Farnworth Little Theatre recognises its duty of care under the Children   
and Young Persons Act 1963, the Child (Performances) Regulations 1968, the Protection   
of Children Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 (in Scotland   
change to Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003).  
The society recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse,   
emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. The society is committed to practice which   
protects children from harm. All members of the society accept and recognise their   
responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.  
The society believes that:  
• The welfare of the child is paramount.  
• All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin,   
 religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.  
• All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to   
 swiftly and appropriately.  
• All members and employees of the society should be clear on how to respond   
 appropriately.  
The society will ensure that:  
• All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.  
• The duty of care to children will always be put first.  
• A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers the   
 children to share in the decision making process.  
• Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism.  
• Bullying will not be accepted or condoned.  
• All adult members of the society provide a positive role model for dealing with other   
 people.  
• Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.  
• It will keep up-to-date with health & safety legislation.  
• It will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of   
 children.  
• It will undertake relevant development and training.  
• It will hold a register of every child involved with the society and will retain a contact   
 name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.  
The society has a dedicated Child Protection Officer, who is in charge of ensuring   
that the child protection policy and procedures are adhered to. That person’s name is   
Gemma Norris and he/she can be contacted on   
07729 436304.  
This policy will be regularly monitored by the Committee of the society.

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES  
Responsibilities of the Society  
At the outset of any production involving children the society will:  
• Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process.  
• Identify at the outset the person with designated responsibility for child protection.  
• Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with   
 responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting (if necessary in consultation   
 with the local education authority).  
• Ensure that children are supervised at all times.  
• Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case it needs to   
 report a concern.  
Parents  
• The society believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents   
 and the society. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the   
 society and to share responsibility for the care of children. All parents will be given a   
 copy the society’s Child Protection Policy and procedures.  
• All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children   
 after rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of the society to take   
 children home.  
Unsupervised Contact  
• The society will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with   
 children.   
• If possible there will always be two adults in the room when working with children.  
• If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimize risk. For   
 example, work will be carried out in a public area, or in a designated room with a   
 door open.  
• If it is predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with   
 children, he or she may be required to obtain a criminal record disclosure.Physical Contact  
• All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.  
• Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the   
 particular activity.  
• Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact and the   
 purpose of the contact shall be made clear.  
Managing sensitive information  
• The society has a policy and procedures for the taking, using and storage of   
 photographs or images of children.  
• Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material   
 featuring children for promotional or other purposes.  
• The society’s web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for   
 inappropriate use.  
• The society will ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of its members,   
 including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such   
 as criminal record disclosures.  
Suspicion of abuse  
• If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of the society, please make   
 this known to the person with responsibility for child protection. If you suspect that   
 the person with responsibility for child protection is the source of the problem, you   
 should make your concerns known to the Chairman.  
• Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed as well as your   
 response, in case there is follow-up in which you are involved.  
• If a serious allegation is made against any member of the society, chaperone,   
 venue staff etc., that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation   
 is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms etc.   
 and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the   
 production.  
**Disclosure of abuse**  
If a child confides in you that abuse has taken place:  
• Remain calm and in control but do not delay taking action.  
• Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child to tell you at their own pace   
 and ask questions only for clarification. Don’t ask questions that suggest a   
 particular answer.  
• Don’t promise to keep it a secret. Use the first opportunity you have to share the   
 information with the person with responsibility for child protection. Make it clear to   
 the child that you will need to share this information with others. Make it clear that   
 you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help.  
• Reassure the child that ‘they did the right thing’ in telling someone.  
• Tell the child what you are going to do next.Speak immediately to the person with responsibility for child protection. It is that   
 person’s responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually social services   
 or the police.  
• As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was   
 said, using the child’s own words. Note the date, time, any names that were   
 involved or mentioned, and who you gave the information to. Make sure you   
 sign and date your record.  
Recording  
• In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a   
 disclosure made in confidence, the details of an allegation or reported incident will   
 be recorded, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a   
 statutory child protection agency.  
