

# Child Safety at Polka Theatre

## Policy Document for Polka Theatre

The safety and protection of children whilst at Polka is paramount and our Board of Directors, Senior Management and staff are committed to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare whilst at Polka. We employ suitably trained and experienced staff and aim to provide a secure and safe environment.

### Polka Theatre Participatory Workshops

**Parents can leave their child in a Polka Theatre class knowing that their safety is ensured.**

#### The National Standards

- Polka Theatre classes comply with Ofsted's 14 National Standards for Out of School Care.
- Our workshop room is approved by Ofsted and Health and Safety inspectors. Polka staff are aware of the company Health and Safety policy and equipment is checked regularly

#### Police Checks/Disclosure

- All staff, who may have one to one time with a child during their employment at Polka Theatre, have obtained enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks. This includes permanent and freelance staff as well as volunteers and all our Workshop Leaders, Assistants, Education, Front of House, Production and Stage Management staff.
- All Polka staff are given details of this policy as part of their induction and Education Staff receive regular appropriate training regarding child safety issues and follow the *London Child Protection* procedures.

#### Ratio of Adults to Children

- 3 adults work on the Polka classes for children aged 3 – 8, a leader, a deputy and an assistant. This is a minimum ratio of 1:7; the national guideline is 1:8.
- A minimum of 2 adults work on the Polka classes for children aged 9+, a leader and a deputy. This is a minimum ratio of 1:10; the national guideline is 1:10.
- There are always other members of staff on hand to help in an emergency: front of house and education staff being the first port of call.

- Children are always escorted by an adult when they need to leave the workshop room.
- Young children wear coloured bibs during breaks in the playground
- Polka always ensures that written consent is given from parents/ carers if children or young people are taken off site.

### **Risk Assessment**

- Risk assessment of our premises and activities is carried out on a regular basis and action plans put in place to address specifically identified hazards and the means of eliminating or minimising them. Please contact our Box Office for a copy of our risk assessment on **020 8543 4888**.

### **Accidents and illness**

In the event of a child suffering an accident during a visit to Polka:

- A member of staff trained in first aid will be on the premises during all public events. They will establish what further action needs to be taken and will put those measures in place.
- First Aid Kits are located around the building.
- In most cases, injuries sustained can be easily treated by the first aider. If this is not the case the first aider will contact the emergency services and the responsible parent/guardian and ensure that the child is comforted until further help arrives.
- Details of all accidents are kept in an accident book, kept in the Theatre Manager's Office.
- Polka Theatre staff cannot administer any form of medication, including paracetamol or aspirin

If an accident of illness occurs during a Polka event:

- The workshop leader or assistant will assess the situation and remove the child from the activity. They will be taken to a quiet area where they can be comforted and helped (where possible).
- If the child continues to feel ill the assistant will contact the parent/carer and request that the child is taken home.
- If a child needs to take medication or may need staff to administer medication the parent must discuss this with staff prior to the workshop.

### **Video and photography**

- Polka Theatre always obtains permission from parents/ guardians before taking photographs or filming children and young people and using any subsequent photographs for marketing or documentation purposes.
- Parents / Guardians are asked to sign consent for their child to be photographed by Polka staff and / or other parents, during a performance. Their consent is obtained at the registration of a workshop or the beginning of the term if their child participates in weekly after school workshops.
- If consent to photograph is not received from all parents, the audience will be asked to refrain from taking photographs at the start of the performance.

### **Code of behaviour**

- Parents/ carers will always be informed if staff have had to do things of a personal nature for a child such as changing clothing
- Workshop Staff are always informed of any changes regarding child protection laws or best practise by the Education department
- During workshops, we encourage independent learning and staff will have minimal physical contact with children. In drama it is sometimes necessary to have some physical contact when demonstrating exercises or joining in activities to encourage others but staff will be mindful of what/how much contact is appropriate. Where possible staff will demonstrate physical exercises with other workshop staff.
- Polka staff discourage children from leaning, lying or sitting on them and other clingy behaviour. Positive behaviour of other children will be rewarded to set an example of how we want children to behave with the workshop team.

### **Emergencies and emergency contact details**

- Emergency contact forms are sent to parents with their tickets to any Polka class, no matter how short the class. A freepost envelope is included with the form.
- Children will not be allowed to take part in the class if parents have not sent back the emergency contact form.
- The Education Assistant will contact parents who have not returned their form back one week prior to the class, to remind them.
- Parents must fill in a new form for each class, or check and sign an old form in the case of after school workshops, as there may be changes that we are not aware of
- We ask that parents complete forms, not nannies or other carers, to ensure that all information is correct.
- Staff receive regular training in emergency procedures. The theatre is regularly inspected by Merton Council.
- Polka Theatre has Public Liability Insurance.
- Workshop staff working in the annexe will be connected to other staff in the main building via walkie talkies and the intercom system.

### **Arrival for a workshop at Polka**

- Registration for a workshop takes place in the foyer of Polka Theatre at the start of every workshop or term of workshops.
- If a participant arrives late to a workshop they should notify the Front of House staff at the Polka shop (in the foyer), who will have a copy of the register. The member of Front of House staff will accompany the participant to the workshop space, with their parent / carer if the participant is under the age of 12.

### **Breaks**

- Toilet breaks: children under 7 are taken to the toilet if they need to go. The assistant will take the children escort them and wait outside.
- Refreshment breaks: During an hour-long workshop a break will not automatically be given. If a child informs the staff that they are thirsty or need the toilet their need will be met.
- During a workshop of more than one hour regular toilet and refreshment breaks are provided. Squash, water and plain biscuits are given to all children during refreshment breaks. Polka staff will refer to emergency contact forms re allergies.
- Lunches: During all-day workshops we request that children bring a packed lunch.

Should a child arrive without a packed lunch the workshop staff will ensure that food is purchased for the child and the bill will be settled with the parent/carer after the workshop.

### **Picking your child up from the class**

- Parents must come to a designated area to pick up their children – the arrangements for collection will be made clear by the workshop assistant at the time of registration. They must inform the workshop leader that they have picked up their child.
- The emergency contact form has a space for the names of two people who the parent will allow to pick up their child in their absence – if arrangements have been made for one of these two appointed adults to collect the child the workshop assistant must be notified at the time of registration.
- Workshop leaders are contracted to stay with the class until all children are picked up by one of the registered carers.
- Children will not be allowed off the premises to be picked up.

### **Safeguarding Children**

- All Polka staff, workshop leaders and assistants are made aware of Polka Theatre's Policy on what to do if you suspect a child is being abused.

### **Policy**

- All parents and carers are made aware of this policy and supplied with this abridged version of the policy when booking a workshop place for their child.
- Full copies of the Child Safety Policy may be requested by contacting a member of Front of House staff or contacting Janna Feldman, Head of Education: 020 8545 8326 / [janna@polkatheatre.com](mailto:janna@polkatheatre.com).
- The application of this policy is constantly being reviewed. It is completely redrafted and updated once every three years. The next review will take place in April 2012.