

MINIS THEATRE CLUB

POLICIES & CONSTITUTION

INDEX

- 1 Aims and Objectives
- 2 Membership
- 3 Attendance
- 4 Behaviour
- 5 Parental Support
- 6 Performances
- 7 Subs
- 8 Auditions
- 9 Child Protection Policy
- 10 General
- 11 Concerns
- 12 The Committees Roles and Responsibilities

1: Aims and Objectives

To promote high quality musical and theatrical productions by young people between the ages of 9 and 14.

To promote friendship, mutual support and encouragement between members and their families.

To encourage pleasure and enjoyment of the performing arts.

2: Membership

Young people between the ages of 9 and 14 may become members following an audition, usually in September.

Application Forms for auditions to become a member can be found on the Minis website, www.ministheatreclub.com or can be requested from any member of the club.

Membership is subject to review in accordance with the expectations of the Club.

Members must commit themselves for a programme of rehearsals, and the production.

If a member is involved in other groups then this must be disclosed on membership or when the member becomes involved in another group to ensure that rehearsals and productions are not compromised by members not able to attend.

3: Attendance

Rehearsals are held on Fridays between 5.45pm and 7.30pm (this time could be extended leading up to a production).

Additional rehearsals may be held mid-week and on weekends prior to a production.

Children may be omitted from a certain scene if they are absent from the corresponding rehearsal. The decision of the Production Team is final. Frequent absences will be noted and may prejudice your child's place in the production and in the club.

Parents are required to sign their children in and out at rehearsals and during the production.

4: Behaviour

Each child must display the appropriate behaviour and discipline. This includes listening to and following the instructions of the adults responsible for running the club during rehearsals and performances.

Failure to do so could result in expulsion from the club.

Children are expected to treat each other with respect.

Bullying will not be tolerated.

5: Parental Support

Parental support is an essential element in the success of the productions and the enjoyment of the members.

Parents are asked to be willing to commit themselves to some supportive activity.

Parents should be aware of the rehearsal schedule, and the needs of the production.

Parents will be responsible for making the costumes for their child and will be required to attend costume meetings.

Parents will be included on a supervision rota for rehearsals.

During the run up and week of the show parental help is essential.

Parents and children need to commit fully to the productions.

Any child or parent consistently causing disruption can be asked to leave immediately

6: Performances

Absences from rehearsal are very damaging to the production and to other members. They are treated very seriously and if continuous the

production team may decide to remove your child due to absences from a scene or the production.

Unplanned absence (e.g. sickness) must be notified to a member of the Committee as soon as possible.

Each family is required to sell a minimum of 20 tickets for every production.

During a production authorised helpers must wear the official identification supplied by the Club.

7: Subs

Subs are payable at the beginning of each term and are charged at £100 per term, as of January 2015.

If your child is unable to take part in one of the shows, their place will be held open, however, 50% of the term's fees will be payable to hold their place.

If your child is unable to take part in two shows, their place cannot be held and they will be required to re-audition at the next audition date for members.

The subs will be reviewed annually and you will be notified of any changes.

At the beginning of each term you will receive an invoice with instruction for payment. This can be made by way of cheque made payable to Minis Theatre Club or by bank transfer.

Cheques and invoices should be returned to the Treasurer. Please settle the invoice as quickly as possible.

If the amount due has not been paid within 4 weeks of invoice issue, a reminder will be sent out. If the amount is not settled within a further 2 weeks, then the matter will be reported to the Committee.

A member of the Committee will then be required to talk direct to the member with outstanding subs to rectify the situation.

If the subs are still unpaid following discussions to resolve the issue, the member may be requested to leave the club.

The Club is self-supporting so cannot afford for members not to pay promptly.

There may be additional costs during the term and performances. Children will not be permitted to perform on stage if subs are not paid in full.

8: Auditions

Members will be able to audition for up to three characters in any audition.

The auditions are closed. This means that during auditions, the only people permitted in the audition room will be the member taking the audition with the production team.

If a member of the production team or a person who plays an integral part in the audition process has a child auditioning, that person will be required to leave the audition room during the child's audition and will be replaced by an independent person with the appropriate experience and ability to take that person's place.

The decision of the production team is final.

The production team will use their best endeavours to notify the members of the cast list as soon as possible after the auditions.

Every child will take part in the production.

