

Lewisham Youth Theatre Safeguarding Policy

LYT mission statement

All young people have a powerful voice and a right to be heard. Lewisham Youth Theatre (LYT) nurtures and inspires young people's voices through free participatory theatre activities, helping them to develop enduring and transferable skills that lead to increased life chances and long-term well-being. We bring young people together from across the Lewisham community to create outstanding theatre in an environment of high expectations and collaboration. We work from the core belief that artistic excellence is key to expanding young people's horizons and creating lasting transformation.

Contents

Introduction & Policy Statement	2
Roles and Responsibilities	3
General Guidance on LYT Safeguarding Practices	7
Staff Conduct and Professional Boundaries	9
Reporting and Responding to Safeguarding Concerns	13
Safeguarding training and Ongoing Monitoring	17
Safer Recruitment and Suitability	18
Record Keeping and Information Sharing	20

Introduction & Policy Statement

Lewisham Youth Theatre (LYT) is committed to the safety and well-being of all children, young people, and adults at risk who engage with our programmes. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. This policy outlines how we recognise, respond to, and report safeguarding concerns in line with UK legislation and best practice:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
- The Care Act (2014)
- The Prevent Duty (2015)
- The Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003)

This policy applies to all staff, freelancers, peer mentors, volunteers and trustees. Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

This policy will be reviewed at least every 2 years, and modified or supplemented in response to new legislation, changes to the working environment or on advice of LYT's staff or Council of Management (CoM). All staff, freelancers and volunteers will receive the latest policy and will be trained to take responsibility for its implementation.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Safeguarding

We recognise that experiences of harm are not equally distributed. LYT is committed to culturally safe and anti-discriminatory safeguarding practices. We acknowledge that racism, ableism, transphobia, Islamophobia, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination impact how young people experience harm and whether they trust systems enough to seek help.

LYT respects every young person's right to self-identify and use pronouns that reflect their identity. Misgendering and deadnaming are not acceptable. Staff must correct themselves and others if these occur. We support all young people exploring their identity with respect and affirmation.

Definitions: What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the action taken to promote the welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk, and to protect them from harm. It means protecting people's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. At LYT, this includes not only

responding to risks but also actively creating safe, inclusive, and empowering environments. Staff at LYT are responsible for protecting all participants, regardless of their age.

Who is a Child or Young Person?

In UK law a child is anyone under the age of 18. At LYT, we consider a young person to include adults aged 18+ up to the age of 25.

Who is an Adult at Risk?

An adult at risk (formerly “vulnerable adult”) is someone aged 18 or over who has support needs (e.g., learning disability, mental health issue, physical disability), which mean they are unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation due to these needs.

Who is a staff member?

For the purposes of this policy, ‘staff member’ is used as a generic term for all LYT employees, freelancers, volunteers, trainee facilitators, placements and any other representative of LYT deemed to have responsibility to safeguard participants.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff members working with LYT are responsible for recognising, responding to, and reporting safeguarding concerns. All staff members must read and follow LYT’s Safeguarding Policy and attend safeguarding training relevant to their role.

Trustees: The Charity Commission is clear that Trustees have primary responsibility for safeguarding in their charity. LYT’s trustees will fulfil their duty of care to safeguard young people and adults at risk with whom LYT works by:

- Acting in their best interests
- Taking all reasonable steps to prevent any harm to them
- Assessing and managing risk
- Putting safeguarding policies and procedures in place
- Undertaking ongoing monitoring and reviewing to ensure that safeguards are being implemented and are effective
- Responding appropriately to allegations of abuse
- Informing the Charity Commission of any serious incidents

The designated trustee for safeguarding matters (named below) will take the lead in overseeing safeguarding practice and responding to allegations of abuse, in consultation with fellow trustees.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: The Executive Producer is the DSL responsible for promoting and implementing safeguarding practices across LYT, including informing all staff, freelancers, Trainee facilitators and volunteers about safeguarding procedures and ensuring they receive appropriate training to implement these practices across the organisation.

As the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Executive Producer will take the lead responsibility for:

- Monitoring and review of this policy, in collaboration with the Council of Management (Board of Trustees)
- Providing safeguarding advice across programmes
- Ensuring that all procedures (including risk assessments) align with safeguarding practices
- Responding in a timely manner to any suspected abuse allegations
- Updating the CoM in regard to any incidents where an external safeguarding process had to be implemented (E.g. referral to social services)
- Keeping written records in line with our Data Protection Policy
- Referring a case on to social services where necessary
- Reporting the case to Lewisham Council's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) when necessary
- Reporting any case where an allegation is made against a worker (including volunteers) to the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO).

DDSL (Deputy DSL): If the Executive Producer is not available, the Participation Manager will lead on responsibilities as the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. By having two staff members, LYT ensures there is no bias in reporting and ensures continuous care.

All staff members: All staff members are responsible for following the Safeguarding policy and procedures, particularly by:

- Understanding their responsibility in safeguarding
- Following the safeguarding arrangements set out in this policy
- Reporting any suspicions of abuse or neglect to a manager/designated person
- Reporting any concerns about the behaviour of any members of staff, volunteers or freelancers towards young people

Trainee facilitators (over 18s): Trainee facilitators are previous LYT members who have been trained to become paid staff. They are not session leads but young professionals who support the creative team in delivery. They are provided with an easy-read version of the safeguarding policy (see **Appendix C**) and safeguarding training to help them understand their role and responsibilities.

In sessions, Trainee facilitators are expected to:

- Plan alongside the session leads and lead activities including games
- Support group engagement and positive participation, and work in individual group work
- Work collaboratively with staff and model LYT's values
- Act with maturity and awareness of their environment
- Remain after the session for a de-briefing with facilitators, to pass on any concerns or observations

While they are not session leads. Trainee facilitators are trusted staff within the group. They must report any concerns to staff immediately.

Peer Mentors (under 18s): Peer Mentors are participants who take on a visible leadership role within projects at LYT. They are not session participants but young leaders who support the creative team in creating a positive and inclusive space. They are provided with an easy-read version of the safeguarding policy (see **Appendix D**) and basic safeguarding training to help them understand their role and responsibilities.

In sessions, Peer Mentors are expected to:

- Lead by example through respectful, inclusive behaviour
- Support group engagement and positive participation
- Work collaboratively with staff and model LYT's values
- Act with maturity and awareness of their environment
- Remain after the session for a de-briefing with facilitators, to pass on any concerns or observations

While they are not staff, Peer Mentors are trusted role models within the group. They are not expected to manage disclosures or assess risk. If they become aware of a concern, they must inform a staff member immediately.

