



Safeguarding Policy

August 2018

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 North West 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:

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

About Safeguarding

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 a person 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
- Is experiencing hardship.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for following the guidelines laid out in this policy and related policies, and reporting 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 (DSM) is Melanie Ash. The DSM will nominate a deputy in their absence, normally the most senior member of staff. This person's responsibilities are:

- To ensure sufficient resources (time and money) are allocated to enable the policy to be effectively implemented
- Promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults
- To ensure staff have access to appropriate training/information
- To receive staff concerns about safeguarding and respond to all seriously, swiftly and appropriately
- Keeping up to date with local arrangements for safeguarding and DBS checks
- To develop and maintain effective links with relevant agencies
- To take forward concerns about responses to child protection teams/police.

• **Scope of this policy**

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:

1. Safe recruitment:

Meladrama ensures safe recruitment of staff and students through the following process:

- DBS checks on all teaching staff, and all teaching assistants are former pupils we have known since they attended classes as children themselves.
- In addition to DBS Checks, all new staff and adult students (all those over 18) will also be subject to the following checks:
 - 3 forms of ID must be presented when registering for classes, and copies taken by the DSM. One of these ID's must be photographic
 - The DSM 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 also sign an agreement, stating they will not contact students under 18 under any circumstances outside of class*

- All adult students must declare any prior or pending 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 these measures without question, and where necessary provide more information.

*Some discretion is used around social media with students who have friends that haven't turned 18, or an existing social relationship (e.g. family members). The process above is focused on adults that join the school as adults, rather than having attended classes as a child.

Meladrama require staff to protect their own professional integrity, as well as the integrity of Meladrama.

2. We follow professional guidelines:

Staff members are discouraged from having students on their Facebook or social media profiles. (Discretion is made for pupils on work experience). Melanie Ash has a 'work' Facebook account which has public settings and is used solely for Meladrama. Her private Facebook account is not used for work and all friend requests from students are denied. There is a Meladrama Facebook Group where students may post enquiries and queries openly and with transparency and this is the preferred method of communication via social media for students under 18.

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

3. Raising and reporting concerns:

Meladrama recognises its duty to report concerns or allegations against its staff and students within the organisation or by a professional from another organization. The process outlined below details the stages involved in raising and reporting safeguarding concerns at Meladrama. 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 DSM

7. Make detailed notes of the allegation with times, dates and place and what the student said (with any questions/clarifications included)
8. DSM to contact the relevant authorities (police or local child protection team)
9. If the allegation is about the DSM, the students' parents will be informed immediately without any consultation with the DSM. The member of staff must stay with the pupil until they are safely in the care of their parent/responsible adult
10. If the allegation is about a teaching assistant then the assistant is 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.

4. The organisation will monitor the following safeguarding aspects:

- Safe recruitment practices as outlined above
- DBS checks undertaken as outlined above
- References requested for all 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 that they will keep secrets.

Meladrama will make clients aware of the Safeguarding Policy through the following means:

- Letters to home
- E mail
- Social media.

This policy will be reviewed by Melanie Ash, every year, or when there are changes in legislation – whichever is soonest.

