



SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Version	1.0
Effective date	29 August 2026
Review date	29 August 2027, or sooner where required
Applies to	Children and young people under 18, staff, teachers, freelancers, volunteers, visitors and third parties

Our commitment

Volt Young Company is committed to providing a welcoming, inclusive and professionally managed environment in which children and young people can learn, rehearse, perform and develop with confidence. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and is our number 1 priority.

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1. Policy overview and purpose

Volt Young Company recognises that safeguarding and child protection are fundamental to the safe delivery of arts education and participation. The company will take all reasonable and proportionate steps to prevent abuse, reduce risk, promote welfare and respond appropriately when a concern arises.

This policy applies whenever Volt Young Company is responsible for, or has contact with, a child or young person. This includes classes, workshops, rehearsals, performances, auditions, showcases, backstage activity, trips, external venues, digital activity, filming or recording sessions and any other activity organised or facilitated by the company.

For the purposes of this policy, a child or young person is anyone under the age of 18.

Our safeguarding principles

- The welfare and safety of children is the first consideration in all safeguarding decisions.
- Safeguarding is the responsibility of every member of staff, teacher, freelancer, volunteer and other adult working on behalf of Volt Young Company.
- Children should be listened to, taken seriously and treated with dignity and respect.
- A concern must never be ignored.
- Staff must not investigate allegations themselves. Concerns will be passed to the appropriate safeguarding lead or external agency.
- Information will be shared appropriately, lawfully and on a need-to-know basis where this is necessary to protect a child.
- Volt Young Company will cooperate with safeguarding partners, the police, children's services and other relevant agencies.

Scope

The policy applies to employees, teachers, freelance practitioners, visiting professionals, volunteers, directors, contractors, visitors and relevant third parties. Parents and carers are expected to support the safeguarding arrangements when their child participates in Volt Young Company activities.

Our commitment in practice

Every member of the Volt Young Company team is expected to contribute to a culture in which children are safe, respected and able to speak up. Safeguarding concerns must be acted on promptly and appropriately.

2. Who this policy protects

This policy is intended to protect every child or young person who participates in or is affected by Volt Young Company's activities. This includes children attending regular classes and those taking part in one-off activities.

- Children enrolled in Volt Young Company classes, workshops or programmes.
- Children attending auditions, rehearsals, showcases, productions or performances.
- Children participating in activities at third-party venues or as part of external events organised or facilitated by Volt Young Company.
- Children appearing in photographs, recordings, promotional material or digital content produced by or for the company, where appropriate permissions and safeguarding arrangements are in place.
- Children who may come into contact with staff or representatives of Volt Young Company indirectly through company activity.
- Children whose welfare becomes a concern to a member of the Volt Young Company team.

3. Safeguarding responsibilities and leadership

Volt Young Company will appoint a named Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL is responsible for overseeing the company's safeguarding arrangements, maintaining safeguarding records, receiving concerns and seeking advice or making referrals to the appropriate local authority or emergency service.

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Justin, Artistic Director
DSL email	justin@voltyoungcompany.com
Emergency	999 where a child is in immediate danger

Every adult's duty

- Know how to recognise and report a safeguarding concern.
- Follow this policy and any associated code of conduct or safeguarding procedures.
- Complete required safeguarding induction and refresher training.
- Maintain professional boundaries with children and young people.
- Report concerns promptly rather than waiting to establish certainty.
- Cooperate with safeguarding enquiries and provide accurate records when requested.

4. Safer recruitment and suitability

Volt Young Company will take reasonable steps to ensure that people engaged to work with children are suitable for their role. Recruitment decisions will be proportionate to the role and will reflect applicable safeguarding and DBS requirements.

- Role descriptions and responsibilities will be clear, including safeguarding expectations.
- Applications and relevant employment or engagement information will be obtained and reviewed.
- Identity will be verified.
- References will be requested and considered before a person begins work wherever practicable.
- Relevant criminal-record and DBS checks will be completed where the role is eligible and the level of check is appropriate.

- Interviews or suitability discussions will consider safeguarding, professional boundaries and the candidate's ability to work appropriately with children.
- New staff and practitioners will receive an induction covering safeguarding, reporting arrangements, professional conduct and emergency procedures.
- Safeguarding training will be refreshed at appropriate intervals and whenever there is a material change to the company's procedures.