Current Safeguarding Contacts:

- **DSL:** Molly Cox (Executive Producer) molly@lewishamyouththeatre.com
- **Deputy DSL:** Maz Wright (Participation Manager)
maz@lewishamyouththeatre.com

- **Safeguarding Lead for the CoM:** chair@lewishamyouththeatre.com
- **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub:** 020 8314 6660
020 8314 6000 (out of hours – ask for emergency duty team)
- **LADO (Lewisham):** Caroline Aitken, London Borough of Lewisham, 1st Floor Laurence House, 1 Catford Road, SE6 4RU. Office Tel: 020 8314 7280, lewishamlado@lewisham.gov.uk, lado@lewisham.gov.uk
- **Lewisham Children's Social Care:** Social Care and Health, 1st Floor Laurence House, 1 Catford Road, London SE6 4RU, Tel: 020 8314 6000, Duty Team: 020 8314 6660, Out of Hours: 020 8314 6000
- **Lewisham Safeguarding Children Board:** 32 Kaleidoscope Child Development Centre, Rushey Green SE6 4JF, Tel: 020 8314 3396, Email: Safeguardingboard@lewisham.gov.uk

To Report a Crime:

- Dial 999 – To report a crime in progress or imminent, or if victim is injured.
- Dial 101 – To report a crime or concern that has taken place previously.

Give Emergency Services the address: 436 Lewisham High Street, SE13 6LJ (the building next to the Seventh Day Adventist Church).

General Guidance on LYT Safeguarding Practices

Peer-on-Peer Abuse and Bullying: LYT aims to create a psychologically and physically safe working environment by fostering a culture of respect and care. All groups complete a group contract and the LYT's Membership Agreement include an inclusion statement.

Staff members should immediately challenge any behaviour that might be seen as bullying or discriminatory, or that might develop into bullying by referring to standards of behaviours expected of all. Phrases that might be useful include: "Everyone works together at LYT"; "Could we find a kinder way to say that?" or "That language isn't acceptable at LYT".

Workers should report any concerning language, including gesture or body language, to the lead facilitators at post-session debriefs. Staff members will create a plan of action, as appropriate, to address the behaviour. This may include talking to a parent/carer or further conversations with the individual or the group.

We will try to use clear boundaries (as detailed above and in the Anti-Bullying policy) and restorative approaches to address peer on peer conflict. Participants will be reminded of expectations to act with care and respect to peers both inside and out of LYT, including online.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB): Staff should remember that sexual behaviour can be harmful even when the children involved are similar in age. It is essential to assess power dynamics, coercion, and whether consent is informed and freely given.

HSB could look like:

- Verbal (including sexual comments, name calling, etc.)
- Physical (including following someone, touching without consent, forcing kissing/hug, etc)
- Online (including spreading rumours, sharing explicit content, etc.)

LYT use the Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool to assess and respond to sexual behaviour between children.

Staff should be aware that a child under the age of 13 can never consent to sexual activity. Any concerns about child under the age of 13 engaging in sexual activity, even with another person under the age of 18, must be reported.

Staff members should note that, while concerns of sexual exploitation or abuse of a child of any age must be reported, knowledge of consensual sexual activity between children over the age of 13 does not necessarily constitute abuse.

Radicalisation & Extremism: LYT has a legal duty under the Prevent strategy to safeguard children and young people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.

LYT recognises that safeguarding against radicalisation must be non-discriminatory and respectful of young people's diverse beliefs. Holding strong religious or political views is not in itself a cause for concern. Staff must be mindful not to confuse religious or political expression with extremism and should seek guidance from the DSL if unsure.

See **Appendix E** for definitions and examples of radicalisation and extremism for more details.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Emerging Technologies: LYT recognises that AI technologies including AI-generated content, chatbots, and image or voice cloning—present new and evolving safeguarding risks for children, young people, and adults at risk. As these tools become increasingly accessible, staff must remain alert to how AI may be used to harm, deceive, or exploit.

All staff, volunteers, and freelancers must:

- Treat AI-related safeguarding concerns with the same seriousness as other forms of harm.
- Be alert to signs that young people are engaging with AI in unsafe ways or are distressed by online interactions involving synthetic content.
- Inform the DSL or Deputy DSL if they become aware of AI-related harm or if a participant discloses exposure to deepfakes, grooming via AI, or distress from chatbot relationships.
- Avoid using AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, image generators) in programme delivery without prior approval from a line manager or DSL.
- Never input personal data about young people or staff into AI tools or platforms, even for internal purposes, even the slightest detail could be harmful.

LYT's Safeguarding team have a duty to provide staff with ongoing training and updates on AI safeguarding risks as part of digital safety awareness. They will monitor developments in technology to ensure our safeguarding policy remains responsive to emerging threats. As well as maintain a culture of critical digital literacy, supporting young people in questioning and analysing online content and interactions. If you are unsure whether a tool, platform or interaction presents a safeguarding concern, speak to the DSL.

Staff Conduct and Professional Boundaries

All staff; freelancers, volunteers and trainee facilitators must maintain appropriate professional boundaries when working with young people and adults at risk. Boundaries protect both participants and practitioners. They help to maintain trust, fairness and safeguarding standards across our programmes.

LYT spaces are often informal and creative, but this must not lead to blurred roles. Practitioners must always remain self-aware and act professionally, understanding the power dynamic they hold. This section outlines our expectations for in-session conduct, communication, personal boundaries and relationships.

Staff members should be aware of using appropriate language and talking about age-appropriate topics when young people are present.

General expectations: All staff members are expected to:

- Treat young people with care, fairness and respect
- Promote a positive, inclusive and welcoming environment
- Avoid behaviour that could be interpreted as grooming, favouritism or bullying
- Avoid gossip or language that isolates individuals
- Maintain boundaries in terms of tone, dress and attitude
- Avoid physical contact
- Not seek friendships, emotional intimacy or emotional dependence from participants
- Avoid accepting gifts from members or parents (if you do receive a gift from participant or parent, you must report this to your line manager and the DSL)

Staff are expected to maintain a warm but professional relationship with participants. Boundaries help to support safety, objectivity and fairness across all interactions.

Worker to Participant Ratios: LYT activities are led by 2 facilitators and supported by volunteers and graduates (usually 2 per session). We aim for the adult/child ratio to be at least 1 to 8 (if under 14) and 1 to 10 (if 14+).

