INVERNESS MUSICAL THEATRE - CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Inverness Musical Theatre SCIO (hereafter referred to as IMT) is a membership organisation for people aged 16 years or older.

In addition to normal membership age requirements, from time-to-time (and through the prior approval of the IMT committee) IMT may also decide to invite young people under the age of 16 to join or take part in IMT activities, for example to be part of a musical theatre production that requires younger children as part of the cast.

This policy sets out IMT's position with regard to the safeguarding of any young people or children involved in IMT membership or activities and applies to all IMT members (including trustees/committee and honorary life members), IMT production team members, any paid officials or contractors, volunteers and helpers, students or anyone working on behalf of IMT.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To safeguard all young people involved with IMT, but particularly any children under the age of 16 who participate in IMT activities.
- To provide all those involved with IMT with the overarching principles, policy and procedures that will guide IMT's approach to safeguarding and child protection.

Safeguarding Policy

IMT values all young people and children who become involved in IMT activities as being a vital part of the organisation, and desires to see them grow, mature and be challenged in musical theatre in a healthy and safe environment.

IMT believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse. IMT has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. IMT is committed to practise in a way that protects them.

IMT will:

- Ensure children and young people involved with IMT, regardless of age, are treated equally and with respect and dignity.
- Ensure IMT's duty of care to any children under the age of 16 is put first.
- Ensure the necessary Volunteer Scotland Disclosure (PVG) Scheme arrangements are in place for anyone who will be responsible for the supervision of children or vulnerable young people as part of IMT's activities.
- Appoint a member of the IMT Committee as a designated Child Safeguarding Officer (CSO).
- Take action to address any inappropriate behaviour towards children or young people.
- Remain cognisant of ongoing developments relating to safeguarding and child protection issues, undertaking any relevant development and training as required.

IMT's expectations of all adult members and those involved in IMT activities are:

- To act as a positive role model to children and young people
- To ensure balanced relationships based on mutual trust that empower children and young people, including within decision-making processes.
- To ensure bullying behaviour is not accepted or condoned.
- To ensure enthusiastic and constructive feedback is given rather than negative criticism.

Ultimate responsibility for the safeguarding of young people and children sits with the IMT Trustees/Committee.

Child Safeguarding Officer (CSO)

The CSO will:

- Be a first point of contact for IMT safeguarding or child protection issues.
- Ensure this policy is put into practice and reviewed/updated as required.
- Bring any child safeguarding or protection concerns to the notice of the Committee and other relevant people (Production Team, Parent/Guardian), ensuring any issues are considered and addressed appropriately.
- Keep a record of any child safeguarding or protection issues.
- Contact relevant authorities if/where appropriate.
- Ensure the parent and/or legal guardians of all children under the age of 16 involved in IMT activities are provided with a copy of this policy.
- Take responsibility for ensuring appropriate child supervision requirements are in place and carried out effectively for all IMT activities, including recruitment and organisation of chaperones where required.
- Take responsibility, on behalf of the IMT Committee, for ensuring all necessary Volunteer Scotland Disclosure (PVG) Scheme arrangements are in place.
- Arrange any required consent/permissions.

For **2024-25**, the designated IMT CSO is: **Morna Eadie**

Supervision arrangements for children under 16

IMT members will be atleast 16 years of age and therefore do not require adult supervision and/or chaperones to take part in IMT activities.

Where a child under 16 is invited to take part in IMT activities, it will be done so on the agreement that either:

1. A parent or legal guardian will take responsibility for the supervision of their child at all times while taking part in IMT activities.
2. IMT will organise chaperones to take responsibility for the supervision of children involved in IMT activities, including collection and drop off to parents/guardians.

Photography and social media

For any children under 16, IMT will:

- Obtain parental or guardian consent for a child to be photographed/videoed.
- Where possible, obtain the child's permission to use their image.
- Only use images for the specific purpose which has been agreed with the parents/carers and child.
- Avoid using children's full names in photographic captions.
- Ensure all images of children are stored safely and securely.

Procedure for dealing with child safeguarding or protection concerns

If a circumstance arises within IMT activities where behaviour or actions are observed involving a child or young person that raises a child safeguarding or protection concern, the following steps should be taken:

- Immediately notify the named IMT CSO. In the absence of the IMT CSO, notify another member of the IMT Committee – ideally the Chair or Vice Chair.
- Do not discuss the matter with anyone else.
- Do not take steps to address and/or investigate the matter yourself.

If a circumstance arises where any child or young person involved in IMT activities discloses something to another IMT member that raises a safeguarding or child protection concern, the following steps should be taken:

- Listen to the child/young person.
- Do not promise to keep any secrets, but always let the child/young person know if and why you are going to tell someone else.
- Take whatever is said seriously and help the child/young person to trust their own feelings.
- Take notes of exactly what is said to you, avoiding assumptions and conjecture.
- Report any disclosure immediately to the named IMT CSO. In the absence of the IMT CSO notify another member of the IMT Committee – ideally the Chair or Vice Chair
- Do not discuss the matter with anyone else.
- Do not take steps to address and/or investigate the matter yourself.

The IMT CSO, with the support of the Chair and/or Vice Chair of the IMT Committee, will investigate and address any issues raised in accordance with the same principals, procedures, actions and penalties as outlined in the IMT Grievance Procedure.

However, given the particular additional legal and moral obligations associated with child safeguarding and protection, where appropriate and necessary IMT will also immediately raise the reported issue with the relevant parent/guardian and, where necessary, authorities, depending on the circumstances involved.