

MANA LITTLE THEATRE

Child protection, care of children & youth policy

April 2026

Contents

Introduction	2
Application.....	2
Purpose	2
Policy Statement	3
Our Responsibility.....	3
Risk	4
Designated Person (DP) for Child Protection.....	4
Chaperones for youth productions or productions involving youth (excluding holiday programmes)	5
Parents/ Caregivers.....	6
Unsupervised Contact.....	6
Relationships.....	6
Alcohol/ Drugs / Smoking	7
Managing sensitive information	7
Suspicion of abuse.....	7
Disclosure of abuse If a child confides in you that abuse has taken place:	8
Accidents	8
Criminal Record Disclosures	8
Social Events	9
Complaints	9
Who should read this policy	9
Key Contact Agencies	10
Definitions.....	10
Legislation.....	11

Introduction

Mana Little Theatre's core activities are staging theatre productions, which utilise volunteers to bring these productions to the stage, supporting local entertainers by hosting live music, poetry and comedy artists and encouraging young people into the theatre through our youth theatre holiday programme.

We aim to have at least one show a year having volunteers under the age of 18 involved in each show, either on or offstage. We also aim to run at least one holiday programme a year for children and/or young people.

This policy sets out the requirements for children and young persons involved in a production or youth programme and how they should be managed accordingly.

In its Constitution the Theatre's purposes include to:

- a) promote and foster the performing arts and to do so by the study and practice of theatre in all its aspects;
- b) prepare and present public and private performances and educational activities; and
- c) be a cultural asset serving the community.

Application

This policy applies to all children involved in a Mana Little Theatre production, workshop, holiday programme or event.

- A child is defined as individuals aged 0-15 years

This policy does not apply to young persons involved in a production, workshop or event:

- Young persons are defined as those aged 16 – 18 years of age.
- In the case of those 16 years of age and over, a designated support person will be put in place.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Guide members and volunteers concerning child protection and the care of children involved with Mana Little Theatre's youth shows, show involving youth and holiday programmes.
- Set out the accountabilities and responsibilities of Mana Little Theatre personnel concerning the involvement of volunteers under 18 years of age in our productions.
- Set a clear protocol of action and a framework for our responsibilities and legal duties concerning each child's vulnerability and protection.
- Ensure a consistent and effective response in the event of any concern for the welfare of a person under 18 years and involved in our productions or events and support any child or young person.
- Provide guidance for attendance and supervision of children at social events, workshops or other events.

Policy Statement

Mana Little Theatre is committed to providing support, care and protection to any children involved in our productions or programmes.

Mana Little Theatre believes that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Whether their age, culture, disability, gender, language, ethnicity, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, all children have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and abuse allegations should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All members and volunteers of Mana Little Theatre should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

Our Responsibility

Mana Little Theatre takes responsibility for the well-being and protection of children involved in its productions and programmes by ensuring the organisation has the information, tools, and support to be able to:

- ensure the safety and well-being of children is at the forefront of all we do and provide;
- have workable and robust child protection policy and procedures; and
- create opportunities for volunteers, members and independent contractors to be informed and gain understanding, and increase knowledge, skills and confidence to implement procedures.

Mana Little Theatre 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 empower 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 members, volunteers and parents of members informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children.
- It will hold a register of every child involved with the Society in each production, workshop or programme and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

Risk

At the outset of any production involving children, the Society will:

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production or programme process.
- Identify at the outset the person with designated responsibility for child protection.
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals responsible for children, including appropriate vetting (if necessary in consultation with the local police authority).
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times.
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services if it needs to report a concern.
- Ensure children are allocated their dressing room and do not share dressing rooms with adults.
- Ensure male and female children do not share dressing rooms.
- Give additional consideration for children or young people who identify as transgender/ gender diverse when it comes to dressing rooms. We will aim to give the individual a choice of which dressing room and bathroom facilities they wish to utilise but this will depend on space limitations, number of individuals and consultation with each person on a case-by-case basis, to ensure the most comfortable dressing room experience for all.

Designated Person (DP) for Child Protection

- The Mana Little Theatre committee holds the overall responsibility for child protection.
- The Production Manager and/or Programme Manager of a Production or programme is responsible for ensuring that the organisation policies are followed.
- The Production Manager and/or Programme Manager, as the designated person(s) (DP), takes responsibility for ensuring child protection is a key focus and that appropriate protocols and procedures, such as child protection policy implementation, staff training, and support, are in place. This role is not a 'job' within itself but usually sits as a function of an established role.