LYT aims for staff members to not be left alone with individuals or groups of young people. However, there may be times when one staff member must work with a small group in a separate space or hold confidential one-to-one sessions. In these instances, the following procedures should be followed:

- Where possible, you should work within sight or hearing distance of other adults.
- You should ensure that other adults are present in the office or nearby in the building.

- You must tell other adults present where you will be working and for how long.
- If you are left alone with a young person while waiting for parents/carers to collect the young person, you must notify a line manager about the situation. When the young person is collected, you must report that the child is no longer in your care to the line manager and make a note of the time of collection.

Communication with Participants and their Parents & Guardians: All participants in LYT's activities return a registration form, which includes their parent/guardians' names and numbers. Parent/guardian consent is required for young people under 18 to take part in any activity. In occasional circumstances, staff may accept initial verbal consent, followed up by signed paperwork.

LYT collects consent for participants to either be collected or make their own way home at the end of a session. LYT staff may accept verbal consent from parent/carers to alter these arrangements.

If a child (under 18) is registered for an activity but doesn't arrive, LYT will contact the parent or guardian to inform them of the absence. All communication must go through LYT-issued devices and accounts. We contact young people through:

- The red phone (for under-18s)
- The black phone (for 18–25s)
- LYT email addresses

Staff should ensure the LYT mobile phones are charged before sessions, and that they have access to the mobile during all activities, as per risk assessments.

Use of Personal Devices: As per LYT's Data Protection Policy, staff must not use personal phones, tablets or laptops to contact, photograph or store information about participants. Workers must not give their personal details to participants.

If a young person's parent or guardian must be contacted via a staff member's personal device (e.g. during a trip), this must be approved in advance by the DSL, and all staff must follow the following procedures:

- Identify themselves as contacting on behalf of LYT.
- Delete any phone numbers from personal devices following the end of the conversation.
- Inform their line manager of any use of a personal device in this way.

Social Media and Online Presence: LYT recommends that all staff members make their social media accounts private. Though this is not a requirement, staff should be aware that young people may search for them online.

Any contact made via social media, even if initiated by a participant, must be documented and shared with their line manager or the DSL. Staff must not arrange to meet any current or former participants outside of official LYT sessions, events or activities, unless approved by the DSL.

Staff must not interact with young people on personal social media platforms, gaming platforms, or share usernames. This includes but is not limited to:

- Instagram
- Snapchat
- TikTok
- WhatsApp
- Discord
- PlayStation Network
- Xbox Live
- Steam
- Fortnite, Roblox, Minecraft, and similar platforms

Physical Contact: Theatre involves contact. We recognise that appropriate physical touch between young people, and between adults and young people, can be healthy and acceptable in public.

Staff must ensure that any physical contact is appropriate and consensual and should not typically initiate physical contact. Staff should be aware that what may be appropriate for one person may feel unsafe to another and should aim to keep the other party always feeling safe. Staff should also apply these principles to personal space boundaries.

Staff should be aware of inappropriate attachments forming between adults and children and should re-establish boundaries to ensure a professional working environment. For instance, if a child repeatedly initiates hugs with a particular staff member, the adult can suggest giving high-fives instead.

Staff members must not engage in physical contact if they are alone with a young person.

Staff Children in Programmes: To maintain fairness and objectivity, LYT discourages current and ex staff (including freelancers) from enrolling their own children in our programmes.

Potential risks include:

- Real or perceived favouritism.

- Breaches of confidentiality.
- Pressure on colleagues to manage situations involving a colleague's child.
- Difficulty maintaining emotional and behavioural boundaries.
- Undue influence over casting or group dynamics.

If a staff member needs to do so for childcare or other reasons, this must be discussed with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the DSL and must be approved by the CoM. If a plan is approved, it must be monitored by the SLT and DSL for fairness and effectiveness.

If approved:

- Staff must not deliver, facilitate or support any programme their child is attending.
- Staff's children must adhere to the same start times as other participants.
- Staff must not be responsible for safeguarding, access or behaviour decisions involving their child.
- Staff may attend public sharing's or assist with off-session logistics such as front-of-house, provided this does not interfere with safeguarding responsibilities.

Returning Participants as Staff, Volunteers, Trainee facilitators or Student Placements: LYT welcomes and supports the progression of young people into volunteering, student placements or paid roles. However, this transition must be managed carefully to safeguard all involved, including the young person returning in a new capacity.

To protect participant confidentiality and maintain clear boundaries:

- Returning young people must not access records held about themselves as participants.
- Access to other participants' personal data must be limited to what is required for their role.
- Any pre-existing relationships with participants should be reviewed to ensure appropriate boundaries are in place.
- A clear transition plan should be created with support from the DSL.
- All returning volunteers, students and staff must complete LYT's safeguarding induction and training, including confidentiality and data protection.

These steps ensure a supported progression while maintaining the safety, privacy and trust of all involved in LYT programmes. Staff or volunteers with previous personal relationships with LYT Graduates over 18 can retain personal details, if they maintain professional boundaries expected when working on projects where those contacts are participants.

Reporting and Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

You may become concerned about a person for several reasons:

- A young person may tell (disclose) that they or someone else has been, is being or may be abused or harmed.

E.g. Harry has disclosed to you that he is actively self-harming.

Ellie has accused Lisa of touching her inappropriately.

- There may be concerns due to the person's behaviour or presentation.

E.g. Ahmed is regularly coming to sessions half an hour late.

Susan is hungry before sessions and always asks for snacks to take home.

Concerns may also be raised about the behaviour of an adult, who may be a member of staff, volunteer, another professional or a member of the public. A parent, carer, relative or member of the public might also share their concerns about a young person.

In all cases, if you believe a young person has been, is being or may be harmed, you must report your concerns on the same day they arise. It is not the responsibility of staff or volunteers to investigate or decide the outcome of a concern. Your role is to record and report what you have seen, heard, or been told.

Emergencies: As per our Health & Safety policy, if a young person has a medical emergency (including mental health emergencies) or is in immediate threat of harm (including self-harm), call 999. Once the situation is safe, inform the DSL or Deputy DSL, as well as parents/carers or emergency contacts.

The effects of any accident or incidence of abuse on the rest of the young people in the group should not be underestimated, and appropriate explanations given, bearing in mind the importance of confidentiality.

Responding to a Disclosure: If a young person discloses something concerning:

- Stay calm and listen carefully
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that confidentiality will need to be broken if there are concerns that they are being or may be harmed and that the information will need to be shared with others. Do not promise to keep secrets.
- Ask questions for clarification only. Try to use the TED method, asking questions that start with "Tell", "Explain" or "Describe". Avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer. Ask open questions if needed: "Can you tell me more about that?"

