

Meladrama Safeguarding Policy

6th December 2016

Meladrama makes a positive contribution to a strong and safe community and recognises the right of every individual to stay safe. Melanie Ash, it's founder is passionate about eliminating CSA, CSE and all forms of abuse and neglect against children and vulnerable adults.

Meladrama comes into contact with children and vulnerable adults through drama classes at venues we hire across the northwest and in schools or in other venues owned by organisations.

The types of contact with children and vulnerable adults is regulated and all children, students under 18 and vulnerable adults are supervised during class times.

This policy seeks to ensure that Meladrama undertakes its responsibilities with regards to the protection of children and vulnerable adults and will respond to concerns appropriately. The policy establishes a framework to support staff in their practices and clarifies the organisation's expectations.

The principal pieces of legislation governing this policy are:

- o Working together to safeguard Children 2010
- o The Children Act 1989
- o The Adoption and Children Act 2002:
- o The Children act 2004
- o Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- o Care Standards Act 2000
- o Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- o The Police Act – CRB 1997
- o Mental Health Act 1983
- o NHS and Community Care Act 1990
- o Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

Safeguarding is about embedding practices throughout the organisation to ensure the protection of children and vulnerable adults wherever possible. In contrast, child and adult protection is about responding to circumstances that arise.

Abuse is a selfish act of oppression and injustice, exploitation and manipulation of power by those in a position of authority. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture.

It can take a number of forms, including the following:

- Physical abuse

- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Bullying
- Neglect
- Financial (or material) abuse

Definition of a child

A child is under the age of 18 (as defined in the United Nations convention on the Rights of a Child).

Definition of Vulnerable Adults

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited.

This may include a person who:

- Is elderly and frail
- Has a mental illness including dementia
- Has a physical or sensory disability
- Has a learning disability
- Has a severe physical illness
- Is a substance misuser
- Is homeless

All staff (Melanie Ash, Hollie Thornton, Meghan Bellow & Matt Kin) have responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies, and to pass on any welfare concerns using the required procedures. We expect all staff to promote good practice by being an excellent role model, contribute to discussions about safeguarding and to positively involve people in developing safe practices.

The Designated Senior Manager is Melanie Ash. This person's responsibilities are:

- Sufficient resources (time and money) are allocated to ensure that the policy can be effectively implemented.
- Promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
- Ensure staff have access to appropriate training/information.
- Receive staff concerns about safeguarding and respond to all seriously, swiftly and appropriately

- Keep up to date with local arrangements for safeguarding and DBS checks
- Develop and maintain effective links with relevant agencies.
- Take forward concerns about responses to child protection teams/police.

The scope of this Safeguarding Policy is broad ranging and in practice, it will be implemented via a range of policies and procedures within the organisation.

These include: Safe recruitment

Meladrama ensures safe recruitment through the following processes: DBS checks and all teaching assistants are former pupils we have known since they attended classes as children themselves.

In addition to checks on recruitment for roles teaching, for adult students (all those over 18) the following processes are in place:

- 3 forms of (1 photo) must be presented when registering for classes, and copies taken by Melanie Ash. One of these ID's must be photographic.
- Melanie Ash will check all information is correct against the electoral roll and check names don't appear in any court records.
- Any discrepancies will be dealt with immediately and adult students will not be permitted to join Meladrama without proof of identity.
- All adult students are also asked to sign a form stating they will not contact students under 18 via social media or any other form of communication outside of class.
- All adult students to state any convictions or any reason why they should not be in a drama class with children, young people or vulnerable people.
- All adult students must accept and embrace the measures without question, and where necessary provide more information.
(Some discretion is used around social media with students that have friends that haven't turned 18 yet and the process above is focused on adults that join the school as adults – rather than having attended classes as a child.)

Meladrama expects staff to protect the professional integrity of themselves and the organisation.

We follow professional guidelines: Staff are discouraged from having students on their facebook or social media profiles. (Discretion for pupils on work experience). Melanie Ash has a 'work' facebook account that has public settings and is used solely for Meladrama, her private facebook isn't used for work and all friend requests from students are denied. There is a Meladrama Facebook Group – students can post enquiries and queries openly and with transparency and this is the preferred method of communication via social media for students under 18.

If the professional boundaries and/or policies are breached this could result in disciplinary procedures or enactment of the allegation management procedures.

The process outlined below details the stages involved in raising and reporting safeguarding concerns at Meladrama. Meladrama recognises its duty to report concerns or allegations against its staff and other

students within the organisation or by a professional from another organization. This process is also used if a child or vulnerable adult makes a disclosure or allegation whilst in our care.

1. Listen carefully and stay calm.
2. Avoid interviewing the child and asking questions, though if necessary ask for clarification without suggesting answers or asking 'leading' questions.
3. Seek medical attention if needed
4. Reassure the student and tell them they have done the right thing.
5. Inform the student that you will have to pass the information on but only to people that have to know.
6. Assistant teachers immediately to inform the designated manager (Melanie Ash or on occasion supply teacher).
7. Make detailed notes of the allegation with times, dates and place and what the student said (with any questions/clarifications included).
8. Designated manager (Melanie Ash or supply teacher) to contact the relevant authorities (police or local child protection team).
9. If the allegation is about the designated manager (Melanie Ash or supply teacher) then the students' parents are informed immediately without any consultation with the designated manager. The member of staff must stay with the pupil till they are safely in the care of their parent/responsible adult.
10. If the allegation is about a teaching assistant then they are immediately withdrawn from the class and contact with students whilst an investigation takes place
11. Ensure that feedback from the Local Authority is received and their response recorded.

The organisation will monitor the following Safeguarding aspects:

- Safe recruitment practices
- DBS checks undertaken
- References applied for new staff
- Training – register/ record of staff training on child/ vulnerable adult protection
- Monitoring whether concerns are being reported and actioned
- Checking that policies are up to date and relevant
- Reviewing the current reporting procedure in place
- Ensure all checks are done every 6 months on adult students and forms filled in correctly.

Information will be gathered, recorded and stored in accordance with the following policies (Data Protection Policy, Confidentiality Policy).

All staff must be aware that they have a professional duty to share information with other agencies to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. The public interest in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults may override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need to know basis only, as judged by the Designated Senior Manager.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise students of their families that they will keep secrets.

Meladrama will make clients aware of the Safeguarding Policy through the following means: letters home, e mail and social media.

This policy will be reviewed by Melanie Ash, every year and when there are changes in legislation.