

Code of Conduct for Derbyshire County Council Licenced Chaperones



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Overview

The chaperone's first duty is to the children in their care. They must ensure their safety and welfare at all times. Chaperones are the key person who the children look to for guidance, protection, clarification, and support.

While they are engaged as the chaperone on a production, they may not undertake any other activity that would interfere with their duties.

The chaperone is 'in loco parentis' except when the child is being taught by an approved teacher, and should exercise the care, which a good parent might reasonably be expected to give.

In order to carry out their role effectively a Chaperone must:

- be aware of and understand the conditions of the performance licence of the child who is in their care
- make themselves aware of any medical needs or disabilities of the child in their care and be clear about any arrangements relating to medicines e.g. inhalers, care of child with an allergy or diabetes or any assistance the child may need
- supervise the children in their care at all times while at a licenced venue
- Be fit and well to be able to perform their duties
- Inform the local authority of any significant changes to their personal circumstances
- not permit children under statutory school age (last Friday in June in the school year in which they are 16) to leave the performance/rehearsal venue at the end of the day unescorted, unless in the company of their parents/carers or other authorised person
- always be aware of and follow the first aid/fire/safety/major incident procedures
- ensure that all accidents/incidents are reported and recorded
- ensure that the children have sufficient access to food and drink, be aware of any allergies they have, and that they have the appropriate mealtimes and rest/comfort breaks
- ensure all the children have adequate and appropriate supervision during changing and toilet arrangements (where possible children should be allocated separate toilets from the adults. Children must always have separate changing rooms/times to be separated from adults changing)
- Keep a register and daily record sheets for all children in their care
- Maintain confidentiality and share information only on a need-to-know basis

A Chaperone may supervise up to 12 children at any one time. However, this may be less dependent upon the ages and the needs of the children. If the Chaperone considers they cannot look after the number of children in their care safely, they must advise the person in charge of the production to change the arrangement (and performance licences if required).

If a chaperone breaches this code of conduct then Derbyshire County Council reserves the right to revoke their chaperone licence with no refund of any fees paid.

Behaviour of Chaperones

A Chaperone must:

- be the child's champion and act in the child's best interests at all times
- always pay attention to the welfare of the children and not be distracted in any way such as by being 'star struck', reading, or using social media
- report any safeguarding concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- report any potential hazards to production if any problems occur
- conduct themselves in an appropriate manner on set. They should be visible to the children, but not get in the way of the crew or set
- be aware that some children may be in the care of their parent whilst on set. Chaperones should intervene if a parent agrees to something that may contravene child performance regulations or may endanger a child
- wear identification (valid Chaperone ID Badge) and/or carry a copy of their Chaperone Approval Form when they are on a production, so this can be shown to any inspecting officer from a local authority
- Be fit and well to be able to perform their duties
- Inform the local authority of any significant changes to their personal circumstances

A Chaperone must not:

- let children perform if they are unwell
- leave the children alone with another adult (unless it is another licenced Chaperone named on the child's licence, the child's parent or teacher)
- release children to an adult they are not expecting at the end of the production unless this has been confirmed by the parent/production
- befriend or engage in an inappropriate relationship with a child. This includes communication via social media, text messaging (unless agreed in advance with parents), websites and social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. This means that Chaperones should ensure that their personal social networking sites are set to private and children are not listed as approved contacts. Equally, chaperones should not accept 'friend requests' from children they are looking after.
- Invite any child to their personal home
- take photos of the children
- use personal mobile phones whilst looking after the children
- give gifts or show favouritism to the children
- drink alcohol, use drugs or smoke whilst working. Chaperone's capacity to perform their duties as a Chaperone must not be impaired by alcohol or drugs
- use inappropriate language
- provide your personal contact details to children
- discipline the children. It is not the role of the chaperone to discipline a child and they must never hit, shout, or otherwise punish a child.

Power and positions of trust

All adults working with children are in positions of trust in relation to the children in their care. There is potential for exploitation of and harm to vulnerable children. Adults have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification. Adults should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident with this potential.

Misuse of power will result in suspension and a referral made to safeguarding authorities.

Professional judgement

This code of conduct does not provide a complete checklist of what is appropriate behaviour for chaperones in all circumstances. There may be occasions and circumstances in which adults have to make decisions or take action in the best interest of the child where no advice/guidance exists. Chaperones should always consider whether their actions are safe, warranted, proportionate and applied equitably.

This means that where no specific guidance exists, chaperones should:

- record what action/decision was taken
- report this to the production company and the child's parent
- discuss the circumstances that informed their action/decision and the reasoning why this was appropriate to take with their organisation and/or with the parent/carer (but not in specific safeguarding circumstances)

Photographs/videos

Working with children may involve the taking or recording of images. Any such work should take place with due regard to the law and the need to safeguard the privacy, dignity, safety and wellbeing of children.