- Record what was said in their own words, paper and pens can be found in every room.
- Reassure them: “Thank you for telling me” and “You’ve done the right thing”
- Be honest about next steps, tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared “I will need to tell someone who can help”
- Report to the DSL or Deputy DSL as soon as possible.

Concerns (No Disclosure): If you become concerned about a young person due to the young person’s behaviour, presentation or other reason:

- Do not trivialise or dismiss your concerns - information that may seem trivial can frequently form the missing piece of the puzzle and lead to protective action being taken.
- If the behaviour may be sexually or psychologically harmful to other young people do not explain it away as ‘normal teenage behaviour’.
- Report your concerns to the lead facilitator or DSL as soon as you can.

If you feel a young person may be going to tell you about abuse, but then stops or tells you something else, let them know that you are always ready to listen to them and/or remind them of the ChildLine number: 0800 1111.

Ask for Tigg: “Ask for Tigg” is a preventative safeguarding measure we use at LYT. It is a code phrase that young people can use if they are feeling unsafe, overwhelmed, or unsure how to express a need for support e.g. “Is Tigg around?”. If a young person asks for Tigg, quickly and discreetly inform the facilitator or member of staff. Trainee facilitators, volunteers or peer mentors are not expected to handle the situation alone.

Staff must not treat “Ask for Tigg” as a safeguarding disclosure unless a concern is raised. It is a mechanism to access help, not a disclosure. Using “Ask for Tigg” may or may not lead to a safeguarding concern, but it is always taken seriously and responded to with care and discretion. It is one of several tools we use to help young people access support on their terms.

If a concern is raised whilst a young person has asked for Tigg, staff should use the same disclosure process as above.

Reporting Process: Volunteers, peer mentors and trainee facilitators should report their concerns to a staff member immediately, don't wait for the end of the session. The staff member will take lead responsibility for carrying out the safeguarding reporting procedures. Use the Airtable safeguarding form to submit all concerns - <https://bit.ly/LYTReport>

If allegations are made against a staff member, concerns should be reported directly to the DSL and the CoM. Observations can be reported to the lead facilitator at the end of the session and recorded via the Session Evaluation Form. Staff may speak to either the DSL or Deputy DSL depending on availability and urgency, if at all unsure of what an observation versus a safeguarding concern is.

*See the safeguarding concern reporting flowchart in **Appendix A** for a visual guide to this process.*

The DSL will then:

- Agree with the lead staff member a plan of action and make a note of this plan.
- Keep the record of the disclosure or observation secure and confidential.
- Consult with Lewisham Social Services, Lewisham Safeguarding Board and other partner organisations before making an external referral.

Referrals to External Agencies: Only the DSL, or a senior member of staff acting on their behalf, may make referrals to external services such as MASH, or the police. Before doing so, the DSL will:

- Consider whether the young person already has support in place (e.g. school, CAMHS, social worker).
- Consult *Lewisham's Continuum of Need* document to determine the threshold for referral. This document is available through the Lewisham Safeguarding Children's Board website and saved in the safeguarding folder within 'Policies and Procedures' on LYT's shared drive.
- Seek consent from parents/carers before an external referral, unless they feel that seeking consent would put the child at further risk of harm or cause unnecessary delay.

If the DSL is making a referral to an external service, they must:

- Inform the CoM about any issues requiring an outside referral.
- In the case of suspecting that Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) has taken place or will take place imminently, reporting to 101, asking for the FGM Protection Unit.

If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not available, the Participation Manager should undertake the responsibilities described above.

Allegations Against Members of Staff: All concerns or allegations about someone working with LYT, including staff, freelancers, volunteers, trainee facilitators and trustees, must be reported the same day.

It is VERY IMPORTANT you do not ignore or dismiss concerns or suspicions about another professional or colleague. Concerns do not need to meet the threshold of suspected abuse to be reported. If you are concerned that another worker is not abiding by LYT's safeguarding practices, whether intentionally or unintentionally, you must report this.

The following procedures must be followed:

- Report any concerns or allegations, about staff, freelancers, volunteers, trainee facilitators and trustees to the DSL as soon as possible.
- If the concern is about the DSL, report it to the Chair of the CoM (contact details above).
- If the concern is about a member of the CoM, report it to the Chair, who may appoint an external safeguarding investigator.
- If the concern is about the Chair of the CoM, please see further concerns whistleblowing below.

The DSL will gather information quickly and carefully, seeking further information from facilitators, staff, volunteers, young people, parents or carers as appropriate to support a potential referral. This is not an internal investigation but helps ensure that LYT can accurately represent what has occurred to the appropriate safeguarding bodies. If the concern is about a staff member, freelancer, or volunteer, the LADO should be contacted by the DSL in the first instance for advice and guidance.

Where relevant, the COM will be informed of concerns that result in LADO consultation, suspension, or external referral, and the DSL may seek their guidance throughout the process.

If there is an identified safeguarding risk, the following may occur:

- The individual may be reassigned to non-contact duties.
- They may be asked to work remotely.
- In more serious situations, suspension may be required.

Suspension is not automatic, it is only used when necessary and the DSL or CoM must authorise it and will be guided by advice from the LADO, external HR advisors, or other safeguarding partners as appropriate. If, after investigation, the staff member is found to have seriously breached the Safeguarding Policy, dismissing the staff member under grounds of gross misconduct may be necessary.

Further Concerns and Whistleblowing: All staff, freelancers and volunteers should feel responsible for raising safeguarding concerns should they arise. Your role with LYT, whether paid or unpaid, will not be at risk because you have raised or escalated your concerns.

If you are dissatisfied with the response to any of your concerns above, raise these again with your DSL or the Council of Management. If you feel your concerns still haven't been appropriately addressed, you should report your concerns to MASH on 020 8314 6660.

If you have concerns about how Child Protection matters are being handled at LYT and do not feel that your concerns have been or will be acted on appropriately, you can contact the NSPCC's Whistleblowing Advice Line to discuss your concerns: 0800 028 0285.

Safeguarding training and Ongoing Monitoring

LYT is committed to ensuring that all staff, freelancers, peer mentors, volunteers and trustees are equipped with the knowledge and confidence to safeguard children, young people, and adults at risk.

