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**Child Protection Policy and Code of Best Practice and Conduct**

**Betty Ann Norton Theatre School**

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**1. Policy Statement**

Children are of the utmost importance to the Betty Ann Norton Theatre School. We at the Betty Ann Norton Theatre School aim to promote the participation of children in our school by creating a culture of safety and fun. “Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence. They must be kept safe from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them” (Article 19: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). All children’s activities should be conducted in an atmosphere of fairness. The Children’s Act (2001) is based on a clear and consistent set of principles designed with the common aim of promoting the welfare of children. Children have the right to be safe. All tutors should ensure that this fundamental principle takes precedent over all other considerations.

**2. Standards Evaluation**

Standards set by Betty Ann Norton Theatre School will be achieved through the following:

* Awareness of the issues which lead to children being harmed
* Safe recruiting procedures for all tutors/volunteers through careful selection
* Application of codes of behaviour for all tutors/volunteers
* Application of codes of behaviour for children/young people
* Application of good and safe working/playing practices
* Establishment of procedures for dealing with child protection issues /recording of complaints/accidents, report books detailing facts, witnesses, circumstances etc.
* Procedures relating specifically to bullying and photography
* Identification and maintenance of parental responsibility
* Availability of information – each parent should receive a copy or have access to the Child Protection Policy
* Regular review and monitoring of Child Protection procedures by School Management
* All children are treated equally; the School will promote anti-discriminatory practices.

The policy applies to all those involved in Betty Ann Norton Theatre School as Tutors, administrators, volunteers, parents/guardians and children.

**3. Designated Person (with respect to Child Protection)**

The ‘contact person’ or Designated Person within Betty Ann Norton Theatre School is:

Name: Betty Ann Norton
Address: Betty Ann Norton Theatre School, Cuisle Arts and Cultural Centre, St. Louis High School, Rathmines, Dublin 6
Telephone number: (01) 280 9270

The name of designated person shall be made known to all in the School. She is the person to whom child protection concerns will be addressed. The School has procedures in place for dealing with concerns or allegation of abuse or neglect either within the School or externally but the first point of contact for the child, parent/guardian or tutor is the designated person. However, any individual has the right to contact Social Services or An Gardaí directly if they have concern about a child’s welfare.

**4. Guidelines for Communication**

Betty Ann Norton Theatre School shall make contact with parents/guardians regularly regarding possible casting opportunities and in relation to class and production schedules. In all cases, contact will be made with the parent/guardian of the child in accordance with the The General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679. Should any parent/guardian choose to not receive any further communication from Betty Ann Norton Theatre School, they can update their subscription settings at any time.

**5. Use of Photography and Social Media**

On occasion, staff will take photos for promotional purposes. Parents/Guardians will be informed when this takes place and proper procedures for seeking permission will be taken e.g. permission forms signed by guardians. You and your child have the right to opt out of official images.

### **Use of Images**

Betty Ann Norton Theatre School’s use of images can be assumed to be acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly adhered to.

* Permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought in line with the school’s digital and video images policy noted above. If anyone, for any reason, has asked that their children not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes should be respected.
* Under no circumstances should staff share or upload student pictures online other than via school owned social media accounts
* Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts. Students should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any school list of children whose images must not be published.
* If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.

Any breach of this policy should be reported immediately to the Designated Person for immediate action.

**6. Anti Bullying Policy**

Betty Ann Norton Theatre School has a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying.

All students are expected to act in a polite and courteous manner with each other. The positive atmosphere in our classes can be seriously undermined by disruptive and unreliable members. Students acting in an inappropriate manner or whose conduct could cause hurt or injury to others may not be admitted to class.

Types of Behaviour that are not tolerated:

* Physical aggression
* Damage to property
* Intimidation
* Gestures
* Silent telephone/mobile phone calls
* Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
* Abusive text messages
* Abusive email/Facebook/Social media messaging
* The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
* Isolation & exclusion
* Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc
* Name calling
* Slagging
* A combination of any of the types listed

Steps that are taken to deal with bullying incidents include:

Where an incident of bullying is observed by or reported to a member of staff the following measures will be taken:

* The Tutor will speak with the accuser to ascertain what has taken place
* The Tutor will monitor closely the activities of the respective students and their classmates
* Persons involved in or witnessing alleged incidents of bullying are asked to write an account of the incident. This does not necessarily imply that these persons have engaged in bullying behaviour
* The investigation and questioning will be sensitive to the needs of those involved
* The Tutor will bring their findings to the attention of the Designated Person who will then take appropriate action
* Those who have been found to have engaged in bullying will be encouraged to recognise the inappropriateness of such behaviour and the seriousness of its effects on others
* They will also be encouraged to apologise for their behaviour to the victim in question
* A record of the bullying incident will be maintained in the incident book and retained in the school’s files.