Responsibilities include:

- Being a source of advice, guidance and support for staff who may have child protection concerns
- Ensuring the Child Protection Policy is reviewed regularly and that all Mana Little Theatre personnel are informed
- Ensuring required volunteers have received regular child protection training and that this is recorded
- Ensuring practices and procedures within the organisation have a child protection lens applied

- Overseeing the maintenance and confidentiality of child protection records and documentation
- Ensuring a child Chaperone(s) is appointed for a youth production and that the job description is provided to that person(s)

Chaperones for youth productions or productions involving youth (excluding holiday programmes)

- Mana Little Theatre will appoint chaperones to care for children during a youth production process. By law, the chaperone is acting in loco parentis (in place of a parent) 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 10.
- Potential chaperones will be required to supply photographic proof of identity (e.g. 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 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 DP. 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 DP and not allow the child to continue.
- Chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the stage door and signing them into the building during performances.
- 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 or designated caregiver.
- Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms unless it is under the circumstances understood and approved by the chaperone.
- Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures in the venue and 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 Mana Little Theatre.
- Chaperones should have written arrangements for children after performances. Only approved people are able to collect the child.
- Children should be signed out when leaving and a record of the person collecting.

- If a parent/caregiver/approved adult has not collected the child, the chaperone must stay with that child or communicate arrangements with the DP to get them safely home.

Parents/ Caregivers

- Mana Little Theatre believes it essential to have a partnership between parents/ caregivers and Mana Little Theatre. Parents/ caregivers are encouraged to be involved in Mana Little Theatre activities and share responsibility for the care of children. All parents/ caregivers will be given a copy of the Mana Little Theatre Child Protection Policy and any related procedures.
- All parents/ caregivers have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals, performances or holiday programme days. It is NOT the responsibility of Mana Little Theatre to take children home.
- Rehearsals and holiday programme sessions are closed, so parents/ caregivers must wait in the Mana Little Theatre foyer or outside the venue to collect children.

Unsupervised Contact

- Mana Little Theatre will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.
- A child chaperone(s) will be appointed for a production to which children are involved, specifically tasked with the care and supervision of children under the age of 16.
- The child chaperone(s) will supervise children from when they are dropped off at the theatre/rehearsal by their parents to when they are collected from the theatre/rehearsal by their parents.
- Our policy is that, in general, there will always be two adults in the room/in view when working with children.
- If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimise risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area or a designated room with a door open.
- At no time is any adult permitted to be alone in a dressing room with a child with the door closed.
- Adults will only touch children when necessary, concerning the particular stage or rehearsal activity, such as:
 - dressing them for and during performances,
 - working on costumes, including measuring and adjusting costumes, and
 - demonstrating or conducting choreography, musical or dramatic element of the show.
- Adults will seek the child's consent before any physical contact, and the purpose of that contact shall be made clear.

Relationships

- The nature of the relationship between adults and young people within the programme is that of a coach, mentor and/or instructor.

- Adults must remember they serve as a role model to young people, and their behaviour towards young people and other adults should reflect that of an appropriate role model.
- Adults will perform their volunteering or paid work honestly and impartially and avoid situations which might compromise their integrity.
- Adults will avoid words and actions that could be misunderstood or cause offence.
- Adults will be open, honest and accountable to young people and each other.
- Adults will create and maintain appropriate physical, emotional, and spiritual boundaries.

Alcohol/ Drugs / Smoking

- No person under the influence of alcohol or any other substance that can have altered adverse and unmanaged effects on their functioning or behaviour can be present during a production with youth or a holiday programme.
- If any child or young person is found to have been drinking/ using drugs, they will forfeit their place in the production/ on the holiday programme and will be asked to leave immediately.
- Smoking and vaping may only be done in public areas well away from the theatre, and out of sight of anyone under 18 years old appearing in a production or attending a holiday programme.

Managing sensitive information

The following is our policy for taking, using and storing photographs or images of children.

- Permission will be sought from the parents to use photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes (as part of the enrolment form).
- The Mana Little Theatre Committee will carefully monitor the theatre's web-based materials and activities for inappropriate use by Mana Little Theatre personnel.
- Mana Little Theatre will ensure confidentiality to protect the rights of its members, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such as criminal record disclosures. See our privacy policy for more information.

Suspicion of abuse

- All individuals involved in a production or programme are responsible for reporting disclosures and any provision of care concerns and contributing to eliminating organisational child protection procedure flaws to enable reporting.
- If anyone sees or suspects abuse of a child while in the care of the Society, this must be made known to the DP. If you suspect that the person responsible for child protection is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the Mana Little Theatre President.
- Please make a note for your records of what you witnessed and your response if there is a follow-up in which you are involved.
- If a serious allegation is made against any Mana Little Theatre personnel, 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. Do not question at all beyond who was involved, where it happened and when it occurred. 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 DP. Make it clear to the child that you must share this information with others. Make it clear that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should 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 DP. That person's responsibility is 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. It is imperative that everything the child says is written down using their words as much as possible. Note the date, time, names involved or mentioned, and who you gave the information to. Make sure you sign and date your record.

