



ROTORUA MUSICAL THEATRE

Child Protection Policy



Guidelines for Rotorua Musical Theatre (RMT) working with children and young people

Rotorua Musical Theatre's core activity is staging musical theatre productions, which utilises volunteers to bring these productions to the stage. Most shows have volunteers under the age of 18 involved either on or off stage.

These guidelines set out the requirements for children and young people involved in a production and how they should be managed accordingly, with the goal of protecting all who work in our theatre. They should be used in conjunction with the child protection policy.

All personnel working in the theatre in both paid and volunteer roles must have access to these documents.

A child is defined as individuals aged 0 to 15 years. A young person is defined as those aged 16 and 17 years of age.

A designated support person will be put in place for young people.

Age limits

1. To be cast as a part of the adult ensemble of an RMT show, an individual must be 16 years of age by/on the date of the opening night of the season.
2. To be part of the backstage team of an RMT show, an individual must be 16 years of age by/on the date of the opening night of the season

At the outset of any production involving children or young people, the society will appoint a person with designated responsibility for child protection

Chaperones

1. The society will recruit and effectively vet chaperones, who will be responsible for children involved in the production
2. Chaperones will be required to supply photographic proof of identity and two references from individuals with knowledge of their previous work with children, unless already well known to the society.
3. They will be asked to sign a declaration stating, there is no reason they would be considered unsuitable to work with children.

The society will provide the child chaperone(s) with a suitable job description including:

1. The maximum number of children in the chaperones care shall not exceed 10
2. The chaperone(s) will supervise children from when they're dropped off at the theatre/rehearsal by their parent/guardian to when they're collected from the theatre/rehearsal by their parent/guardian
3. Children are not to leave the theatre unsupervised unless in the company of the parent or a designated caregiver
4. Chaperones will have written arrangements for children. If someone different is to collect the child, a telephone call should be made to the parent to confirm the arrangements
5. Children should be signed out when leaving and a record made of the person collecting
6. If a parent has not collected the child, the chaperone must stay with the child until arrangements are made by the Production Manager or designated person to get them safely home. It is not the responsibility of RMT to take children home.
7. Children will be allocated a dressing room and will not share dressing rooms with adults
8. Male and female children will not share dressing rooms
9. If a child or young person identifies as non-binary, they will give the individual a choice of which dressing room they wish to utilise
10. Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms unless it is under circumstances understood and approved by the chaperone

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11. The chaperone should attend the Health and Safety briefing to ensure children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger
12. Any accidents are to be reported to, and recorded by the Production Manager or designated person

Unsupervised contact

1. The society will attempt to ensure no adult has unsupervised contact with children
2. If possible, there will always be two adults in the room when working with children
3. If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimise risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area or a designated room with the door open
4. If it is predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, they may be required to obtain a criminal record disclosure.
5. At no time is any adult allowed to be alone in a dressing room with a child with the door closed
6. Adults will only touch children when necessary, and only in the capacity of a particular stage or rehearsal activity, or when providing first aid
7. Adults will seek the child's consent before any physical contact, and the purpose of that contact should be made clear

Managing sensitive information

1. Permission will be sought from the parents to use photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes (as part of the audition form)

Suspicion of abuse

1. All individuals involved in the production are responsible for reporting disclosures as per the Child Protection Policy
2. If you see, hear or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of the society, please make this known to the Production Manager or designated person. If you suspect that the person responsible for child protection is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the RMT president.
3. As soon as possible after the incident, please make a note for your own records of what you saw or heard, using the actual words spoken as much as possible. Also record your response. Note the date, time, names involved or mentioned, and who you gave the information to. Make sure you sign and date your record as this could be used for follow-up in which you may be involved.
4. If a serious allegation is made against any RMT personnel or venue staff, that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production.
5. If you see or hear an incident involving abuse of a young person, please discuss with the Production Manager or designated person.

Hours of work

Age Of Child	Maximum Hours per Day
Up to and including eight-year-olds	6 hours door to door (includes travel time)
9 to 11-year-olds	8 hours door to door [includes travel time]
12 to 16-year-olds	10 hours working time plus travel time

When scheduling a production, RMT will take practical steps to reduce call times and travel times for the child e.g. RMT may double cast each child part.

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Children are not to work more than 5 consecutive days, and no more than five days in a calendar week. A 12-hour overnight break (i.e. turn around), exclusive of travel time is required

Age-appropriate rest and meal breaks must be provided by RMT

Welfare

At no time should RMT expose a child under the age of 16 years to any situation that could be deemed detrimental to a child's mental, physical, or moral well-being. This includes performances with stronger inappropriate language, encouraging the use of tobacco or drugs, criminal activities, violence, and sexual content.

Accidents

1. Chaperones and children will be advised of house rules regarding their health and safety and will be notified of areas outside of bounds.
2. Children must not be present in any area where construction work is being carried out, or in any area that is likely to cause harm to the child.
3. Children will be informed of appropriate clothing and footwear.
4. Children must not lift weights or perform any task that is likely to be injurious to their health
5. Children must not operate machinery, or power tools
6. Costumes should be designed to adequately fit and avoid being a tripping hazard.
7. Information on a child's skin sensitivity should be collected before the child is provided with or exposed to costumes, make-up, wigs, or hair products
8. Exposing children to special atmospheric effects should be avoided. If chemicals are used to produce smoke or fog, water-based solutions should be used instead. Exposure should be minimised by limiting the amount of time present.
9. Special consideration must be given to the safety of children when set is being moved on stage or in the wings.
10. If a child is injured while in the care of the society, a designated first aider will administer first aid, and the injury will be recorded in the society's accident register. The chaperone will counter sign this record.
11. If a child joins the production with an apparent physical injury, this will be recorded in the accident register. The Production Manager or designated person will counter sign this record

(This record can be helpful if a formal allegation is made later and will also be a record that the child did not sustain the injury while participating in the production.)

Social events

1. Children are permitted to attend show related social events
2. The supervision of a child at social events, and transportation home is the parent/guardian's responsibility, not RMT personnel, including the chaperone.
3. Children and their parents/guardians must comply with the Terms of the Sale of Liquor Licence while on licensed premises
4. No child shall be permitted to purchase, consume or be provided alcohol at any time while involved in an RMT production, including but not limited to social events.

All adults involved in a production are responsible for looking out for and protecting the wellbeing and health and safety of children in a production.

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