9: Child Protection Policy

Minis Theatre Club ("The Society") recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Child (Performances) Regulations 1968, the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

The Society recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. The Society is committed to practice which protects children from harm. All employees of the Society and its committee members, accept and recognise their

responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

The Society believes that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All committee members and employees of the Society should be clear on how to respond appropriately

The Society will ensure that:

- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity
- The welfare of each child will always be put first
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned
- All adult members of the Society provide a positive role model for dealing with other people action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour
- It will keep up-to-date with health & safety legislation
- It will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children
- It will undertake relevant development and training
- It will hold a register of every child involved with the Society and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies

The Society has child protection procedures which accompany this policy.

The Society has a dedicated Child Protection Officer, who is in charge of ensuring that the child protection policy and procedures are adhered to. If you would like the name of that person please request same from a member of the committee.

This policy will be regularly monitored by the committee of the Society and will be subject to annual review.

Child Protection Procedure Responsibilities of the Society

At the outset of any production involving children the Society will

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process
- Identify at the outset the person with designated responsibility for child protection
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children including appropriate vetting
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case it needs to report a concern

Parents

- All parents will be made aware of the existence of the Child Protection Policy
- The Society believes it to be important that there is a partnership between the parents and the Society. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the Society's Child Protection Policy and procedures on request
- All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of the Society to take children home
- It is the responsibility of the parents to make sure their children are signed in and out of rehearsals and shows

Unsupervised Contact

- The Society will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children
- If possible there will always be two adults in the room when working with children
- If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimise risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area or in a designated room with a door open
- If it is predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, he or she may be required to obtain a criminal record disclosure

Physical Contact

- All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children
- Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity
- Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear

Managing Sensitive Information

- Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes
- The Society's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use
- The Society will ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of its members, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such as criminal record disclosures

Suspicion of Abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of the Society, please make this known to the person with responsibility for child protection. If you suspect that the person with responsibility for child protection is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the Chairman
- Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed as well as your response, in case there is follow-up in which you are involved
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of the Society, chaperone, venue staff etc., that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre rehearsal rooms etc, and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production

Disclosure of Abuse

- If a child confides in you that abuse has taken place
- Remain calm and in control but do not delay taking action
- Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer
- Don't promise to keep it a secret. Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the person with responsibility for child protection. Make it clear to the child that you will need to

- share the information with others. Make it clear that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help
- Reassure the child that they 'did the right thing' in telling someone
 - Tell the child what you are going to do next
 - Speak immediately to the person with responsibility for child protection; it is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually social services or the police
 - As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was said, using the child's own words. Note the date, time, any names that were involved or mentioned, and who you gave the information to. Make sure you sign and date your record

Recording

- In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, the details of an allegation or reported incident will be recorded, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a statutory child protection agency
- An accurate note shall be made of the date and time of the incident or disclosure, the parties involved, what was said or done and by whom, any action taken to investigate the matter, any further action taken e.g. suspension of an individual, where relevant the reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, and the name of the persons reporting and to whom it was reported
- The record will be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation

Rights and Confidentiality

- If a complaint is made against a member of the committee or an employee, the committee will investigate and proceed as they see fit, in accordance with the child protection policy
- No matter how you feel about the accusation, both the alleged abuser and the child who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998. Remember also that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released
- In criminal law, the Crown or other prosecuting authority has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty

Accidents

- To avoid accidents, chaperones and children will be advised of 'house rules' regarding health and safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds. Children will be advised of the clothing and footwear appropriate to the work that will be undertaken
- If a child is injured while in the care of the Society, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the Society's accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for child protection
- If a child joins the production with obvious physical injury a record of this will be made in the accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for child protection. This record can be useful if a formal allegation is made later, and will also be a record that the child did not sustain the injury while participating in the production.

Criminal Record Disclosures

- The Society believes it is in its best interests to obtain criminal record disclosure for any persons helping backstage. It will inform the parents of the necessary procedures and the level of disclosure required. A Standard disclosure will apply for any one with supervised access to children. An Enhanced disclosure will be required for anyone with unsupervised access
- The committee will try to make sure that some dressing room helpers are official chaperones
- The Society will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

Chaperones

- By law a chaperone is acting in loco parentis and should exercise the care which a good parent might reasonably be expected to give a child. The maximum number of children in the chaperone's care shall not exceed 12.
- Chaperones will be made aware of the Society's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the producer. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily the chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue.

