



StrongBack Productions

Policy and Procedure for protection of Children, Young People and Vulnerable adults.

INTRODUCTION

StrongBack Productions places the highest priority on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

This document includes a policy statement, roles and responsibilities, guidance for Trustees, StrongBack Productions staff, freelance sessional workers and volunteers; it also outlines arrangements for training, monitoring and information sharing.

In accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service's code of practice for registered persons and other recipients of disclosure information, StrongBack Productions will ensure the following practice.

1. StrongBack Productions recognises the right of all children, young people and vulnerable adults to be protected from any situation or practice that results in their being physically or psychologically damaged. The organisation is committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults attending its events and activities and expects all adults in these events and activities to take responsibility for promoting and ensuring the highest standards of care.

2. Aims of this policy

- To ensure the safety and security of participants in StrongBack Productions' projects.
- To create an environment that enables all participants to achieve the maximum educational and personal benefit from their participation.
- To ensure that staff involved in projects are appropriately trained and fully understand child and vulnerable adult protection issues and procedures.

3. Designated Child Protection Officer

StrongBack Productions' Designated Child Protection Officer holds overall responsibility for child protection issues and is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Dominique Le Gendre. The designated Child Protection Officer must undertake Quality Assured Designated Officer training which will be refreshed every two years. The Designated Child protection officer will nominate a project manager (Designated person) to take responsibility for dealing with child protection issues as related to specific projects. For each project the designated person will be named here

Lead trustee, Maria Hayden has been appointed to a monitoring role with the responsibility of ensuring that the organisation is following good practice and that its policies are up to date.

The lead trustee will work with the CEO to produce a yearly report to trustees.

4. Responding to alleged or suspected abuse

4.1 All allegations or suspicions will be treated seriously and acted upon in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy and its associated code of practice.

4.2 Staff and sessional workers who are approached by students with allegations of abuse will listen carefully and sympathetically, keeping questions to a minimum. They will explain that allegations cannot be kept secret and will explain to whom the information will be communicated. Further advice on dealing with any such disclosure is dealt with in appendix 2.

4.3 Freelance sessional workers will report any allegations or suspicions only to the Designated Person and will otherwise maintain absolute confidentiality. In the absence of the Designated Person, concerns should be addressed to the Designated Child Protection Officer.

4.4 The Designated Person will inform the Designated Child Protection Officer. The Designated Child Protection Officer will inform the nominated lead trustee and if a prosecution results from the allegations all trustees will be informed.

4.5 The Designated Child Protection Officer will be responsible for initiating appropriate action in response to concerns, taking care to refer to the appropriate authorities-Local authority designated Officer- rather than to investigate serious allegations of abuse.

4.6 A written record will be kept of any suspicion, allegation or incident causing concern, noting details of the date, time, location, person reporting, person concerned, designated person handling the concern and the action taken.

The records will be held in a secure location by the Designated Child Protection Officer. Paper records will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the Designated Child Protection Officer and digital records will be held on a secure area of the StrongBack Productions server accessible only to the Designated Child Protection Officer. When all actions on referral, including any subsequent actions have been completed, the records will be deleted or destroyed.

4.7 If the reported allegation concerns a staff member of StrongBack Productions (including all freelance session workers) this information will be communicated when contacting the relevant authorities (Local Authority Designated Officer). This may result in the suspension from the project of the staff member/ freelance sessional worker, pending an investigation by authorities and in a case of Gross Misconduct (the definition of which includes any Child Protection issue where abuse is found to have taken place), that person's contract will be terminated with immediate effect.

4.8 Legislation in 2013 now requires employers to refer any safeguarding concerns to the Disclosure and Barring Service who will consider whether the individual should be barred from

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working in their sector. This legislation also stipulates that it is illegal for a barred person to work or apply for work within the sector in which they are barred and that it is illegal for organisations to knowingly employ a barred person in the sector from which they are barred. StrongBack Productions acknowledges this legislation and will act accordingly.

5. Information for parents and carers.

5.1 This policy will be made available to parents and carers via the StrongBack Productions website and in printed form at the start of each new project.

5.2 In the event of an allegation or incident causing concern (unless the allegation involves the disclosure of information concerning a parent/carer) parents / carers will be :

- Contacted by telephone on the day of the incident
- Informed by letter or email of the nature of the incident and action taken in response
- Received by designated staff, if they wish to visit the venue in person.

6. Recruitment and training of project staff

6.1 Staff (including all freelance staff) involved in StrongBack Productions' projects will be subject to enhanced police checking procedures where their duties will entail significant contact with children, young people and /or vulnerable adults.

