

Purpose of Role and Description Chaperones for Children in Entertainment

Purpose of the Role

- It is a legal requirement that children engaged in public performances or entertainment under a licence issued by the local authority must be supervised by a chaperone approved by a Local Authority, unless they are in the care of either their parent or agreed tutor.
- The regulations are designed wholly to protect the child's welfare and to prevent any child being exploited.
- Chaperones are required to undergo an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check (previously Criminal Records Bureau) as part of the approval process. Other checks within the Council may also be carried out.

Description

- A chaperone's first duty is to look after the children in their care. They are in *loco parentis* and are required to exercise the care that a good parent might reasonably be expected to give a child.
- The nature of a chaperone's role is that s/he is in a position of trust regarding those children. Abuse of a position of trust in respect of young persons under the age of 18 is considered an offence.
- The law says that the maximum number of children an individual chaperone may supervise is twelve. However, the local authority may consider that due to the demands of the performance, the ages, gender of the children, or a combination of both, that the chaperone would only be able to effectively supervise a smaller number.
- Chaperones **must** remain with the children **all** of the time. It is only when they are on stage or performing that chaperones are not required to be by their side.
- Chaperones should possess firm negotiating skills. Occasionally production companies may try to exploit a child in order to facilitate their schedule. Chaperones have the power to withdraw a child from a performance if they have good reason and should have the confidence to do so when it is in the interest of the child.
- The chaperone must keep daily records of the children at the place of performance. They should have emergency contact numbers available.
- Chaperones must record any significant incident or accident. The parent and the local authority must be informed at the earliest opportunity. The records must be available for examination on request.

- A child should not be allowed to perform when unwell. The chaperone must put the needs of the child first. They have the responsibility to refuse to accept a sick child who arrives for a performance.
- Qualified first-aiders should be on hand in all entertainment establishments. Chaperones should establish where the first-aid kit and accident book are located.
- The chaperone should make themselves familiar with the procedures for evacuating the building in case of fire and the escape routes from whatever rooms the children are using.
- A chaperone is required to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are in place for each child under their control. They are also required to ensure that the person previously agreed collects the child.
- Chaperones and producers must ensure that suitable changing facilities are available. Boys and girls from the age of 5 must have separate changing rooms.
- Chaperones are required to undergo an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check (previously Criminal Records Bureau) as part of the approval process.
- Chaperones will be required to partake in a telephone training call after they have received their DBS clearance.

Local Authority Education Attendance Officers are empowered to enter any premises where a performance or entertainment is being performed by children, without prior notice, to establish that the children are being properly supervised and cared for. They have the authority to withdraw the children from the performance, to rescind the chaperone's approval, or both.

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