- Under the Dangerous Performances Act no child of compulsory school age is permitted to do anything which may endanger life or limb. This could include working on wires or heavy lifting.
- Chaperones should tell the producer to cease using children in this way, and should contact the local authority
- During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the stage door and signing them into the building
- Children will be kept together at all times except when using separate dressing rooms
- Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times
 - Children are not to leave the theatre unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents
 - Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets
 - Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures in the venue, and will ensure that children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger
 - Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by the Society
 - Chaperones should examine accident books each day. If an accident has occurred, the producer is not allowed to use that child until a qualified first aider opinion has been obtained (not just the word of the parent or child).
 - Chaperones should have written or verbal arrangements for children after performances if parents are not picking them up
 - Children should be signed out when leaving
 - If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of a chaperone or committee member to stay with that child or make arrangements to take them home

Concerned about a child? Info from Bristol City Council:-

Everyone has a part to play in children's welfare and keeping them safe from abuse or neglect. If you have concerns that a child may be being neglected or abused – don't keep it to yourself, no-one will criticise you for reporting genuine concerns. Speak to one of our duty teams at the following numbers.

Avonvale Road, Redfield Tel 0117 955 8231

Southmead House, Southmead Tel 0117 903 8700

Symes House, Hartcliffe Tel 0117 353 2200

Welsman, St Paul's Tel 0117 903 6500

Email (all Bristol) childprotection@bristol-city.gov.uk

Our offices are open Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm and Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm.

In an emergency outside office hours contact our Tel. 01454 615 165.

Or you can contact:

Police Child Protection Team Tel 0117 945 4320

NSPCC 24 Hour Help Line Tel 0800 800 5000

In an emergency dial 999 or contact your local Police Station

10: General

No unauthorised children or adults will be allowed in the rehearsal room or backstage during a production.

As a club we will comply with our Child Protection Policy.

We aim to hold several social events throughout the year for children and their families.

The club will hold an Annual General Meeting. The member's will be notified of the time and date of the AGM at least four weeks prior to the date of the AGM.

11: Concerns

Any concerns or grievances should be addressed to a member of the Committee. A list of the names and address of the Committee will be supplied if requested.

12: The Committees Roles and Responsibilities

The Committee will be made up of parents of members, or persons who have previously had children as members and continue to benefit the club by their contributions to the club.

The Committee will consist of a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and up to 11 others with no more than 15 Committee members at any one time.

The Committee may name other Committee members under specific headings as and when needed.

The Committee will meet 3 or 4 times a year. An executive Committee will meet regularly for matters concerning the running of the Club and everyday decisions and will consist of the current Chair-person, Treasurer, Vice-Chairperson and Product Co-Ordinator. Members of the Committee can be co-opted on to the executive Committee if and when it is necessary to do so.

The aim of the Committee member is to put the interests of the Club foremost at all times.

Proceedings at General Meetings

1.1: There will be an Annual General Meeting, the date to be confirmed and notice to be given to all Members at least two weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting.

1.2: No business shall be transacted at any General Meeting unless a quorum is present. Two persons entitled to vote upon the business to be transacted, each being a Member, shall be a quorum.

1.3: If within half an hour from the time appointed for a General Meeting, a quorum is not present, if convened upon the requisition of members, shall be dissolved; in any other case, it shall be adjourned to the same day in the next week at the same time and place or to such time and place as the Committee may determine. If a quorum is not present at any such adjourned meeting within half an hour from the time appointed for that meeting, the meeting shall be dissolved.

1.4: Every Member present at a General Meeting shall have one vote.

1.5: If there is a hung decision the decision of the Chairperson will be final.

Appointment and Retirement of Committee Members

2.1: Unless and until the Club in a General Meeting shall otherwise determine, there shall not be more than 15 Committee Members at one time.

2.2: A Committee Member may be appointed if that person has been proposed by a Member and seconded by another Member.

2.3: If a Committee Member fails to attend 3 Committee Meetings in succession, that Committee Member will automatically cease to be a Member of the Committee.

Rules or Byelaws

3.1: The Committee Members may from time to time make such Rules as they may deem necessary or expedient or convenient for the proper conduct and management of the Club and for the purposes of prescribing the classes of and conditions of Members, and in particular but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, they shall by such Rules or Byelaws regulate: -

(i) the classification of Members, and the rights and privileges of such Members, and the terms on which Committee Members may resign or have their Membership terminated and the subscription fees, charges, contributions or payments to be made by Members and Committee Members;

(ii) the conduct of Members in relation to one another, and to the Club and to the Club's servants or agents;

(iii) the setting aside of the whole or part of the Club's funds at any particular time or times for a particular purpose or purposes;

(iv) the procedures at General Meetings and Meetings of the Committee

Members;

(v) and, generally, all such matters as are commonly the subject matter of the Club Rules or regulations

(vi) the Committee shall have the power to alter or repeal the Rules and Byelaws and to make additions thereto and to notify the Members of all changes