



HEARTLAND TALENT MANAGEMENT LTD

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

1. Policy Introduction & Ethos

Heartland Talent Management ("the Agency") acknowledges a primary moral and legal duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people (aged 4 to 18 years) placed on our roster or participating in our workshops and engagements. Every staff member, professional tutor, registered chaperone, parent/guardian, and volunteer operating on behalf of the Agency accepts their duty to protect children from harm, abuse, and exploitation.

The entertainment, casting, and performance sectors present unique environments. The Agency operates under the firm principle that **the welfare of the child is paramount**. All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, have an equal right to protection from all types of harm and abuse.

2. Statutory Legislation & Governance

This Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy is formulated in strict accordance with relevant UK legislation, statutory guidance, and regulatory framework standards:

- **Children Act 1989 & Children Act 2004**
- **The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (statutory guidance)**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**
- **United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) & Data Protection Act 2018**

3. Prevention & Safer Working Practices

To maintain a safe, supportive, and transparent environment across all casting calls, studio rehearsals, assessment workshops, and external production shoots, Heartland Talent Management implements the following preventive measures:

1. **Clear Environment & Introductions:** Children are made familiar with their surroundings at hired workshop venues and studios, including the location of toilets, emergency exits, first aid arrangements, and on-site welfare staff.
2. **Designated Safeguarding Contacts:** Children, parents, and chaperones are explicitly informed of who the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is for any workshop, audition, or shoot.
3. **Open Work Environment:** Agency staff and tutors must always work in open, observed environments. One-to-one or isolated situations with a child in closed rooms are strictly prohibited.
4. **Vetting & DBS Checks:** All agency staff, tutors, and on-site personnel coming into direct contact with children must hold a valid, Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate.
5. **Licensed Chaperones:** All external or agency-appointed chaperones supervising children must hold a valid Council Chaperone Licence issued by their local authority, supported by an Enhanced DBS check.
6. **Parental Responsibility:** On external shoot sets and auditions, parents/guardians are responsible solely for their own child unless an official council-licensed chaperone has taken over legal custody for the production.
7. **Physical Contact & Conduct:** Unnecessary physical contact is prohibited. Physical contact during workshops (e.g., posture adjustments in dance or drama) must be minimal, professionally necessary, and explained clearly to the child in advance.
8. **Rest & Wellbeing:** Tutors, staff, and chaperones must actively monitor children for signs of physical fatigue or emotional stress and enforce statutory break schedules.

4. Definitions of Child Abuse & Neglect

Safeguarding concerns may arise from physical, emotional, or behavioural indicators. Abuse is defined across four primary statutory categories:

- **Physical Abuse:** The infliction of physical harm or failure to prevent physical injury, including hitting, shaking, throwing, burning, scalding, or suffocating.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This includes physical contact, non-contact acts (such as exposure to or involvement in producing pornographic media), online grooming, or encouraging sexually inappropriate behaviour.
- **Emotional Abuse:** The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child causing severe adverse effects on their emotional and behavioural development. This includes conveyances of worthlessness, unrealistic developmental expectations, exposure to domestic abuse, cyberbullying, or exploitation.
- **Neglect:** The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional, or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of health or development. This includes failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or

protection from harm.

5. Managing Disclosures of Abuse

If a child or young person confides in a staff member, chaperone, or volunteer regarding abuse, the receiving adult must adhere to the following protocol:

- **LISTEN:** Stop and listen attentively straight away. Show that you take their statements seriously.
- **REASSURE:** Stay calm and reassure the child that they were right to speak out.
- **DO NOT PROMISE CONFIDENTIALITY:** Explain gently that you cannot keep secrets if a child is at risk but assure them that information will only be shared with professionals who need to know to keep them safe.
- **NO LEADING QUESTIONS:** Do not ask probing or leading questions. Allow the child to tell their story in their own time and words. Do not interrupt or ask them to repeat the statement.
- **DO NOT CONFRONT:** Never confront the alleged abuser.
- **RECORD IMMEDIATELY:** Write down an accurate record of the disclosure as soon as possible. Use the child's exact words, noting the date, time, location, presence of any witnesses, and the child's demeanour.
- **REPORT IMMEDIATELY:** Pass the written record directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay.

6. Allegations Against Staff, Tutors, or Chaperones

If an allegation of abuse or misconduct is made against an agency staff member, tutor, chaperone, or volunteer:

1. The incident must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
2. If the allegation involves the DSL, the report must be directed immediately to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) / Children's Social Care within the relevant local council area.
3. The individual subject to the allegation will be immediately removed from duties involving children pending an urgent investigation.
4. The alleged perpetrator must not be informed of the allegation before advice is sought from the LADO or police.

7. Record Keeping & Information Sharing

- Accurate, objective written records of all safeguarding concerns, disclosures, or incidents will be created immediately and stored in a secure, encrypted format.
- Records are kept strictly confidential and accessed only on a need-to-know basis.
- In accordance with statutory UK guidance, data protection legislation (UK GDPR) is not a barrier to sharing information where it is necessary to safeguard and protect a child's welfare.

8. Designated Safeguarding Personnel Contact Details

If you suspect abuse or have any welfare concerns regarding a child represented by or attending workshops with Heartland Talent Management, contact the designated personnel immediately:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- **Name:** Heather Watson
- **Position in Company:** Agency Director
- **Head Office Address:** 14 Salisbury Avenue, East Leake, Loughborough, LE12 6NJ
- **Telephone / Emergency Out-of-Hours:** 07904 674 549
- **Email:** safeguarding@heartlandtalent.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- **Name:** Madie Mason
- **Position in Company:** Operations Manager
- **Telephone / Emergency Line:** 07904 674 549
- **Email:** safeguarding@heartlandtalent.co.uk

Important Notice: It is your duty to report concerns—not to investigate them. If a child is in immediate danger, call the Police on **999** or contact local council Children's Social Care services without delay.