Where bullying behaviour has been established as having taken place and where there is a repeated or serious offence, the parents/guardians will be notified. Parents/Guardians are expected to co-operate with these policies and to re-enforce them in the home. Appropriate sanctions will be imposed which may ultimately result in exclusion from the school. Retaliation against students or others, following or during an investigation will be regarded as a very serious breach of discipline and will merit the most serious of sanctions.

**7. Guidelines for Reporting Accident**

In the event of an accident the following procedure will be followed:

* Contact parents/guardians in the event of all accidents
* Fill in details to the incident book
* For more serious accidents:
	+ Contact emergency services/G.P. if necessary
	+ Record detailed facts surrounding accident, witnesses etc.
	+ Complete accident book as above

**8. Guidelines for Reporting Allegations/Incidents**

* Record all incidents reported or observed in incident book
* Ensure confidentiality – a ‘need to know basis’
* The designated person is responsible for report security

**9. Good and Safe Working Practices**

Betty Ann Norton Theatre School will ensure:

* Promotion of a healthy lifestyle by practice and example
* Proper supervision of children within the school with adequate tutor:child ratio
* Use of safe equipment where required
* Supervision of equipment used where required
* Public Liability Insurance covering all students of the school
* First aid assistance and first aid equipment is available in case of accident, with accident/incident books documented where necessary (N.B. All accidents will be reported to parents/guardians)
* A safe environment for students
* Facilitation of open discussion on student protection issues
* Support to students and parents/guardians who report allegations of abuse
* Suspected abuse information is treated confidentially
* Tutors to be made aware of any special needs (disability) relating to a child and respond accordingly
* Appropriate action is taken if students breach standards of reasonable behaviour
* The establishment and maintenance of a student register
* The setting of standards of good practice
* The Designated Officer has knowledge of child protection procedures and responsibility in reporting concerns
* That parents/guardians are kept informed and have access to the school’s policy guidelines for use of photography/videos
* The implementation of good and safe working practice is developed to the mutual benefit of the students and tutors

Betty Ann Norton Theatre School has the right to:

* Expect Tutors to comply with its Code of Conduct
* Expect all children to maintain standards of reasonable behaviour
* Take appropriate action if Tutors breach the Code of Conduct or Child Protection Policy
* Expect all Tutors to undertake appropriate training when advised to
* Expect Tutors / supervisors will not abuse children physically, emotionally or sexually
* Take appropriate action in the event of accusations
* Acquire pre-employment checks on all tutors
* Maintain records on individuals in line with advice from data protection agency, i.e. only hold records on individuals that they have justifiable reason for holding

Children are expected to:

* Enjoy their time at Betty Ann Norton Theatre School
* Keep within the defined school area
* Behave acceptably and listen to the Tutors
* Respect the school’s personnel and equipment
* Take care and responsibility for any costumes or props either on loan from the school or on hire from costume hire
* Refrain from using bad language and racial/sectarian references
* Refrain from bullying and rough/dangerous play
* Respect other children and adults
* Keep safe
* Report inappropriate behaviour and risky situations
* Play fairly
* Not use violence

Children have the right to:

* Safety
* Be listened to
* Respect
* Privacy
* Enjoyment of a safe environment
* Referral to professional help if necessary
* Protection from abuse
* Equality and fair involvement
* Be believed
* Ask for help

Any misdemeanours and general misbehaviour will be dealt with by the Tutors and reported to the designated person where deemed necessary. Persistent misbehaviour will result in dismissal from the School. Parents/guardians will be informed.

Dismissal can be appealed with final decisions taken by Betty Ann Norton.

**10. Codes of Behaviour for Parents/Guardians**

Parents/Guardians are expected to:

* Complete and return School registration form for Betty Ann Norton Theatre School
* Deliver and collect children punctually
* Ensure child is properly attired for classes
* Take care and responsibility for any costumes or props either on loan from the school or on hire from costume hire
* Detail any health concerns or special needs pertaining to the child on the consent/registration form, particularly respiratory problems, and allergies. Any health concerns should be notified to the Tutor before class
* Inform the Tutor beforehand if the child is to be collected early
* Encourage the child to do his/her best
* Show good example
* Encourage all children’s efforts, listen and be positive
* Be realistic
* Ensure child’s hygiene and nutritional requirements are met
* Promote child’s participation for fun

Parents/Guardians have the right to:

* Know the child is safe
* Be informed of problems or concerns relating to the child
* Be informed if the child is injured
* Have consent sought for issues such as trips
* Complain if there is concern about the standard of teaching
* Have access to any policies or procedures

Any misdemeanour or breach of this code of conduct will be dealt with individually by a School official.