Training Requirements:

- All core staff are required to complete accredited Level 3 safeguarding training, which is renewed every three years.
- The DSL, Safeguarding Lead and/or Chair of the COM must refresh their Level 3 training every two years, in line with good governance standards.
- Other members of the CoM are required to complete Level 1 or 2 safeguarding training, which is renewed every three years.
- All new members of core staff are required to complete LYT's safeguarding induction before starting work with participants.
- Freelancers, trainee facilitators, peer mentors and volunteers must complete a safeguarding induction before starting work with participants and take part in appropriate training according to their role.

Trainee facilitators: Trainee facilitators receive safeguarding training and an easy-read version of the safeguarding policy (**Appendix C**). They are expected to follow LYT's safeguarding policies, maintain a safe environment for all participants and actively report any safeguarding concerns to the facilitation team immediately.

Peer Mentors: Peer Mentors receive basic safeguarding training and an easy-read version of the safeguarding policy (**Appendix D**).

This training employs the *"See it, Say it, We'll Sort it"* approach, helping participants understand how to respond appropriately if they are concerned about another individual. Peer Mentors are not expected to manage disclosures or assess risk and are reminded to report any concerns directly to a staff member immediately.

Safeguarding in team culture: Safeguarding is a standing item on team meeting agendas. These discussions focus on:

- Sharing information, policy updates, training opportunities, and good practice reminders.
- Updates on changes to policy and guidance, identification of general trends or emerging risks, shared anonymously.

Team meetings are not used to discuss individual safeguarding cases. If a case briefing is needed, the DSL leads it, and only staff directly involved are included. When referencing individuals, staff must use initials only, and no full names or personal details are to be recorded in the minutes to protect participants' confidentiality.

DSL Safeguarding Meetings: The DSL and Deputy DSL meet monthly for DSL safeguarding briefings to review open and recently closed safeguarding cases. These meetings are used to identify actions, make decisions, and review whether there is any learning for LYT.

Safer Recruitment and Suitability

LYT is committed to ensuring that everyone working or volunteering with children, young people, or adults at risk is suitable to do so. Safer recruitment is a core part of our safeguarding practice. It helps prevent unsuitable individuals from gaining access to children and ensures that our values and expectations are embedded from the outset.

Pre-Appointment Checks and Onboarding: All staff, freelancers, volunteers, and trustees that work with us for more than one session are required to:

- Attend an interview and provide two references (which specifically comment on any safeguarding concerns and their suitability to work with young people), including at least one from a previous employer or relevant organisation.
- Answer questions during their interview regarding their understanding of safeguarding and how that might be a consideration in the role they are applying for.
- Complete an Enhanced DBS check (including Barred List check if applicable).
- Disclose any unspent convictions, safeguarding investigations, or relevant concerns.
- Complete an in-house safeguarding induction and agree to all relevant LYT policies.

DBS checks will be considered valid for 2 years. LYT will accept DBS checks undertaken at other organisations if they were undertaken within 2 years prior to the end of the contracted project. LYT may accept Standard DBS checks as a temporary measure, if:

- The staff member is not left alone with any young person at any point
- They do not have prolonged engagement with a young person (E.g. a Creative Hub partnership, or delivery in schools).

Any staff without a DBS, or a Standard DSB will be clearly identifiable via a coloured lanyard and monitored by the lead facilitator and core staff.

LYT will pay for worker and volunteer DBS checks and will facilitate the application process through an online system. LYT encourages all staff to register with the DBS Update Service to support safer monitoring and reduce administration.

Self-Disclosures and DBS Findings: Applicants are required to be open and transparent about any convictions, cautions, or reprimands (spent or unspent), any past or ongoing safeguarding concerns or investigations, any relevant police involvement or disciplinary actions or any other factors that may impact their suitability to work with young people.

If a self-disclosure or DBS certificate includes information of concern, LYT will:

- Consider the nature, context, and timing of the offence or incident.
- Assess whether the individual's current behaviour and attitude demonstrate responsibility, insight, and change.
- Seek advice and guidance from the LADO, external HR advisors, or safeguarding partners as needed.

- Undertake a safeguarding risk assessment, led by the DSL.

An individual cannot work with LYT if:

- They are barred from working with children.
- The information disclosed suggests an ongoing or serious risk.
- They fail to declare relevant information.
- Their conduct, judgment, or values are not in line with LYT's safeguarding expectations.

Ongoing Suitability: Suitability is not assessed only at recruitment. All adults working or volunteering with LYT are expected to maintain behaviour consistent with our safeguarding responsibilities. Concerns about someone's behaviour, even if unrelated to a specific incident or allegation, may trigger a review or reassessment of their role.

Concerns may include:

- Inappropriate communication or relationships with participants.
- Disrespectful or discriminatory behaviour.
- Breaches of safeguarding policy or professional boundaries.
- Behaviour in personal life that calls the ability to safeguard children/young people into question.

Where concerns about suitability arise after appointment, LYT will follow the outlined reporting on allegations or concerns procedures above.