Informed written consent from parents or carers and agreements and where possible, from the child, should always be sought before an image is taken for any purpose. There also needs to be an agreement as to whether the images will be destroyed or retained for further use, where these will be securely stored and who will have access to them.

Adults need to remain sensitive to any children who appear uncomfortable, for whatever reason, and should recognise the potential for such activities to raise concerns or lead to misunderstandings.

It is not appropriate for adults to take photographs of children using their own personal devices.

No photographs or videos should be taken in a changing room (even if all the children have finished changing).

Internet Safety

Chaperones should ensure that children are not exposed to any inappropriate images.

There are no circumstances that will justify anyone possessing indecent images of children. Accessing, making and storing indecent images of children is illegal. You should not investigate the matter or evaluate the material yourself, as this may lead to evidence being contaminated which can lead to criminal prosecution.

The chaperone must:

- Inform your organisation's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) of the incident
- Create an incident report
- Inform the police
- Inform social care (where the child lives)
- Inform Derbyshire County Council's Child Employment & Entertainment team of the incident

Dress and appearance

Chaperones who work with children should ensure they take care to dress professionally and appropriately for the tasks and work they undertake.

This means that chaperones should wear clothing which:

- is suitable to their role
- does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding
- is not likely to be viewed as offensive and absent of any political or contentious slogans

Personal living space

Children must never be invited to a chaperone's home.

Under no circumstances should children assist with chores or tasks in the home of a chaperone. Neither should they be asked to do so by friends or family of the chaperone.

This means that adults should:

- be vigilant in maintaining their privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations
- challenge any request for their accommodation to be used as an additional resource for the organisation
- be mindful of the need to maintain professional boundaries

Overnight stays/trips and outings

Adults should take particular care when supervising children on trips and outings, where the setting is less formal than the usual place of work. Chaperones remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays within clearly defined professional boundaries.

Where activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements. Children, adults and parents should be informed of these prior to the start of any overnight stay. In all circumstances, those organising the overnight stay must pay careful attention to ensuring safe staff/child ratios and the gender mix of staff especially on overnight stays.

This means that Chaperones should:

- undertake risk assessments in line with the organisation's policy where applicable
- have parental consent for any activities the children are taking part in
- never share beds with a child
- not share bedrooms unless it involves a dormitory situation and the arrangements have been previously discussed with the person responsible for the production and with parents and the children themselves

Infatuations

Occasionally a child may develop an infatuation with an adult who works with them. These adults should deal with these situations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned. They should remain aware, however, that such infatuations carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and they should therefore make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour is above reproach.

This means that chaperones should:

- report and record any incidents or indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a child may have developed an infatuation with an adult in the workplace
- always acknowledge and maintain professional boundaries when working with children

Transporting children

There will be occasions when chaperones are expected or asked to transport children as part of their chaperone role. Chaperones who are expected to use their own vehicles for transporting children should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

We recommend that there be a driver and a chaperone in a vehicle that is transporting children, unless necessary for an emergent safety issue.

It is a legal requirement that all passengers should wear seat belts and it is the responsibility of the chaperone to ensure that this requirement is met. Chaperones should also be aware of the current legislation and adhere to the use of car seats for younger children.

There may be occasions where the child needs transport in an emergency situation or where not to give a lift may place a child at risk. Such circumstances must always be recorded and reported to the parent/carers and the organisation.

It is inappropriate for chaperones to offer lifts to a child outside their normal working duties, unless this has been brought to the attention of the production manager and agreed with the parent/carers in exceptional circumstances.

This means that chaperones should:

- have permission from the child's parent/guardian to transport their child
- ensure they are fit to drive and free from any drugs, alcohol or medicine which is likely to impair judgement and/or ability to drive
- be aware that the safety and welfare of the child is the chaperone's responsibility until they are safely passed over to a parent/carer
- record details of the journey in accordance with agreed procedures
- ensure that their behaviour is appropriate at all times
- ensure that there are proper arrangements in place to ensure vehicle passenger and driver safety.
- ensure the driver has the correct type of licence and insurance to transport the child in the vehicle.
- ensure that any impromptu or emergency arrangements or lifts are recorded and can be justified if questioned

Physical Touch

You should keep any physical contact with children to a minimum.

Touch should always be conducted in an open manner. It should never be 'secret' or in a surreptitious manner.

This means the chaperone should always:

- check that it is ok with the child before offering to help them with something that involves you being in their personal space
- have line of sight with other chaperones/adults
- narrate aloud exactly what you are doing so that both the child and others in the vicinity know what is happening

Gifts, rewards and favouritism

Any gifts should be given openly and not be based on favouritism. Chaperones need to be aware however, that the giving of gifts can, in certain circumstances, be misinterpreted by others as a gesture either to bribe or groom a child. Methods and criteria for selection should always be transparent and subject to scrutiny.

