



# Octopus Thornbury

## Health and Safety for Children

It is essential to ensure that whenever drama activities, rehearsals and performances are undertaken the safety of all children, is ensured as far as reasonably practicable. A competent person can be appointed to assist with the delegation of this responsibility.

In order to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of children is in place during all activities.

The duty to supervise is delegated by the Chair of Octopus Thornbury to the Child Welfare Officer who will have the support from other designated responsible persons (Chaperones). Chaperones will be designated for each production. It will never be enough to rely upon the assumption that children ought to know what they are doing. Initial training of children for each performance should be devoted to explaining how best to keep themselves safe. It is important to reinforce key safety messages and check the understanding of all children at regular stages.

### **Risk Assessment**

The Child Welfare Officer is responsible for ensuring compliance with this guidance. This will include ensuring that other responsible adults understand the guidance and how to implement it.

It is the Child Welfare Officer and designated persons responsibility to ensure that risk assessments for working in a drama setting are completed. Risk assessments must be recorded and carried out by a competent person, that is, someone with the necessary knowledge and training, prior to activities being undertaken or equipment being used.

All involved in the productions must be consulted and the findings and control measures must be communicated. Where existing risk assessments have been conducted these should be reviewed as a minimum annually or when there is reason to suspect they are no longer valid to ensure the control measures in place remain effective and adequate.

### **Code of conduct**

Children and their parents/guardians must be familiar with the code of conduct for Octopus Thornbury prior to undertaking drama activities.



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### Inspections

Before rehearsals or performances, an inspection of the area must be carried out by a competent member to ensure the suitability of the drama area for children's use.

Inspections should include items such as:

- the suitability of staging
- floor surfaces
- space
- portable appliances
- equipment
- lighting, props and storage of items
- suitability of environment or area for equipment particularly in the case of special effects
- ensuring that children are wearing suitable footwear and clothing.

### Incidents

All involved in Octopus Thornbury are responsible for ensuring all incidents and near misses are reported.



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### Back stage

Back stage areas are to be kept clear of obstructions as far as is practical. Where this is unavoidable they should be brought to the attention of the children. It is important that routines are established and maintained e.g. all items are returned to the props table immediately after use. Access to backstage and other areas are restricted at all times and especially when stage is set for production.

### Electrical

- All portable appliance equipment is to be subject to annual check by a competent person and a visual check by the user before use.
- Fixed and permanently wired installations to be inspected and tested as part of the electrical installation check.
- Keep cable runs tidy and securely tied and properly routed.

### Fire

- Children and Chaperones, must be made aware of the emergency evacuation procedures.
- The fire risk assessment must be reviewed by a competent person for rehearsals and performances.
- All exit routes to be clear and correctly signed.
- Chaperones and Front of House staff to be in place and trained to assist with evacuations during performances and be aware of anyone requiring assistance to evacuate.



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### **First Aid**

During activities, rehearsals and performances suitable first aid arrangements must be available. Octopus Thornbury members should be made aware of how to summon a first aider/medical assistance if required.

### **Medical information**

The Child Welfare Officer must ensure information on the medical conditions (and medications taken), including allergies, of children is known to them and acted upon as drama activities can bring children into contact with make-up, paints and other substances such as smoke machines, dry ice etc.

### **Stage fights**

The safety and security of the participants should always be considered the most important element in any effect. All stage fights should be properly choreographed and rehearsed. Unrehearsed or improvised sequences should never be permitted. All rehearsals should be under direct supervision of a member of Octopus Thornbury.

### **Stage lighting**

Stage lighting must meet the conditions set out in the current IEE Wiring Regulations.

### **Off Site Venues**

The Child Welfare Officer is to ensure all venues, including those away from the regular site that are used for drama activities, are assessed for suitability prior to use and that they are safe, and do not present hazards and risks to children.

### **Visitors**

The Child Welfare Officer is to ensure all visitors and visiting groups are suitably inducted into the health and safety arrangements of Octopus Thornbury regarding children.