Accidents

- To avoid accidents, chaperones and children will be advised of "house rules" regarding health and safety and will be notified of areas outside of bounds. In addition, children will be informed of the clothing and footwear appropriate to the work 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.
- The person will countersign this record with responsibility for child protection.
- If a child joins the production or programme with an apparent physical injury, this will be recorded in the accident book. The DP will countersign this record. This record can be helpful 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

- Mana Little Theatre believes it is in its best interests to obtain criminal record disclosures for relevant production personnel. Therefore, it will inform the individual of the necessary procedures and the level of disclosure required.
- Individuals in the following roles, which have close involvement with children involved in a production, shall be required as part of their roles to obtain a copy of their criminal record and provide this to Mana Little Theatre before the commencement of involvement in the production:
 - Programme Director
 - Holiday programme adult staff members
 - Child Chaperone(s)

- Director
 - Musical Director
 - Choreographer
 - Production Manager
 - Stage Manager
- The Society will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.

Social Events

- At times there are social events held in conjunction with a Mana Little Theatre production
- Children are permitted to attend show related social events.
- Children must be accompanied to any/all show social events by a parent or guardian.
- The supervision of the child and transportation home at those social events is the parent or guardian's responsibility, not Mana Little Theatre or any personnel, including the child Chaperone.
- Some social events are held in licensed facilities. Children and their parents and guardians must also comply with the terms of the Sale of Liquor License while on licensed premises
- No child shall be permitted to purchase, consume or be provided alcohol at any time while involved in a Mana Little Theatre production, including but not limited to social events.

Complaints

- Complaints about any aspects of the programme should, in the first instance, be addressed formally to Mana Little Theatre in writing to mltcommittee@gmail.com and not to any individual on the programme.
- Mana Little Theatre undertakes to treat all complaints confidentially and with respect.
- An acknowledgement of receipt will be made to the complainant immediately on receipt of the complaint.
- Mana Little Theatre endeavours to investigate any complaints objectively and promptly and reply formally in writing and confidentially to the complainant within two weeks of receiving the complaint.
- If a complaint is made against a member of the programme, they will be made aware of their rights under the Theatre'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.
- Any reckless or wilful violation of this policy or negligent behaviour, corrective or disciplinary action may be appropriate through an informal or formal process.

Who should read this policy

The following persons or groups must read and understand this policy to effectively discharge their duties to Mana Little Theatre:

- All Committee members and Holiday programme members of Mana Little Theatre.
- All volunteers associated with the Mana Little Theatre and its productions.
- Directors, Musical Directors, Choreographers and Production Managers for any Mana Little Theatre show.
- All parents, guardians and caregivers of children involved in a Mana Little Theatre production or holiday programme.

Key Contact Agencies

Police | Emergency: Ph 111 | Non-Emergency: Ph 105 | Online reporting: 105.police.govt.nz

Oranga Tamariki | Report of Concern: Ph 0508 326 459 | Email: contact@ot.govt.nz

Youthline | Ph: 0800 37 66 33 | Email: talk@youthline.co.nz | Text: Free text 234

Definitions

THEATRE	means Mana Little Theatre at 9 Sunset Parade, Plimmerton, and the hired rooms within the Plimmerton Pavilion building at that address.
PROGRAMME	means the Mana Little Theatre ‘Play in a Week’ School Holiday Drama Programme. It may also be referred to as ‘holiday programme’.
THE SOCIETY	means Mana Little Theatre. These terms may be used interchangeably throughout the policy.
CHILD/TAMARIKI	Individuals aged 0-15 years
YOUNG PERSON/RANGATAHI	Individuals aged 16 – 18 years
BULLYING (INCLUDING CYBERBULLYING)	is behaviour that hurts someone else – such as name-calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period and can hurt a child/young person physically and emotionally.
CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT	Is the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person.
PHYSICAL ABUSE	is any behaviour or action which inflicts physical harm to a child or young person, which can include unexplained bruises, welts, cuts and abrasions, unexplained fractures and dislocations, burns, fabricated illnesses such as Munchausen by proxy.
SEXUAL ABUSE	is an act where an adult or a more powerful person uses a child or young person for a sexual purpose. This can be direct contact or exposing children to adult materials.
EMOTIONAL ABUSE	Is any act or omission which results in an impaired psychological, social, intellectual and or emotional functioning and development of a child or young person.
NEGLECT	Is any act or omission that results in impaired physical/emotional functioning, injury, and/or development of a child or young person and can include: a) Physical neglect – not providing the necessities of life.

	<p>b. Neglectful supervision – leaving children alone or without someone safe looking after them.</p> <p>c. Emotional neglect – not providing the comfort, love and attention the child needs.</p> <p>d. Medical neglect – the failure to ensure their health needs are met.</p>
CHILD PROTECTION	The activities carried out to ensure the safety of a child/tamariki and young person/rangatahi, in cases of abuse or neglect.

Legislation

This Policy is informed by international and New Zealand legislation. This includes but is not exclusive to:

- Children’s Act 2014
- Crimes Amendment Act 2011, Section 195 and 195A
- Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1994
- Human Rights Act 1993
- Oranga Tamariki Act 1989