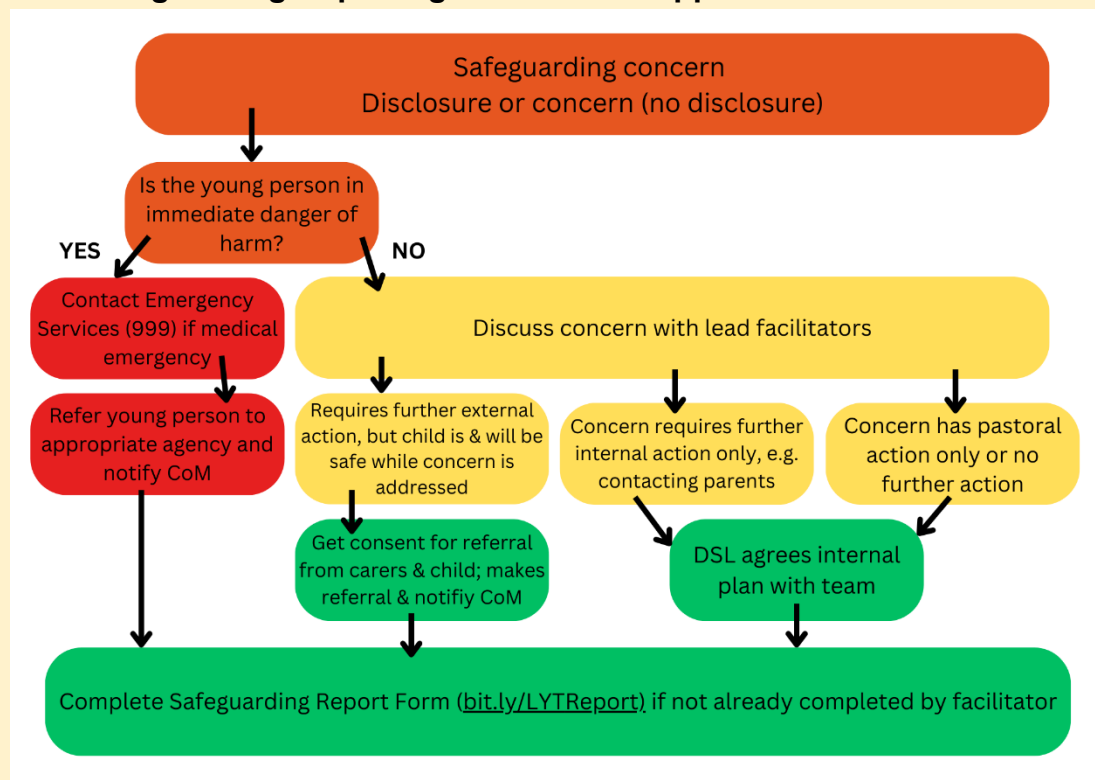
Record Keeping and Information Sharing

All safeguarding information must be recorded and stored securely to protect confidentiality and support effective decision-making. Records are managed following data protection legislation and good safeguarding practices.

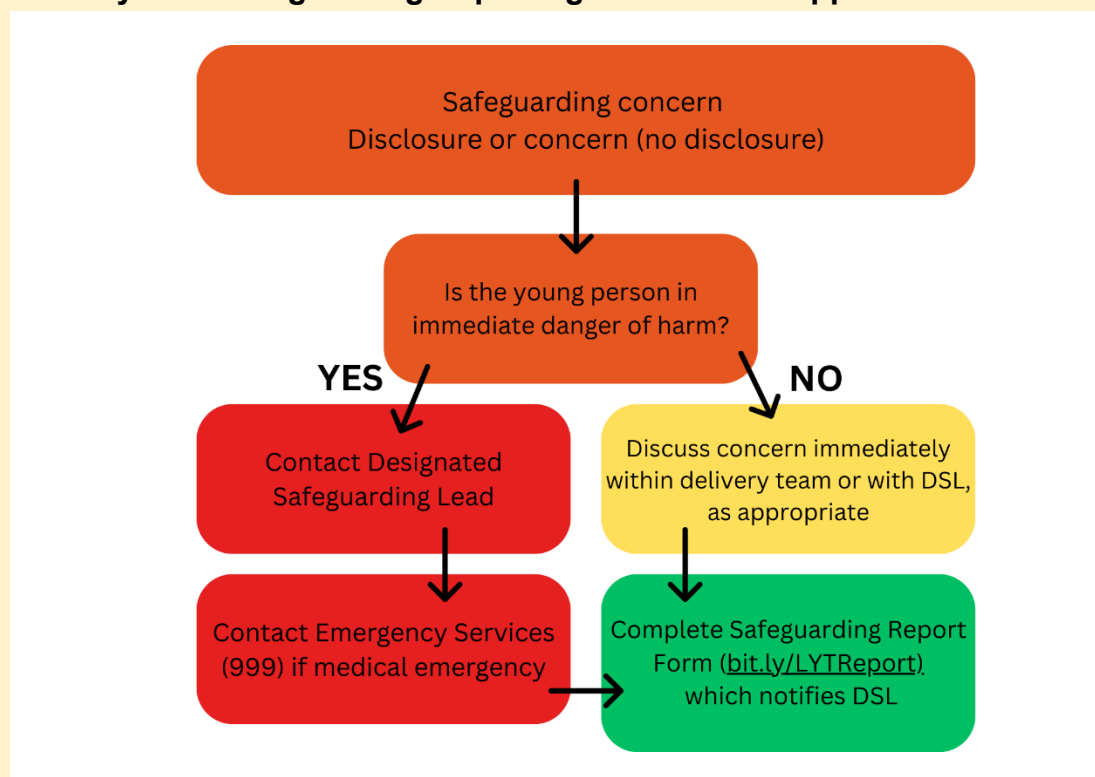
Safeguarding Records

- Safeguarding concerns are submitted on the same day via the [LYT Airtable safeguarding form](#).
- Records are stored in Airtable and are accessible only to the DSL and Deputy DSL.
- Safeguarding records are retained until the child is 25 and are not held on personal devices or outside approved systems.
- LYT will archive information that is no longer relevant at the end of each programme year.

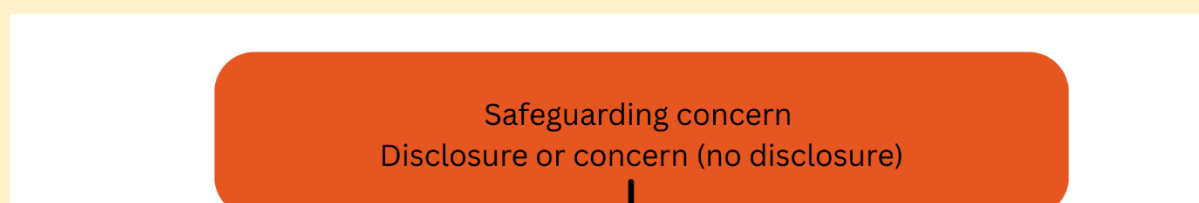
DSL Safeguarding Reporting Procedure – Appendix A1



Delivery staff Safeguarding Reporting Procedure – Appendix A2



Non-Delivery staff Safeguarding Reporting Procedure – Appendix A3



Easy Read 8-11s Safeguarding Guide – Appendix B

Lewisham Youth Theatre Safeguarding Guide

You can read this with your parent or carer!

1. What does Safeguarding mean?

Keeping you safe, happy and respected at LYT in workshops, shows and online.
The

2. Who can you talk to about safeguarding?

Who can help?

Molly Cox – the main “Safety Lead”



Maz Wright – the assistant Safety Lead



Any LYT staff member



When to talk to them?

Any time you feel unsafe or worried

If Molly isn't around

If you need to share something quickly

(We'll show you their photos on your first day.)

3. Your Top 5 Safety Rights

- Be Treated Kindly  No bullying, racism, or name-calling.
- Say “Stop”  if touch or jokes feel wrong.
- Use Your Name & Pronouns   We'll respect what you choose.
- Be Listened To  What you say matters.
- Feel Safe Online & On Stage   No one should pressure you for photos, secrets or money.

4. If Something Feels Wrong

- Tell an adult straight away 
- Share what happened – use your own words 
- We write it down  to help keep you safe
- We may need to tell other helpers outside of LYT (like social workers or police) so the problem stops.