Concerns about staff or volunteers

Any allegation or concern that an adult working for or on behalf of Volt Young Company may have harmed a child, may pose a risk to children, or may have breached safeguarding expectations must be reported immediately to the DSL. The company will seek appropriate external advice where required and will not conduct an informal investigation that could prejudice a formal safeguarding process.

5. Responding to a concern or disclosure

A child may disclose abuse, neglect or another safeguarding concern because they trust an adult to listen. The adult's response can affect whether the child feels safe enough to continue speaking.

If a child speaks to staff, they must:

- Stay calm, listen carefully and be supportive.
- Allow the child to speak in their own words.
- Do not interrogate, investigate or ask leading questions.
- Do not suggest possible answers or introduce information the child has not provided.
- Do not criticise or confront the alleged perpetrator.
- Do not promise to keep the information secret. Explain, in age-appropriate language, that you may need to share information to help keep them safe.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking to someone.
- Do not make promises about what will happen next; explain only what you know.
- Report the concern to the DSL immediately, or to the police/emergency services if the child is in immediate danger.

If the concern relates to the DSL

The concern must be reported to the appropriate alternative safeguarding route, which may include the local authority, children's services or the police, depending on the nature and urgency of the concern. Staff must not feel required to report a concern to the person who is the subject of that concern.

A member of staff does not need proof that abuse has occurred before raising a safeguarding concern.

6. Recording, confidentiality and information sharing

Safeguarding records must be accurate, factual, dated and signed. Records should distinguish clearly between what was observed, what was said and any action taken.

- Record the concern as soon as possible after the event or disclosure.
- Use the child's own words wherever practicable and avoid interpretation or speculation.
- Record the circumstances immediately before the concern or disclosure where relevant.
- Record the date, time, location, people present and the action taken.
- Sign and date the record.
- Pass the record promptly to the DSL using the company's agreed secure process.
- Store safeguarding records securely and restrict access to authorised people.
- Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with applicable data-protection requirements.

- Information may be shared with children's social care, the police, the LADO or other appropriate agencies where this is necessary to safeguard a child.

7. Recognising abuse and safeguarding risks

Abuse and neglect can happen in families, institutions, community settings, online and through relationships known or unknown to a child. A child may be harmed by an adult or by another child.

Physical abuse

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm. In a theatre setting, unexplained injuries or injuries inconsistent with an activity should be treated as a possible safeguarding concern.

Emotional abuse

Persistent emotional maltreatment that has a serious effect on a child's emotional development. This may include humiliation, intimidation, threats, rejection, silencing, inappropriate expectations, serious bullying or exposure to the ill-treatment of others.

Sexual abuse

Involves forcing, persuading or manipulating a child into sexual activity or sexualised behaviour. Concerns can include inappropriate sexual language, sexualised behaviour, sexual assault, exploitation, sharing sexual images, or exposure to sexual material. This can be direct or in-direct.

Neglect

Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, including adequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, protection from danger or access to appropriate medical care.

Other safeguarding concerns

- Bullying and cyberbullying.
- Child-on-child abuse.
- Online safety concerns.
- Domestic abuse affecting a child.
- Physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect.
- Exploitation, grooming or criminal exploitation.
- Discrimination, harassment or hate-related behaviour to a child.
- Radicalisation or extremism concerns relating to a child.
- Self-harm or serious mental-health concerns where safeguarding action may be required.
- Unsafe working conditions, inappropriate adult behaviour or other conduct that creates a risk to children.

8. Our services and specific safeguarding arrangements

Volt Young Company's safeguarding arrangements recognise the particular environment of theatre training, where children may move between studios, rehearsal spaces, dressing areas, backstage areas and performance venues.

- Attendance and collection arrangements will be clearly communicated to parents/carers, including who is authorised to collect a child.
- Emergency contact and relevant medical information should be collected and kept up to date.
- Parents/carers should be informed of significant safeguarding incidents affecting their child where appropriate, subject to professional advice and the child's safety.
- Studios, rehearsal rooms and backstage areas should be appropriately supervised and risk assessed against our safeguarding policy.
- Changing and costume arrangements should respect privacy, age, dignity and safeguarding requirements.

