



Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection **Policy and Procedures**

Helicon Storytelling Ltd

Company registered in England and Wales (Company number 11323958).

Revision History

Date	Version Number	Changes Made	Published By
04-Sept-18	1.0	Initial Policy Outline.	Hayley Russell

Contents

Revision History	2
Introduction	3
Purpose	3
Scope.....	3
Data Protection	4
Policy Principles	4
Best Practice Code of Conduct.....	4
Procedures	5
Definitions of Abuse.....	7
Signs and Indicators of Abuse	8
Summary	9

Introduction

Helicon Storytelling Ltd. often works directly with children and vulnerable adults and therefore takes the issue of safeguarding those parties very seriously. We are also aware that as a company working with children and vulnerable adults we may be the target of those who may wish to cause harm to those parties. This policy is in place to ensure Helicon Storytelling Ltd. and all associated members are following the requirements of the 2006 Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act, and in addition, to ensure all those working with us follow our best practice code of conduct. We are committed to ensuring that the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount in every aspect of our work.

We seek to create an atmosphere of safety and mutual respect. We are committed to reviewing our policy annually in order to keep up with current legislation and best practice.

Child

A child, as defined in the Children's Acts 1989 and 2004, is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'children and young people' throughout.

Vulnerable Adult

A vulnerable adult, is defined as a person aged 18 and over who is or who may be in need of community care services because of age, illness, physical or learning disability, or someone who is or may be unable to take care of or protect themselves against harm or exploitation (including those who have difficulty in communication and may need additional help).

Purpose

These policies and procedures have been created in order to provide information to both Helicon Storytelling members (referred to henceforth as "The Collective") and parents, schools, charities and other organisations, regarding our interactions with children and vulnerable adults in the course of delivering interactive performances and workshops.

Scope

The policies and procedures outlined in this document applies to everyone working with, for or on behalf of Helicon Storytelling Ltd.

Helicon Storytelling Ltd. has nominated a Safeguarding Officer whose responsibility it will be to ensure all members of The Collective are familiar with the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures. This officer will also act as the first point of contact for anyone with safeguarding concern, and advise on safeguarding matters.

Data Protection

Helicon Storytelling Ltd. are committed to complying with The Data Protection Act (1998) and to upholding the principles of good information handling practice. All information relating to individuals will be kept securely and in accordance with Helicon Storytelling Ltd.'s Data Protection Policy. Helicon Storytelling Ltd. will not permit any photographs or video footage to be taken without the appropriate consent being in place.

Policy Principles

Helicon Storytelling Ltd. will seek to safeguard children and vulnerable adults by ensuring all members of The Collective and any third-party organisations working with us commit to the following policy principles. To:

- value children and vulnerable adults, listen to and respect them.
- adopt child and vulnerable adult protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct.
- ensure that all members of The Collective engaged to work with children and vulnerable adults will be the subject of a disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau, or from the Disclosures and Barring Service (DBS), which deems them suitable to work with children, prior to any contact taking place.
- provide two or more staff (including one non-performer) for every activity we organise with children and vulnerable adults.
- share information about safeguarding children and vulnerable adults along with good practice guidelines.
- share information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involve parents and children appropriately.
- provide effective management for The Collective through supervision, support and training.
- ensure all members of The Collective have agreed to comply with Helicon Storytelling Ltd.'s Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures.
- adopt the principles of this policy in relation to online engagement (e.g. by appropriate use of social networking websites).

Best Practice Code of Conduct

- always ensure language is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory, and not make sexually suggestive comments, even in fun.
- always avoid favouritism
- always ensure equipment is used appropriately and for the purpose it was designed for
- ensure any contact with children is appropriate and in relation to the work of the activity
- provide examples of good conduct you wish others to follow

When working with children it is important to:

- always follow Helicon Storytelling Ltd.'s Child Protection Policy
- treat everyone with dignity and respect and put the welfare of each participant before the goals of the activity
- actively involve children in planning activities wherever possible
- treat children fairly and without prejudice
- value and take children's contributions seriously
- ensure that feedback is encouraging and constructive
- keep an appropriate distance from children and not engage in any inappropriate physical contact
- work in an open environment, avoid any activity with children behind closed doors, or in private or unobserved situations e.g. accompanying a child to the toilet
- ensure another DBS/CRB checked adult is present when working with children
- not take, receive or pass on contact details from children, nor let children have your personal contact details e.g. mobile number or address
- not to be-friend a child on social media
- not to take a photo of a child or allow anyone to photograph children, unless it is for specific agreed purposes, and where consent from the parent/guardian has been given through a release form
- not arrange any contact with children met through Helicon Storytelling Ltd. activities outside of those activities
- only touch a child when it is absolutely necessary and only after permission has been given by the child. In this case be clear, tell the child where you are going to touch them and how e.g. "I will help you up onto this step by placing my hand on the centre of your back." When comforting a child remember it is more appropriate to give a child a glass of water or a tissue, than a hug
- kindly discourage all types of physical conduct that a child may wish to initiate (e.g., a hug)

Members of The Collective who breach this code of conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures. Any breach of this code involving a volunteer or member of staff from another organisation may result in cancellation of their contract or ability to work with Helicon Storytelling Ltd. Serious breaches of this code may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency such as the Police or Children's Services Department.