- We will never spread gossip 🙄
- You are not in trouble – it's our job to help! 🌟

5. Online & Phone Safety 📱💻

- Keep chats with other LYT members public – no secret DMs with strangers. 🔒
- Never share private info (address, school, photos) of other LYT members without asking a grown-up first. 🚫
- If someone sends a weird link, mean message, or requests pics – screenshot & tell us 📸⚠️
- Watch out for fake faces or voices 🤖🗣️ – if a video or call feels off, check with an adult.

6. When We Use Technology in Sessions 💻

- We'll only use safe LYT accounts and devices.
- Your data (like phone numbers) is stored safely, not on staff personal phones. 🔒
- We won't post your photo online unless you and your parent/carer say "yes". 📸✅

7. Quick Emergency Numbers ☎️

- 999 – Danger right now (police, ambulance, fire) 🚓🚑🚒
- Childline 0800 11 11 – Free, 24/7 if you want to talk to someone outside LYT ☎️

8. Remember 🌈

You deserve to feel safe, welcome and awesome every time you come to LYT.
If something doesn't feel right, talk to us – we've got your back! 😊

9. 💬 Ask for Tigg

If you are feeling upset, unsafe, or just need help, you can say: "Can I speak to Tigg?" or "Is Tigg in?"

This tells us adults at LYT that you want help or need to talk. Here's what will happen:

- An adult will take you somewhere quiet
- They will ask how they can help
- You can talk if you want to, or just take a break

- They won't make a big deal unless they are worried, you're not safe

Even if you don't want to talk straight away, it's okay. Saying "Ask for Tigg" is a good way to let someone know you need support.

● Remember: "Ask for Tigg" is not you getting in trouble. It's you asking for help. And we'll always try to help.

Easy Read Trainee Facilitators Safeguarding Policy Version – Appendix C

Safeguarding Guide for Trainee Facilitators Staff

Trainee facilitators are part of the LYT staff team. As team members working alongside young participants, they have a duty to model safe behaviour, maintain professional boundaries, and uphold all safeguarding responsibilities. This guide outlines what is expected of you in relation to safeguarding. You are not a participant. You are a member of staff, and you are expected to conduct yourself as such in all aspects of your work.

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the process of protecting children, young people, and adults at risk from harm. It includes preventing abuse, responding to concerns, and creating a safe, inclusive environment where everyone feels respected and protected.

You are not expected to make decisions about thresholds or risk, but you are expected to notice when something feels wrong and report it.

Your responsibilities

As a Trainee Facilitator, you are expected to:

- Act professionally at all times — in sessions, online, and in public spaces
- Lead by example in how you speak, listen, and behave
- Uphold LYT's values of inclusion, respect, and care
- Report any safeguarding concern or disclosures to the DSL (Molly Cox) or DDSL (Maz Wright) as soon as possible

You are not expected to fix things, but you are expected to pass concerns on promptly.

We use the simple approach:

See it. Say it. We'll sort it.

If something feels off, concerning, or inappropriate, say something. Tell a senior member of staff. The safeguarding team will take it from there.

If a young person discloses something concerning:

- Stay calm and listen carefully
- Don't ask leading questions or try to investigate
- Don't promise confidentiality, explain you need to pass it on if you are concerned about that young person
- Make a clear, factual note in their words as soon as possible
- Report to the DSL or DDSL the same day or to another member of staff if they are not available
- Upload the report securely via the Airtable form if possible (*you will be supported with this*)

If you're not sure what to do, ask. You are not alone in this process.

Ask for Tigg

If a young person says, "Can I ask for Tigg?", or "Is Tigg in" it means they are asking for help, time out, or a quiet conversation with a trusted adult. It is a discreet safeguarding alert.

You must:

- Tell a staff member immediately
- Avoid asking the young person what it's about; let staff handle it
- Ensure it's passed on as a safeguarding note, even if no disclosure is made

This phrase must always be taken seriously.

Boundaries and digital communication

As a member of staff, you must follow LYT's professional and digital boundaries:

- Do not arrange to meet participants outside of LYT
- Do not show favouritism or become overly personal with participants
- Do not use personal phones, emails, or social media accounts to contact participants
- Do not share usernames or engage on gaming or messaging platforms (e.g. Discord, TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Roblox)
- All communication with participants must go through approved LYT channels, you cannot take photos of young people, contact participants or parents on your own personal devices.

Support and supervision

You will receive safeguarding training as part of your induction. Throughout your project, you can:

- Raise concerns directly with the DSL or DDSL
- Ask for clarity on any safeguarding situation
- Get help writing up a report or completing a referral form
- Take part in staff briefings to help you feel prepared

If you ever feel unsure, unsafe, or overwhelmed, speak to a senior staff member. You will be supported.

Easy Read Peer Mentoring Safeguarding Policy Version – Appendix D

Peer Mentor Safeguarding Guide

You are a Peer Mentor. That means you're a trusted young person at LYT. You're here to support, lead by example, and help everyone feel safe and included

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding means keeping everyone safe, especially children, young people, and anyone who may be vulnerable.

It includes protecting people from:

- Bullying or hurtful behaviour
- Abuse (emotional, physical, or sexual)
- Neglect (not being cared for properly)
- Unsafe adults
- Online harm
- Exploitation or pressure
- Hate or discrimination

Your role as a Peer Mentor

You are a role model. In sessions, we expect you to:

- Be kind, patient, and inclusive
- Help other young people feel welcome
- Support the creative team when asked
- Speak up if you see something that feels wrong

You don't need to fix problems yourself. You DO need to pass them on.

We use this:

 **See it. Say it. We'll sort it.**

If you see or hear something that worries you, tell a staff member. That's your job, we'll take it from there.

What to do if you're worried

If someone says something upsetting or worrying to you:

- Stay calm

- Don't ask leading questions
- Tell a staff member straight away
- Never promise to keep it secret

Ask for Tigg

If a young person says, "Can I ask for Tigg?" or "is Tigg in?"

It means they want help or a break.

Let a staff member know quietly and immediately. Don't try to handle it yourself.

Online & phone safety

Peer Mentors shouldn't:

- Use their own phones to take selfies with young people
- Share their personal numbers, or social media handles with participants or volunteers

If an member of LYT or another participant contacts you outside of LYT and it feels weird or wrong, report it.

Remember

- You're a young leader, not a professional
- It's okay to be unsure — ask for help
- Staff are here to support you too

Definitions – Appendix E

Types of Abuse and Harm

Safeguarding involves being alert to various forms of abuse. Staff must be able to recognise these, know the signs, and act appropriately.

1. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse involves deliberately causing physical harm to a child or adult at risk. This includes hitting, kicking, shaking, burning, poisoning, or fabricating illness.

Signs may include:

- Unexplained injuries (bruises, cuts, burns)
- Fearfulness or flinching around adults
- Aggressive or withdrawn behaviour
- Wearing clothes that cover injuries, even in hot weather

2. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse involves persistent emotional maltreatment, which can severely and adversely affect a person's emotional development or well-being.

Signs may include:

- Low self-esteem or lack of confidence
- Withdrawn or anxious behaviour
- Overly eager to please adults
- Delays in development (social, emotional or physical)

3. Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or vulnerable adult's basic physical and emotional needs. It is the most common form of abuse and can have long-lasting developmental impacts.

Signs may include:

- Poor hygiene or appearance
- Constant hunger or hoarding food
- Wearing clothes that are unsuitable or inadequate
- Lack of medical or dental care
- Persistent tiredness or lack of supervision
- Missed health appointments or chronic non-attendance

Neglect can also take an emotional form, such as consistent ignoring, emotional unavailability, or lack of affection.

4. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or adult at risk to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the person is aware of what is happening. This includes both physical and non-physical contact.

Signs may include:

- Sexualised behaviour or knowledge beyond age expectations
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Avoidance of specific people or places
- Disturbed sleep or nightmares

5. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is illegal in the UK and considered a form of child abuse.

Signs may include:

- Talking about a 'special ceremony' or trip abroad
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Pain or bleeding
- Absences from school or creative activities

Staff have a legal duty to report FGM to the police if disclosed by a young person under 18.

6. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity, often in exchange for gifts, money, affection, or status.

Signs may include:

- Receiving unexplained gifts or money
- Older "boyfriend/girlfriend" figures
- Repeated absences or late return home
- Sudden changes in appearance or behaviour

Common emojis and slang used in online grooming and CSE contexts include:

- 🍬 (candy): used to suggest a "treat" or reward
- 💰 (money): exchange or promise of payment
- 🐈 / 🍑 / 🍆 / 🍓: sexual connotations
- 🚗 (car): references to pick-ups or being taken places
- 🗝️ (lock): secrecy or "you're mine" dynamics

Staff should be aware that emojis may form part of grooming patterns and must never be dismissed as harmless.

7. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) & County Lines

CCE occurs when children are manipulated or forced into committing crimes for others, often about gangs and drug trafficking (known as "county lines"). Young people may be trafficked outside of their home area and exposed to serious harm.

Signs may include:

- Possession of a new mobile phone or SIM cards
- Carrying large amounts of money
- Being missing or out of area without clear explanation
- Use of gang-related slang or language
- Fearfulness around unfamiliar adults

CCE and County Lines may be communicated via emojis such as:

- 🔫 (gun), 💊 (pill), 🚬 (cigarette): drug/gang references
- 🏠 (house), 🚂 (train), 🧳 (suitcase): travel or dealing references
- 💳 / 💰: cash for criminal activity

8. Radicalisation & Extremism

Radicalisation refers to the process by which someone comes to adopt extremist beliefs that may lead to terrorism or violence. Extremism includes far-right, Islamist, incel ideologies, and other hate-based movements. Islamist extremism may reference martyrdom, jihad (in a violent, non-religious context), or present conspiracy narratives about the West.

Signs may include:

- Expressing strong support for extremist groups or ideologies
- Isolating from friends or usual activities
- Speaking in 'us vs them' language
- Accessing or sharing extremist content online
- Use of extremist codes, symbols, or numbers

Radicalisation online may use emojis such as:

- 🗡️ / 💣 / 🔥: implying violence, conflict, or martyrdom
- 🚬 / 💀: harmful or extremist content
- 🥷 (ninja): often misused to imply "warrior" or secret action

Far-right coded language and number use includes:

- 88 (Heil Hitler – H is the 8th letter of the alphabet)
- 14 (reference to a white supremacist slogan)
- NPC (Non-Player Character): a term used to dehumanise those with opposing views, implying they lack independent thought

9. Peer-on-Peer Abuse and Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)

Abuse can be perpetrated by another child or young person can perpetrate abuse. This may include bullying, physical violence, inappropriate sexual behaviour, coercion, or digital abuse.

Signs may include:

- Reports of inappropriate sexual comments or touching
- Power imbalances in peer relationships
- Use of degrading or humiliating language
- Sharing of sexual images without consent (“sexting”)
- Name-calling related to sexuality, gender identity, or appearance
- Sudden reluctance to attend sessions or engage with certain peers

10. Online Harm

Young people may be exposed to harm through online platforms, including social media, games, forums, or chat rooms. This includes grooming, bullying, sexual exploitation, misinformation, and exposure to violent or extremist content.

Signs may include:

- Secretive behaviour around phone or computer use
- Sudden changes in device usage habits (more withdrawn or obsessive)
- Anxiety when unable to access the internet
- Speaking about “new friends” who haven’t been met in person
- Receiving unsolicited messages, images, or videos
- Isolation from family or existing friends

Staff should be aware that many online platforms offer unmoderated private messaging (e.g., Discord, Telegram, Roblox chat) where harm can occur.

11. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Emerging Technologies

Lewisham Youth Theatre recognises that Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies—including AI-generated content, chatbots, and image or voice cloning—present new and evolving safeguarding risks for children, young people, and adults at risk. As these tools become increasingly accessible, staff must remain alert to how AI may be used to harm, deceive, or exploit.

Potential Risks Associated with AI

Staff must be aware of the following AI-related risks:

- **AI Chatbots and Grooming:** Young people may be approached by individuals using anonymous or AI-generated identities in chat environments (e.g., character-based bots or platforms like Character.AI, Replika).
- **Deepfakes and Synthetic Media:** The creation of fake videos, audio, or images using AI to impersonate others or spread false information (e.g., fake nudes, hoax messages, voice mimicry).
- **AI-Generated Abuse or Hate Content:** Exposure to discriminatory or violent content created by AI tools, including fake messages designed to radicalise, intimidate, or manipulate.
- **Data Privacy and Profiling:** AI systems may be used to collect personal data from young people via online quizzes, filters, or “fun” personality tests, leading to profiling, targeting, or data breaches.
- **Mental Health Impact:** Repeated interactions with emotionally manipulative AI (e.g., bots simulating romantic attention or reinforcement) may affect young people's emotional well-being or understanding of boundaries.