- Photography and filming must be controlled and carried out only for authorised purposes, with appropriate consent, on company approved equipment and by DBS checked personnel.
- Online groups, messaging and digital learning must be managed through approved company channels and appropriate adult oversight.
- Any safeguarding concern arising during a performance, tour, trip or external event must be reported through the same safeguarding procedure as a concern arising during a normal class.

9. Third parties, venues and performances

Volt Young Company may work with theatres, venues, producers, photographers, videographers, creative practitioners, event organisers and other third parties. Safeguarding expectations apply to those arrangements.

- Third parties working with Volt Young Company participants will be expected to maintain appropriate safeguarding arrangements.
- Where relevant, Volt Young Company will request information about safeguarding arrangements, responsible personnel and risk assessments before activity begins.
- Third parties must comply with applicable child-protection, child-employment and licensing requirements.
- Chaperones or other adults with specific safeguarding responsibilities must be appropriately authorised or licensed where required.
- A venue or third party must not be permitted to override Volt Young Company's safeguarding requirements.
- Any concern arising from a third party will be recorded and escalated to the DSL, and external agencies will be contacted where appropriate.

10. Emergency action and external referrals

Where a child is in immediate danger, the priority is immediate safety. Staff should contact the emergency services on 999 and then inform the DSL as soon as practicable.

For concerns that are not immediate emergencies, the DSL will determine the appropriate safeguarding route and may seek advice or make a referral to children's services, the LADO, the police or another relevant agency.

External safeguarding routes

- Police: 999 for immediate danger.
- Local authority children's services/ Multi-Agency Safeguarding arrangements: use the relevant authority's current contact route.
- LADO: contact the relevant local authority where an allegation concerns an adult who works with or is otherwise in a position of trust or responsibility for children.

11. Legislation and guidance

This policy is intended to operate within the legal and safeguarding framework applicable to Volt Young Company in England. The original policy on which this document is based identified the Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children.

- Children Act 1989.
- Children Act 2004.
- Working Together.

Important scope note

Volt Young Company is a part-time theatre school/out-of-school setting rather than a maintained school or college. Government guidance specifically recognises arts activities among out-of-school settings and provides safeguarding guidance for providers. The company's policy should nevertheless be read alongside any specific legal, licensing, venue or local-authority requirements that apply to its particular activities.

The policy should be reviewed whenever relevant legislation or official guidance changes and at least every 12 months.

12. Definitions and glossary

Child / young person	A person under the age of 18.
Safeguarding	The arrangements and actions taken to protect children from maltreatment, prevent impairment of their health or development, support safe care, and act when concerns arise.
Child protection	The part of safeguarding focused specifically on protecting individual children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead (Designated Safeguarding Officer) - the person appointed by Volt Young Company to oversee safeguarding arrangements and receive concerns.
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer - the local authority officer responsible for managing allegations about adults who work with children, in accordance with local arrangements.
MASH	Local authority safeguarding arrangements through which concerns about children may be assessed and coordinated.
Disclosure	Information shared by a child or another person indicating that a child may have experienced or may be at risk of harm.
Referral	The formal process of passing a safeguarding concern to an appropriate external agency for assessment or action.
Need to know	Information should be shared only with people who require it to safeguard a child or carry out a legitimate safeguarding function.
Third party	An external person, organisation, venue or service provider involved in Volt Young Company activity.

13. Review, approval and policy acknowledgement

This policy will be reviewed at least once every 12 months. It will also be reviewed earlier if:

- there is a relevant change in legislation, statutory guidance or local safeguarding arrangements;
- a safeguarding incident, concern or learning review identifies a need for change;
- Volt Young Company changes, adds or removes a service, activity, or operating arrangement that affects safeguarding;
- An error or omission is identified.

All staff, teachers, freelancers and volunteers working with children are expected to read and follow this policy. Safeguarding induction should be completed before, or as soon as reasonably practicable after, a person begins work, with appropriate supervision until induction is complete.

Effective from	29 August 2026
Next scheduled review	29 August 2027
Named DSL	Justin, Artistic Director
DSL contact	justin@voltyoungcompany.com