



# **CHAPERONE POLICY**

General Council  
12 April 2021

## Introduction

South London Theatre puts on up to 22 productions a year. Annual productions are a feature for our Youth Theatre and there are other occasions when children or young people will be invited to participate in productions as part of the adult season.

Safeguarding children and young people is of paramount importance and as part of our commitment to their safety and wellbeing we will ensure that we are compliant with both the spirit of and law on chaperoning.

It is the Theatre Committee's responsibility to identify which productions during the season are likely to involve children or young people so that the necessary steps can be taken well in advance. We're keen for young people to have as many opportunities as possible to get involved with SLT's productions, but this has to be balanced with our legal duties – timely, clear, and regular information and communication is the key to reducing stress and minimising risk.

## Definitions

A chaperone is a person aged over 18 years who safeguards, supports and promotes the wellbeing of the child while they are taking part in a performance, rehearsal or other activity carried out by the theatre.

"The Chaperone is acting in loco parentis and should exercise the care which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give that child". [National Network for Children in Entertainment](#)

A child or young person is anyone under the age of 18.

DBS = [UK Government, Disclosure and Barring Service](#)

DSO = Designated Safeguarding Officer (the designated person with overall responsibility for managing and advising on safeguarding and chaperoning matters for South London Theatre and the Building Preservation Trust).

## Legal Context

For situations covered by a licence, chaperones must be licensed by the local authority. Chaperone licences from Lambeth include an enhanced DBS check plus an interview or training session.

Follow this link for up to date information on [LB Lambeth chaperone](#) requirements and licensing. Only Lambeth residents can apply to become chaperones through LB Lambeth. If you live in another borough and wish to become a chaperone, you'll need to apply through your local council.

## Policy

All chaperones must work within this policy and guidance and be familiar with the South London Theatre Safeguarding Policy. The full chaperone role is vitally important during public performances when there are more people around and most people's attention is focused on the stage. Every child should be assigned to a chaperone, whose sole duty is to look after the

children in their care. The number of children, their ages, genders and their roles in the performance, will all help to determine how many children a chaperone can realistically look after, though the maximum is 12. The ratio of chaperone to children must be agreed with the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) [dso@southlondontheatre.co.uk](mailto:dso@southlondontheatre.co.uk).

The rules regarding chaperoning during a production are that under-18s must be accompanied by a DBS-checked adult from the moment they arrive, whether they are onstage, backstage, green room or elsewhere in the building.

For shows with larger youth casts, separate chaperones are required for each group of under-18s, which should be segregated by age and sex as appropriate when offstage.

In cases with a single under-18 in the cast, this may be achievable by having DBS checked crew members acting as chaperones during rehearsals. There must be an agreed procedure when under-18s leave the building. Younger cast members may be picked up by a parent after each performance, while others may have written permission to make their own way home.

### **Guidance for show directors**

Where Directors intend to have children in their shows they should highlight this as part of their submission to Theatre Committee, outlining any safeguarding and chaperone considerations. If it is approved, and rights gained, the DSO must be informed. Theatre Committee will take the Director through the safeguarding processes to be followed from audition to performance, including the requirement for and role of chaperones. Additional advice may be sought from the DSO.

One member of the production team (usually the Director or Assistant Director) is named the safeguarding/chaperoning contact and must keep the DSO informed of all safeguarding or chaperoning issues and report any concerns as soon as they arise.

During rehearsals, at least one team member with an enhanced DBS check (within the past 2 years or via online update service) must be in the room whenever an under-18 is present. For casts with a large cohort of children, chaperoning arrangements should be discussed with the DSO and planned prior to rehearsals beginning.

Some of the more involved measures can be avoided/mitigated by careful planning: plotting in advance where performers and production team will be at every stage of rehearsals and performance; only calling under-18s to certain rehearsals; asking under-18s to arrive in costume where possible; avoiding multiple costume changes; involving the child's parent(s) in the production.

### **Arrivals and Departures from the Building**

Chaperones or the designated person for the show (with a sole child) must make sure that children are signed in by parents/carers when arriving at the premises and signed out when leaving the premises. The chaperone/designated person must escort children around the premises (toilets, dressing room, etc.)

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to ensure that children get home safely from theatre activities. The chaperone/designated person must be informed by a child's parent/guardian if they will be collected by another adult or are not being collected. In accordance with the 'Children in Performance Act' any child who is not collected one hour after

the designated time and, after all reasonable efforts have been made to contact the child's parent/guardian, Social Services should be called and the child should be declared abandoned. Adults/chaperones must not take it upon themselves to take the child home.

### **Procedures for costume changing**

Chaperones should be present and able to observe the young person at all times (except on stage). Where this is not possible (for example to visit the toilet) children should not wander the building alone, but be accompanied by another age-appropriate child or adult. Young people will be provided with a separate changing room from the adult cast. Where possible young people will be asked to attend in leggings and t-shirt so changing into costumes is minimal.

### **First aid/medical treatment**

Chaperones will have the emergency contact details of the children (emergency contact details form also holds details of the child's doctor and any medical conditions) and hold any medication e.g. inhalers, etc. for the children in their care. If a child needs hospital treatment, then a chaperone is to take them to the hospital after contacting parent(s) and arranging to meet them at the hospital. The chaperone should take emergency contact details with them. Chaperones are to make a note of any accidents in the accident book and inform the parents when they collect the child. Any incidents/accidents are also to be written down in the incident/accident book (located in the First Aid box in the Foyer).

### **Mobile Phones/Electronic Devices**

Mobile phones and electronic devices must not be used for taking photos during rehearsals or in the dressing rooms by either children or adults.

### **Supplementary information**

Professional shows require a licensed chaperone to be present to perform the chaperoning duties – this is a complex process and currently varies by local authority (the licence is granted by the local council in the borough the chaperone lives in – not where the venue is situated).

[LB Lambeth: apply for or renew a licence to chaperone.](#)

**Chaperone online training (£25 per person) is available online**

[NSPCC: chaperone training](#)