Procedures

Helicon Storytelling Ltd. is not directly responsible for the protection of children or vulnerable adults attending any of activities organised in conjunction with schools, charities, theatre venues or any other third-party organisations. The protection of any children or vulnerable adults participating in any activities led by Helicon Storytelling Ltd. is solely the responsibility of those organisations. Helicon Storytelling Ltd.'s Safeguarding Officer will inform the relevant parties of the situation in the event that any of the procedures detailed below need to be followed. In the event that the Safeguarding Officer is the source of the problem, it is the duty of any other member of Helicon

Storytelling Ltd. to inform the appropriate authority. If someone believes a child or young person may be in immediate danger, always dial 999 for police assistance. If someone believes that a child may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering significant harm, then they must notify the Safeguarding Officer, who will then take appropriate action.

Accidents and Injuries

If any child sustains an accident or injury whilst participating in a Helicon Storytelling Ltd. event, the staff present must enter a record of the accident in the venue's Accident Book and provide a copy to the Safeguarding Officer. The record will be countersigned by the person responsible for the child, and a member of staff from the venue. Helicon Storytelling Ltd. will keep a record of the accident for a minimum of 12 months. If a child or member of a vulnerable group arrives for an activity with an obvious physical injury, a record will be made by the Safeguarding Officer and a member of venue staff will be required to counter-sign. This record will be used if a formal allegation is made later as a record that the individual did not sustain the injury whilst engaged in a Helicon Storytelling Ltd. activity.

Action to Take

Helicon Storytelling Ltd. take any allegation or potential threat concerning the welfare of children and vulnerable adults with the utmost seriousness. The following procedures ensure that any incidents are dealt with quickly and correctly. It is the responsibility of the authorities to determine whether abuse has occurred. If a young person discloses an abuse allegation to you:

1. Let the child know that you will need to tell someone else what they are going to say. Keep the door open.
2. If they still want to speak let the child speak without interrupting them, look at them directly and accept what they say. Do not press them for information. Do not pass judgment but neither should you make the child feel guilty or isolated. Be aware that they may have been threatened.
3. Let the child know what you are going to do next, who you are going to tell, why and roughly what will happen next.
4. Finish on a positive note.
5. Ensure no situation arises which could cause further concern.

Action to take immediately

1. Contact the Helicon Storytelling Ltd.'s Safeguarding Officer (020 7601 1800).
2. Make written notes of the facts as you know them, including:
 - the young person's name and address
 - relevant phone numbers: eg. head teacher, child's parent or guardian
 - what is said to have happened, or what was seen
 - when it occurred
 - who else was there
 - what was said by those involved
 - whether there is any actual evidence e.g., bruises, bleeding, changed behaviour

- who has been told about it
- who was concerned
- was the child able to say what happened
- whether the Group Leader/parents/guardians/carers have been advised

Give a copy to the Safeguarding Officer. If the allegation is about you then follow the same steps. If independent advice is needed contact the NSPCC - for a free 24hour Child Protection Helpline, 0808 800 5000 Any suspicious behaviour will be passed to the local Police Child Protection Unit or the local Social Services within 24 hours of the allegations being made.

Definitions of Abuse

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scolding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent/guardian/carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child they are looking after.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to the child(ren) that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact including penetrative or non-penetrative acts, as well as touching of any part of the body, clothed or unclothed. They may include noncontact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic and/or psychological needs. It may involve a parent/guardian/carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs

Signs and Indicators of Abuse

The signs of physical abuse may include:

- unexplained bruising
- marks or injuries
- bruises that reflect hand marks or fingertips
- cigarette burns
- bite marks
- broken bones
- scalds

Changes in behaviour can also indicate physical abuse:

- fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- flinching when approached or touched
- depression withdrawn behaviour It is important to remember that children and young adults collect cuts and bruises in their daily life. It is important that these can be readily explained.

The signs of sexual abuse may include:

- stomach pains
- discomfort when walking or sitting down

Changes in behaviour that might indicate sexual abuse include:

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- running away
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- saying they have a secret they cannot tell anybody about
- substance or alcohol abuse suddenly
- having unexplained sources of money
- not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

Some indicators of neglect may include:

- looking badly presented with old, torn clothing
- always hungry and looking for food
- not being expected to be at home when it seems reasonable that they should be
- adults not seeming to know or be interested in what is happening to them
- becoming thin and under-nourished

- not having what they need for their studies
- not receiving medical attention when it seems appropriate

Emotional abuse can be difficult to identify but changes in behaviour may include:

- fear of making mistakes
- sudden speech disorders
- self-harm
- fear of parent being approached concerning their behaviour

Summary

This code has been developed to provide advice which will not only help to protect children but will also help identify any practices which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse being made against individuals. Following this good practice code will also help to protect Helicon Storytelling Ltd. by reducing the possibility of anyone using their role within the organisation to gain access to children to abuse them. When working with children or vulnerable adults all members of The Collective are considered to be acting in a position of trust. It is therefore important that staff are aware that they may be seen as role models by children and vulnerable adults and must act in an appropriate manner at all times and follow the code of conduct.