6.2 Checks will be undertaken on all staff members (including all freelance workers) who work directly with children, young people and vulnerable adults or who process personal information about those children, young people and vulnerable adults on the organisation's servers.

6.3 StrongBack Productions will undertake a new check every two years on staff or by looking at the staff member's online record (possible only if they have registered with the Disclosure and Barring Service online system). Certificates processed by other organisations that are not registered with the DBS online service will be accepted if they are less than three months old.

6.4 Staff (including all freelance workers) will be briefed on child protection issue and procedures, health and safety matters and the code of conduct for all project participants including children, young people and vulnerable adults, prior to each project.

6.5 All staff (including freelance workers) will receive a copy of this policy and its associated code of practice (cf Appendix 1)

6.6. it is a requirement of all StrongBack Productions' project contracts to follow the organisation's Child Protection and Health and Safety policies.

7. Use and storage of digital images and social media

7.1 All project participants' parents are asked to give permission for photography and video unless the participant is 18 years old, in which case the young person may give consent themselves. Any requests not to be photographed/videoed will be respected.

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7.2 Photographs and video taken on behalf of StrongBack productions are done by people with Enhanced DBS checks in line with this policy. Photographers and video makers working for StrongBack productions on a freelance basis will not store copies of these images once they have completed work on the project in question; they are contractually required to return all footage/ images to StrongBack Productions on a hard drive and confirm in writing that they have deleted the footage/images from their systems.

7.3 All digital images are stored in a separate and secure area of StrongBack Productions' server that is accessible only to the Project Manager and the CEO both of whom hold enhanced DBS checks. Any footage/ images on separate hard drives are stored in a secure locker and the sole key holder is the project manager.

7.4 No child or young person whose image is used by StrongBack Productions will be identified without additional consent from a parent/guardian.

7.5 StrongBack Productions staff and freelance workers will not connect with children, young people and vulnerable adults participating in projects via any form of social media. Any contact will take place only through accounts created and owned by StrongBack Productions so that all activity can be monitored and moderated.

7.6 All freelance workers, are strongly advised to not communicate with students whether by phone, email or social media. Any contact should be through the intermediary of StrongBack Productions or a work email address copying in either the child's/young person/s parent or the CEO. This policy will be presented during the Child Protection training session.

8. Health and Safety

8.1 Project participants will be given a copy of the relevant Health and Safety Procedures at the start of each new project.

8.2 Contact information for young participants (i.e. under the age of 18) and details of any specific medical needs will be held by the project manager who will also take responsibility for the administration of any medication as requested by parents/carers, should such a need arise within the context of a project.

8.3 Trained first aiders will be present at all times during projects and activities that take place outside of the organisation's regular premises.

9. Code of Conduct for participants

9.1 All participants are required to sign a Code of Conduct (where appropriate) outlining the expected standard of conduct during the project. Where participants are under the age of 18, their parents /carers are expected to sign on their behalf.

9.2 Serious breaches of the Code of Conduct (e.g. violence, racial and discriminatory abuse, use of illegal substances) will result in immediate expulsion from the project.

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10. Monitoring and dissemination of this policy

10.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by StrongBack Productions

10.2 The policy and Code of Practice will be distributed to all StrongBack Productions staff and freelancers working on projects involving children, young people and /or vulnerable adults.

StrongBack Productions
November 2022

Next review November 2023.

Appendix 1

Code of Practice for Staff and all freelance workers

- 1.** Participation in StrongBack Productions' projects should be a rewarding experience for participants and contributing artists. To this end it is important for adults to recognise the particular responsibilities involved in working with children and young people. This code of practice is designed to ensure that staff are aware of those responsibilities and confident in dealing with participants.
- 2.** All staff (including freelancers) will receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy which they should read carefully in conjunction with this code. They will also take part in a training session prior to the commencement of the project which will include guidance on child protection issues.
- 3.** Staff and Freelancers should ensure that they behave in a friendly but professional manner at all times and maintain the highest standard of personal conduct in their dealings with participants that are children, young people and /or vulnerable adults. They should not appear to favour or show interest in one participant more than another. Any comment on a young person's performance over the course of a project should be constructive and supportive. At no time should participants be sworn at or otherwise verbally abused.
- 4.** Staff and Freelancers should take great care to avoid touching participants at any time. This applies for example when demonstrating instrumental technique; tutors should develop the means for modelling and demonstrating the physical aspects of technique without touching participants. Physical touching can make a student feel uncomfortable and may lead to charges of inappropriate behaviour.

