

The Little Lantern Theatre: Child Safety Policies and Procedures

Effective October 2025

Purpose

The safety and well-being of every child participating in our theatre program is our highest priority. These procedures ensure a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment where children can explore and enjoy the performing arts.

1. Adult Supervision & Interaction Policy

- **Two-Adult Rule:**

No adult (staff member, volunteer, or contractor) shall be alone with a child at any time. All interactions must occur in the presence of at least one other adult or within clear view of others (e.g., open door, windows).

- **Appropriate Behavior:**

All adults are expected to maintain professional boundaries at all times. Physical contact must be limited to what is appropriate and necessary (e.g., for costuming assistance or emergency care), and never without the child's consent.

- **Private Conversations:**

Any sensitive discussions with a child (e.g., behavioral concerns) must occur in a semi-private, observable space and in the presence or near presence of another adult.

- **Digital and Online Communication:**

Adults may not communicate privately with minors via personal phone, text, email, or social media. All digital communication must occur through official theatre channels or parent/guardian-inclusive group messages.

2. Background Checks and Training

- **Mandatory Background Checks:**

All adults (staff, volunteers, teaching artists, contractors) who work directly with children must undergo a national criminal background check and sex offender registry check before beginning work.

- **Annual Renewal:**

Background checks will be renewed every 12 months for continued involvement.

- **Child Safety Training:**

All adults will complete annual training on child protection, mandatory reporting, appropriate conduct, and emergency procedures.

3. Check-In/Check-Out Procedures

- **Children Ages 12 and Under:**

Must be signed in and out by a parent, legal guardian, or authorized adult listed on their registration form.

- Photo ID may be requested at any time to verify authorized pickup.
- Children will not be released to anyone not on the approved pickup list.

- **Children Ages 13–18:**

May sign themselves in but must remain on premises until a parent or authorized adult picks them up unless parental permission is given in writing for the child to leave alone.

- Program staff will monitor the pickup area to ensure children leave safely.
- Loitering is not permitted after program hours.

- **Late Pickups:**

Late pickups will be documented, and after the third occurrence, parents/guardians will not be able to drop off and will have to remain on site for the entire rehearsal.

4. Emergency Contact and Health Procedures

- **Emergency Contact Information:**

Parents/guardians must provide updated emergency contact details. These will be accessible to staff during all program hours.

- **Medical Conditions & Medications:**

Any medical conditions, allergies, or medications must be disclosed in the registration form. Staff are not authorized to administer medication except in emergencies, with prior written consent.

- **First Aid:**

A first aid kit will be on-site at all times. At least one adult with current First Aid/CPR certification will be present during programming.

5. Incident Reporting

- **Accidents and Injuries:**

All incidents will be documented on an Incident Report Form and communicated to parents as soon as possible.

- **Suspected Abuse or Neglect:**

All staff are mandated reporters and are required by law to report any suspicions of abuse, neglect, or endangerment to the proper authorities immediately.

- **Whistleblower Protection:**

Anyone who reports a concern in good faith regarding child safety will be protected from retaliation.

6. Photography and Media Use

- **Consent Required:**

Parents/guardians must provide written consent for their child to be photographed or recorded.

- Photos and media may only be used for promotional purposes with consent.
 - No unauthorized photography of children is permitted by staff, volunteers, or other parents.
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7. Behavioral Expectations and Discipline

- **Respectful Environment:**

Children are expected to treat peers, adults, and property with respect. Bullying, harassment, or aggressive behavior is not tolerated.

- **Discipline Policy:**
Positive reinforcement and redirection will be used. Repeated or severe issues will result in parental contact and potential removal from the program.
 - **Inclusion & Accessibility:**
All children will be treated equitably regardless of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, or background. Reasonable accommodations will be provided to support inclusion.
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8. Facilities and Safety Measures

- **Open Access Spaces:**
All rehearsal, classroom, and backstage spaces will remain open or have visibility at all times.
 - **Restroom Policy:**
Children should use the buddy system for restroom breaks. Adults will not enter restrooms with children unless it's an emergency, and even then, only with another adult present.
 - **Emergency Preparedness:**
Evacuation routes, fire safety, and severe weather procedures will be reviewed with all participants and staff at the start of each session. Emergency drills will be conducted at least twice per year.
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9. Transportation Policy

- **No Transportation by Staff Without Prior Written Consent:**
Staff and volunteers are not permitted to transport children in personal vehicles unless approved by the organization and with written parental consent.
 - **Off-Site Trips:**
For field trips or off-site performances, parents/guardians must sign a separate permission slip. Approved chaperones must follow all supervision and conduct policies.
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10. Policy Enforcement and Review

- **Violations:**

Any violation of these procedures may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal or legal reporting, depending on the nature of the violation.

- **Annual Review:**

These procedures will be reviewed annually and updated as needed to reflect best practices and legal requirements.

Acknowledgment: All staff, volunteers, and parents/guardians must sign an acknowledgment of understanding and agreement to these child safety procedures at the beginning of each program year.