• An accurate note shall be made of the date and time of the incident or disclosure,   
 the parties involved, what was said or done and by whom, any action taken to   
 investigate the matter, any further action taken eg. suspension of an individual,   
 where relevant the reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency,   
 and the name of the persons reporting and to whom it was reported.  
• The record will be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know   
 about the incident or allegation.  
Rights & Confidentiality  
• If a complaint is made against a member of the society, he or she will be made   
 aware of his rights under the society’s disciplinary procedures.  
• No matter how you may feel about the accusation, both the alleged abuser and   
 the child who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality under   
 the Data Protection Act 1998. Remember also that any possible criminal   
 investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being   
 released.  
• In criminal law the Crown, or other prosecuting authority, has to prove guilt and the   
 defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.  
**Accidents**  
• To avoid accidents, chaperones and children will be advised of “house rules”   
 regarding health and safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds.   
 Children will be advised of the clothing and footwear appropriate to the work that   
 will be undertaken.  
• If a child is injured while in the care of the society, a designated first-aider will   
 administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in the society’s accident book.   
 This record will be countersigned by the person with responsibility for child   
 protection.   
  If a child joins the production with an obvious physical injury a record of this will   
 be made in the accident book. This record will be countersigned by the person with   
 responsibility for child protection. This record can be useful if a formal allegation   
 is made later and will also be a record that the child did not sustain the injury while   
 participating in the production.  
**Criminal Record Disclosures**  
• If the society believes it is in its best interests to obtain criminal record   
 disclosures for chaperones or other personnel, it will inform the individual of the   
 necessary procedures and the level of disclosure required. A Standard disclosure   
 will apply for anyone with supervised access to children. An Enhanced disclosure   
 will be required for anyone with unsupervised access.  
• The society will have a written code of practice for the handling of disclosure   
 information.  
• The society will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.  
Chaperones  
• Chaperones will be appointed by the society for the care of children during the   
 production process. By law the chaperone is acting in loco parentis and should   
 exercise the care which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give to a   
 child. The maximum number of children in the chaperone’s care shall not exceed   
 12.  
• Potential chaperones will be required to supply photographic proof of identity (eg.   
 passport, driving licence) and two references from individuals with knowledge   
 of their previous work with children, unless already well known to the society. They   
 will also be asked to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they   
 would be considered unsuitable to work with children.  
• Chaperones will be made aware of the society’s Child Protection Policy and   
 Procedures.  
• Chaperones will not usually have unsupervised access to children in their care.   
 If unsupervised access is unavoidable, or if this is a requirement of the local   
 authority, a criminal record disclosure will be sought.  
• Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should   
 bring this to the attention of the producer. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily,   
 the chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue.  
• If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the   
 chaperone must inform the producer and not allow the child to continue.  
• Under the Dangerous Performances Act, no child of compulsory school age is   
 permitted to do anything which may endanger life or limb. This could include   
 working on wires or heavy lifting. Chaperones should tell the producer to cease   
 using children in this way and should contact the local authority.  
• During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the   
 stage door and signing them into the building. Children will be kept together at all times except when using separate dressing rooms.  
• Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times.  
• Children are not to leave the theatre unsupervised by chaperones unless in the   
 company of their parents.  
• Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.  
• Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms.  
• Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures   
 in the venue, and will ensure that children in their care do not place themselves and   
 others in danger.  
• Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by the   
 society.  
• Chaperones should examine accident books each day. If an accident has occurred,   
 the producer is not allowed to use that child until a medically qualified opinion has   
 been obtained (not just the word of the parent or child).  
• Chaperones should have written arrangements for children after performances. If   
 someone different is to collect the child, a telephone call should be made to the   
 parent to confirm the arrangements.  
• Children should be signed out when leaving and a record made of the person   
 collecting.  
• If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with   
 that child or make arrangements to take them home.