

Online Safety Policy



The purpose and scope of this policy statement

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to keep children and young people safe online while taking part in The Stage Factory's classes, rehearsals, performances and related activities
- to set out how we use photography, video and social media in a way that protects children's welfare and privacy
- to give staff, volunteers, children and their families clear expectations around personal devices, online conduct and the use of artificial intelligence.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of The Stage Factory, including the director, studio manager, teachers, staff, volunteers and students, and should be read alongside our Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct.

Legal framework

This policy is informed by the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, the Online Safety Act 2023, ICO guidance on photographing and filming children, and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026 edition). We also draw on best-practice guidance for organisations working with children outside of school settings, including [NSPCC online safety guidance](#) and the [CPSU online safety policy template](#).

Roles and responsibilities

Our nominated child protection lead (Helen Pender) has overall responsibility for online safety, including this policy. Any online safety concern should be treated as a safeguarding concern and reported through the same route as set out in our Child Protection Policy.

Photography, filming and images of children

- We regularly take photographs and video of rehearsals and performances for marketing, our website and social media. We obtain consent once, at enrolment/re-enrolment, on a simple opt-in/opt-out basis — families consenting are agreeing to their child's image being used across our website, social media and marketing materials. We do not operate a platform-by-platform or photo-by-photo consent system, as this isn't practical for us to monitor and apply consistently
- For children under 16, we obtain parental or carer consent as well as asking the child directly; a child or young person can decline or withdraw consent at any time, regardless of what a parent previously agreed, and their wishes will be respected
- We keep a clear record of who has consented, to what, and when, and review this at the start of each school year.
- We do not publish a child's full name alongside their image without separate consent, and avoid identifying details (school, home address, exact age) in captions
- We are mindful that images can be misused out of context, altered using AI, or used to identify a child for grooming — only staff and volunteers with a legitimate reason take photos or video, using official Stage Factory devices or accounts wherever possible, not personal phones
- Parents and audience members filming performances are asked to keep footage for personal use only and not to publish images of children other than their own without consent.

Personal devices and phones

- Phones and personal devices are not used during classes or rehearsals
- Children may use their own phones while waiting in the reception area between classes.

- Children must not photograph or film other children, staff or volunteers on personal devices at any time, including in the reception area, without that person's consent
- Personal devices must not be used in changing areas, toilets, or backstage spaces where children are changing
- Any concern about a child's or adult's use of a device — including something seen on a phone, inappropriate content, or being contacted online by someone connected to The Stage Factory — should be reported to the nominated child protection lead.

Staff and volunteer use of technology

- Staff and volunteers use official Stage Factory channels (email, official social media accounts) to communicate with children and families — never personal social media, personal phone numbers, or personal messaging apps
- Staff and volunteers do not accept friend or follow requests from children on personal social media accounts
- Devices used to take or store images of children are kept secure, with images transferred to secure storage and deleted from personal devices as soon as practicable
- Staff and volunteers are expected to maintain professional conduct on their own social media, including not posting content that could compromise their role or the safety of children in our care.

Social media and website use

- The Stage Factory's social media accounts and website are managed by named, authorised staff only
- Comments and messages from the public are moderated; anything raising a safeguarding concern is passed to the nominated child protection lead
- We do not use social media to communicate directly and privately with individual children
- Privacy settings on official accounts are reviewed periodically to ensure images and content are only shared as intended.

Artificial intelligence

- Staff may use generative AI tools for administrative tasks (e.g. drafting marketing copy or lesson plans), but must not upload photographs, video or personal information about children to any AI tool
- We are aware that AI can be used to alter or misuse images, including to create harmful or abusive content, and factor this into our decisions about what images we take and share and how we store them
- Any AI-generated content used publicly (e.g. in marketing) is checked by a named member of staff before publication, who remains responsible for its accuracy and appropriateness.

Responding to online safety concerns

- Any online safety concern — including cyberbullying, grooming, inappropriate contact, or exposure to harmful content — is treated as a child protection matter and reported to the nominated child protection lead (or deputy) without delay
- Where a concern involves potential criminal activity or immediate risk, we will contact the police (999 in an emergency, 101 otherwise) or the NSPCC Helpline (0808 800 5000) and, where relevant, CEOP (ceop.police.uk) for concerns about online sexual abuse or grooming
- We record and store information about online safety concerns in line with our data protection and child protection procedures.

Training

All staff and volunteers receive an introduction to this policy as part of induction, and an annual refresher covering current online risks (including AI-related risks). The nominated child protection lead's training is updated at least every two years, in line with our Child Protection Policy.

Contact details

Nominated child protection lead

Name: Helen Pender

Email: helen@thestagefactory.co.uk

Deputy child protection lead(s)

Name: Danielle Sheldon

Email: daniwalker1@hotmail.co.uk

NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 5000

CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command)

ceop.police.uk — for reporting concerns about online sexual abuse or grooming

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed on: 23rd July 2026