5. For their own protection against allegations, staff and freelancers should be alert to situations and behaviours which are open to misinterpretation. One to one contact with participants out of sight of witnesses should be avoided where possible as should any use of or response to sexual innuendo.

6. Staff and freelancers are strongly advised not to communicate with participants whether this is by phone, email or through social media. Again, this is for their own protection. In the case of social media, staff and freelancers should not follow, make friends with, comment on or share young participants' posts even if a participant has commented on the staff member/freelancer. It is recommended that Staff/freelancers ensure their privacy settings are at the highest possible settings for the duration of the project.

7. Any email contact for a legitimate reason (eg educational or professional guidance and/or advice) should be through a work email address where possible copying in either the young participant's parent/carer or the CEO so that communications can be monitored.

8. Staff/ Freelancers who are approached by a young participant with a complaint about their treatment by another member of staff/freelancer or with concerns about inappropriate behaviour by staff/freelancers or other participants should immediately report this to the designated person with responsibility for child protection (named in the Child Protection policy). Where the allegation involves abuse, it is particularly important not to become involved in discussion or investigation but to make sure that details are clearly recorded and passed on to the designated person. This procedure should be explained to the young participant.

9. Outside the specified reporting procedures, strict confidence should apply to any suspicions or allegations raised by staff/freelancers or participants.

10. All staff should remind themselves of the Health and Safety Policy and procedures and ensure not only their own compliance but that of the participants under their supervision.

11. All staff/freelancers will be given a copy of the Code of Behaviour that all participants will have signed prior to the start of each project. Any breaches should be immediately reported to the CEO.

12. Staff/freelancers will be asked to provide the necessary personal details for the police checks to be undertaken to confirm their suitability to work with children. This will be a condition of their employment on the project.

13. Any staff member/freelancer who is unsure of the correct procedure in terms of child protection or uncertain of how to deal with a situation during a project can seek advice and assistance from either the Designated Person or the Designated Child Protection Officer.

14. Nobody is perfect. There may be an occasion where you realise that you have behaved in an inappropriate way under pressure. In such a case, you should inform the Designated Person

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or the Designated Child Protection Officer as soon as possible. Further action may be necessary but it is easier to support people who admit to their mistakes than those who seek to hide them.

Appendix 2

Advice to staff on the appropriate response to a child making an allegation of abuse.

1. Stay calm.
2. Listen to what is said.
3. Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others- do not promise to keep secrets.
4. Tell the child/ young person that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it.
5. Allow the child/young person to continue at their own pace.
6. Ask questions for clarification only and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
7. Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
8. Tell the child what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.
9. Record in writing what was said using the child's own words as soon as possible- note the date, the time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure the record is signed and dated.
10. It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies, following a referral from the Designated Child Protection Officer in StrongBack Productions.

Appendix 3

Code of Conduct for all participants under 18

The Golden Rules

1. Please respect all participants, staff and freelancers; no bad language or bullying please.
2. Do not leave the project site unless you have permission from your parents/carers to do so. Please only leave the site during scheduled breaks and mealtimes.
3. Smoking is not allowed on any project site.
4. No alcohol or illegal drugs.
5. Please arrive on time and attend all project sessions.
6. Please keep your mobile switched off and out of sight during project sessions.
7. Please respect the venue's environment and property and be mindful of the members of the public who also use the venue.
8. Please respect other people's property; ask the owner for permission before using other people's laptops/mobiles/ equipment/instruments/tools.

Behaviour

We require acceptable and reasonable levels of behaviour from all participants at all times. We are especially determined that there should be no physical, verbal or digital bullying of participants, staff or freelancers involved in projects. All staff/freelancers will be obliged to bring any instances of such mistreatment to the attention of the CEO.

We expect everyone to be polite and responsible when communicating with others; participants should not use strong, aggressive or inappropriate language or 'banter'. Participants should appreciate that others may have different opinions. Participants will not take or distribute images or videos of anyone without their permission.

Participants must not upload material to social networking sites (facebook/Instagram etc) or broadcasting sites (eg YouTube) that contains any associations with the project without the permission of StrongBack Productions. Participants must not create pages on social media that refer to other participants, staff and contributors to the project.

Where incidents occur, we reserve the right to ask a participant to leave the project. Where this happens, we will remove the participant from the project.

Tell us in confidence

If you are aware of any behaviour or actions of others that make you feel uncomfortable or know of unpleasant or inappropriate material or messages online, please tell a member of staff on the project. The information you give will be treated in complete confidence.

These guidelines have been produced on the model of Sound and Music's guideline policies as well as guideline policies from the NSPCC, London Community Fund and Musicians Union.