



Child Protection

Introduction

The ABD has introduced a Child Protection policy, with associated Good Practice Guidelines, in the light of the difficulties in law which would arise both for the ABD and for members if a problem arose and due consideration had not been given to the risks involved.

As part of the policy, ABD members who are in contact with children and vulnerable persons are expected to operate procedures particularly on employment, data protection, procedures at events such as Festivals etc. and photography/videoing.

The ABD has procedures in place so that any allegation or complaints of abuse are taken seriously and investigated, which includes informing the Board Members of the complaint. They have the power to suspend the individual against whom the complaint has been made from membership until the investigation is complete and a decision on the action to be taken has been made.

In addition, each member should keep a list of any person in their school, or associated with it, who may have access at any time to records about children, or who may be helping with activities which may bring them into a supervisory contact with children using their facilities, services or activities, whether paid or voluntary. All those on the list should be asked to undergo a disclosure check by the DBS to ascertain their suitability to supervise, protect and safeguard the welfare of children using members facilities. The ABD operates a scheme for members to obtain DBS Disclosures through the Company "Due Diligence Checking" – members can request a DBS check by contacting the ABD HQ in the first instance.

Children and Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy

1. The ABD and all its members are aware that children under 18 and vulnerable persons of any age can be involved in their activities and that they have a responsibility, within the limits of their control and jurisdiction, to protect and safeguard the welfare of every such child and vulnerable person.
2. It is the policy of the ABD that all children and vulnerable persons have the right to protection from abuse. All members who are in contact with such children and vulnerable persons are expected to be familiar with and to apply the procedures on:
 - Employment
 - Data protection, especially in regard to children
 - Procedures at ABD events, competitions, and courses
 - Procedures for examiners
 - Photography and video recording

The ABD will ensure that the following procedures are in place so that any allegation(s) or complaints of abuse are taken seriously and investigated.

3. Any complaint or incident to be reported under this policy should be reported in the first instance to the person in charge of the event or activity indicating that an abuse of a child or vulnerable person's welfare may have taken place. If the person in charge is the person against whom the complaint is being made, the matter should be referred

to the ABD Compliance Officer Mr Richard Rose or if the complaint is about him, to the Theatre President of the ABD.

4. On receipt of a complaint the Compliance Officer will convene, as soon as possible, a committee of three "Grand Council" members to hear and investigate the complaint. All parties to the complaint will have the right to be heard, including the parents or legal guardian(s) of the child or vulnerable person concerned.

5. The Directors will be informed of the complaint and have the power to suspend the individual(s) against whom the complaint has been made from employment or membership until the investigation is complete and a decision on the action to be taken has been made.

6. The ABD has a person who is appointed as a Policy Compliance Officer to advise on procedures to ensure the ABD and its members are aware of their responsibilities, and Steven Weaver (General Secretary) is responsible for liaising with its Umbrella Body on DBS Disclosures.

7. All member teachers are required to undergo a DBS check; there will be no exceptions other than non-teaching or retired members – furthermore, persons working either directly or indirectly for ABD and who come into contact with children and vulnerable persons for more than once a week or 4 times within a month on a regular basis will be asked to undergo a disclosure check by the DBS to ascertain their suitability to supervise, protect and safeguard the welfare of children.

8. A copy of the legal requirements and guidelines adopted by ABD (**enclosed**) and guidelines on good practice will be given to all persons deemed to fall within the enclosed guidelines. The Directors will ensure that this policy and its implementation will be kept under review. The final status of the DBS check will be reported direct to the General Secretary and be held securely in confidence.

Child Protection – Good Practice Guidelines

The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate:

Good practice

- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoid private unobserved situations and encourage open communication with no secrets).
- Treat all children equally and with respect and dignity.
- Always put the welfare of each child first.

Practices to be avoided

- Avoid spending time alone with children away from others save in essential one to one situations when extreme care should be exercised.

Practices never to be sanctioned

- Allowing or engaging in horseplay, physical or sexually provocative games.
- Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child or young person, even in fun.
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control.
- Failing to act on and record any allegations made by a child.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur during or in the context of an ABD event or activity, it should immediately be reported to the designated Compliance Officer:

- If you accidentally hurt a child.
- If a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.
- If a child is unusually distressed and you have any suspicions of or concerns about potential abuse.

Events policy and Guidelines

- ABD Teachers/members will be responsible for the duty of care as regards their individual school/students/ organisation whilst attending any ABD event. It is recommended that additional chaperones are made available if larger numbers are in attendance.
- This ruling applies to ABD Festivals, Scholarships, Theatre events and Congress or any other such event.