



Child Protection Policy

General Purpose Statement

The Clearfield Arts Studio Theatre, Inc. seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children of the Clearfield Arts Studio Theatre, Inc. from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms "child" or "children" include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The terms "worker" or "volunteer" includes both paid and unpaid persons who work with children.

Selection of Workers

All persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

- a) **PA Criminal Background Check** - <https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>
- b) **Child Abuse Clearances** - <http://www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov/clearances/index.htm>
- c) **Personal Interview**

A face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

- d) **Reference Checks**

If needed, references may be checked to discuss anyone wishing to work with children at the Clearfield Arts Studio Theatre, Inc.

Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing the Clearfield Arts Studio Theatre, Inc. to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, s/he will be unable to work with children.

A disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the executive committee on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event.

The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file at the Clearfield Arts Studio Theatre, Inc.

Two Adult Rule

It is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom will remain open and there will be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity.

Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect** – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Volunteers and staff may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this must be reported immediately to the board president for further action, including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law. Those who are considered mandated reporters, such as educators, social workers, etc. are required to immediately report the abuse, as per their training. The board president must also be notified.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at the Clearfield Arts Studio Theatre, Inc. or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure will be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The staff member or volunteer alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation. He or she will be instructed to have no contact with the victim or with witnesses.
3. All allegations of abuse will be reported to the civil authorities, and the organization will comply with the state’s requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. The organization will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. The insurance company will be notified, and the organization will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
5. The director of communications will serve as the spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect. The advice of legal counsel will be sought before responding to media inquiries or releasing information about the situation to the public. All other representatives of the organization will refrain from speaking to the media.
6. Any person who is found guilty of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children or youth and not allowed access to The Clearfield Arts Studio Theatre, Inc. productions, performances, and other sponsored activities.

Open Door Policy

Classroom doors will remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors will never be locked while persons are inside the room.

Teenage Workers

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for teenage workers (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to teenage workers:

- Must be at least age 14.
- Must be screened as specified above.
- Must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.

Check-in/Check-out Procedure

For children in sixth grade and younger, a security check-in/check-out procedure will be followed during all programs, performances, practices, and other activities.

Sick Child Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at The Clearfield Arts Studio Theatre, Inc. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be dropped off:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours;
- Green or yellow runny nose;
- Eye or skin infections; and/or
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease.

Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up immediately.

Medications Policy

It is the policy of The Clearfield Arts Studio Theatre, Inc. not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications will be administered by a parent at home. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with the leader of that program to develop a plan of action.

Discipline Policy

It is the policy of The Clearfield Arts Studio Theatre, Inc. not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There will be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children.

Restroom Guidelines

For children under the age of five, Staff and volunteers will escort a group of children to the bathrooms. They will always go in a group, never taking a child to the bathroom alone. The workers will check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the children inside. The workers will then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker will open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the workers will prop open the bathroom door, and leave the stall door open as they assist the child.

For children over the age of five, if possible, at least one adult male will take boys to the restroom and at least one adult female will take girls. The staff or volunteers will check the bathroom first to make sure that the bathroom is empty, and then allow the children inside. The worker will then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom.

For the protection of all, workers will *never* be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class, performance, production, etc.

Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps will be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be notified, in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

Training

The Clearfield Arts Studio Theatre, Inc. will provide training on this child protection policy to all new volunteers and staff and will strive to provide opportunities for additional training classes or events. All workers are strongly encouraged to attend these training events.