of fact
- Action taken
- Were the responsible person(s) informed?

The record must then be signed by the completing person and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

**RESPONDING TO CONCERNS MADE BY A CHILD OR VULNERABLE PERSON OF SUSPECTED ABUSE**



## RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF AN EMPLOYEE OF SMTC



## REFERRAL PROCEDURE

The SMTC referral procedure for identified suspicion or concern will be followed at all times. This is outlined below:

SMTC Employees identify a safeguarding concern:

- All safeguarding concerns should first be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Leads. No Employee should act alone.
- Do Not Delay, the concern should be discussed between the referring Employee and the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible, other SMTC Employees consulted as appropriate, and a decision made.
- If the concern is deemed of a serious nature, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the Social Services and Police if appropriate.
- Wherever possible an identified concern will be discussed with the social worker or person responsible for the vulnerable person (if possible) before any further action is taken. Advice from the social work department will be taken and any concerns discussed. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will lead on this but the person who identified the concern will assist.
- The person who identified the concern will be asked to complete a referral form.
- Information sharing needs to be proportional to the level of concern. Relevant SMTC Employees and other agencies involved with the vulnerable person will only be given information on a need to know basis.
- If a child who is already subject to a Child Protection Plan is involved with SMTC, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be notified and provided with any relevant information on a need to know basis. This information will be shared with other SMTC Employees on a need-to-know basis.

## DISCLOSURE

- Never guarantee absolute confidentiality, as the protection of vulnerable persons will always have precedence over any other issues.
- Ensure you never use closed questioning or leading questions
- Offer him / her reassurance without making promises, and take what is said seriously.
- Allow the vulnerable persons to speak without interruption, accept what is said – it is not your role to investigate or question.
- Do not overreact or respond with emotive language.
- Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgement
- Advise that you will offer support, but that you must pass the information on.
- Explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell.
- Record the discussion accurately, as soon as possible after the event, use the vulnerable person's words or explanations – do not translate into your own words, in case you have misconstrued what the vulnerable persons was trying to say.
- Contact the SMTC Designated Safeguarding Leads for advice / guidance.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead may then discuss the concern / suspicion with the relevant organisation, and, if appropriate, make a direct referral.
- Record any discussions or actions taken as soon as is practicable.

## APPENDIX A - INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Name of Vulnerable Beneficiary:	Name of Employee completing form:
Date of Birth/ Approximate Age:	
Date the incident took place:	
Time:	
Where did the incident take place:	
Who else was involved/witnessed the incident:	
Details: please provide a statement of fact:	
Action taken:	Responsible person(s) informed? Yes/No

Signature of Employee reporting incident:

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature of Designated Safeguarding

Lead: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX B - WHAT IS ABUSE?**

*The following definitions are informed by The Department for Children Schools and Families (2013) Working Together to Safeguard Children document. SMTC Company considers the same definitions relevant to all vulnerable persons.*

**ABUSE:** Somebody may abuse or neglect a vulnerable person by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Vulnerable persons may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

**PHYSICAL ABUSE:** A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a vulnerable person. Physical harm may also be caused when a responsible person fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a vulnerable person.

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE:** The persistent emotional maltreatment of a vulnerable person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the vulnerable person's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on vulnerable persons. These may include interactions that are beyond a vulnerable person's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the vulnerable person-participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing vulnerable persons frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of vulnerable persons

**SEXUAL ABUSE:** Involves forcing or enticing a vulnerable person or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the vulnerable person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving vulnerable persons in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging vulnerable persons in to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a vulnerable person in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other vulnerable persons.

**NEGLECT:** The persistent failure to meet a vulnerable person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious Impairment of the vulnerable person's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Neglect may involve a responsible person failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- Protect a vulnerable person from physical and emotional harm or danger; • Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a vulnerable person's basic emotional needs