There are occasions when children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to adults e.g. on special occasions or as a thank you and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value as this might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

This means chaperones should:

- be aware of their organisation's policy on the giving and receiving of gifts
- ensure that gifts received or given are declared
- gifts are not of significant value
- ensure that all selection processes which concern children are fair and that wherever practicable these are undertaken and agreed by more than one member of staff

Response to Disclosures

All allegations must be taken seriously and investigated in accordance with the local procedures and statutory guidance.

If a young person confides in their Chaperone, that abuse/neglect/exploitation has taken place:

- remain calm and in control, but do not delay in taking action
- listen carefully to what is being said. Allow the child to tell at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification
- do not promise to keep it a secret or confidential, reassure the child that they did the right thing telling someone and explain what will happen next

Advice can also be sought from the Child Employment Officer in the home local authority of the chaperone, during working hours or from the Emergency Out of Hours Safeguarding Duty Team.

Parents should not routinely be informed at this point if they are the subject of the disclosure as this may compromise the safety of the child.

The chaperone must:

- Inform your organisation's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) of the incident
- Create an incident report
- Inform social care (where the child lives)
- Inform the police (if there's an immediate threat to life and/or something illegal has occurred)
- Inform Derbyshire County Council's Child Employment & Entertainment team of the incident
- Where the abuser is a licenced chaperone – inform the local authority that issued their chaperone licence

Recording Incidents

It is essential that accurate and comprehensive records are kept wherever an incident such as:

- A safeguarding disclosure is made
- A child is injured
- Concerns are raised about the conduct or actions of adults working in your production company

In the event of an incident, information should be promptly recorded and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the organisation as soon as possible and without delay

This means that chaperones should:

- be familiar with the organisation's recording system for recording concerns
- should take responsibility for recording any incident and passing on that information where they have concerns about any matter pertaining to any adult in the workplace
- record and report any concerns or allegations about another adult to the Local Authority in which the incident occurred
- Inform Derbyshire County Council's Child Employment & Entertainment team that an incident/disclosure has occurred whilst you are chaperoning

Organisations should have an effective, transparent and accessible system for recording and managing concerns raised by any individual in the organisation.

This means that organisations should keep a secure record of:

- When - Date & Time
- Where - Location
- What happened – Full details of incident (If it includes what a child said then you must record the child's own words)
- Who - Names of people that were involved, witnesses or were mentioned

Worried about a child who lives in Derbyshire?

Every child has the right to be safe. Safeguarding children is everyone's business.

All reports or enquiries concerning the welfare or safety of a child must go straight to Call Derbyshire:

Telephone: 01629 533190

Emergencies: If a child is at immediate risk, contact the Police on 999.

Reporting concerns about a Derbyshire County Council chaperone licence holder

Please provide us with as much information as possible, such as:

- What happened – full details of incident (If it includes what a child said then please use the child's own words)
- When - Date & Time
- Where – Location
- Who - Names of people that were involved, witnessed or were mentioned

Email: CS.EWSCEE@derbyshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 01629 537859

Postal address: Child Employment & Entertainment, County Hall, Matlock, DE4 3AG

How we deal with allegations about a Derbyshire County Council licenced chaperone

An allegation could be from either a member of the public, agency, police, social care, parent, child, production, another Local Authority, etc.

We take all allegations against a Derbyshire licenced chaperone seriously. The matter will be investigated in accordance with the local procedures and statutory guidance. Any interviews may be held either in person or online (at our discretion).

Our general process is as follows:

- The chaperone's licence is automatically suspended whilst we complete investigations
- The chaperone must immediately return their ID badge to the Child Employment & Entertainment (CEE) team – we will discuss what arrangements can be made for this
- If somebody asks us to verify their licence during the investigation then we will advise them that the licence in question is suspended pending further investigation
- We will hold a formal interview with the chaperone to discuss the allegations
- we may invite any witnesses of the incident to an interview
- we may speak with members of production companies the chaperone is involved with
- make a referral to our Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- make a referral to social care (if necessary)
- make a referral to the police (if necessary)
- notify Derbyshire County Council's Human Resources (HR) team
- we may speak with senior leadership at Derbyshire County Council for input into the decision making process
- A decision will be made by the Child Employment & Entertainment (CEE) team whether the chaperone licence should be reinstated or revoked.

If the chaperone licence is reinstated:

- the Chaperone will be informed and they will be issued with a new ID badge
- we will inform anybody who asked us to verify the chaperone's licence during the investigation that the chaperone holds a valid chaperone licence again

If the chaperone licence is revoked:

- The Chaperone will be informed that we can no longer have them as a chaperone licence holder for Derbyshire County Council
- Any fees paid will not be reimbursed