



## Child Safeguarding Policy

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## 1. Introduction

Alpha and Omega believes that all children have the right to be safe and enjoy their involvement in the entertainment industry. Alpha and Omega is committed to helping and supporting everyone involved to accept their responsibility to safeguard children from harm or abuse. Alpha and Omega is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment for all children to participate.

Alpha and Omega Policy Statement:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children regardless of age, gender, ability or disability, faith, size, language or sexual identity, have the right to protection from harm
- All allegations, suspicions of harm and concerns will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately
- Everyone will work in partnership to promote the welfare, health and development of children
- As defined in the Children's Act 1989 anyone under the age of 18 years should be considered as a child for the purposes of this document.

## 2. Scope

This policy is applicable to all and applies to the management of any child safeguarding concern, at any production with Alpha and Omega activity or any event, whether arising from that event or not.

### 3. Geographical variation

The Alpha and Omega Safeguarding Policy is written as an umbrella policy. As a minimum all are required to adhere to the Safeguarding Policy and the practices, procedures and guidelines and adopt the Policy Statement, implementing them alongside regional variations.

### 4. Definitions

Safeguarding Children is a broader term than “Child Protection” which includes prevention activities. Children are defined in the Children Act 1989 as people under the age of 18 years. For the purposes of this Policy the legal definition applies. Child Protection is the specific aspect of safeguarding that protects children from harm, or abuse or risk of harm or abuse.

### 5. Roles and responsibilities

Alpha and Omega will cooperate with all requests from Local Authorities, Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) or their equivalent, Local Area Designated Officers (LADO) and the Police in relation to all child safeguarding issues including serious case reviews and child death reviews and notifiable incidents (HM Government 2015).

Alpha and Omega is committed to providing access to appropriate advice, support and ensuring that concerns relating to the safety and welfare of children are taken seriously and acted upon swiftly and appropriately.

Alpha and Omega will ensure there is a clear commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children’s welfare within the entertainment industry.

## 6. How to react to concerns about the welfare and safety of children

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. This means that everyone has a responsibility to respond to any concerns that they or others, may have about a child, or the behaviour of an adult.

There are four categories of child abuse: neglect; physical abuse; sexual abuse and emotional abuse. Bullying is not always easy to define and will not always be an adult abusing a child. Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. It results in pain and distress for the victim. Bullying can be verbal, physical or emotional

It is not always situations of poor practice, which give cause for concern. Abuse and bullying can and does occur in a wide range of settings. It is important that all those are aware of the signs, indicators and types of abuse that may occur. Indicators of abuse should always be taken seriously and any concerns should be reported.

All child-safeguarding concerns must be recorded at the time of the event and managed as efficiently as possible.

If a child discloses information to you, you should:

- Stay calm
- Reassure them that they are not to blame
- Avoid making promises of confidentiality or outcome
- Keep questions to a minimum
- Make brief, accurate notes at the earliest opportunity
- Report all findings immediately

Where there are concerns that a child is in immediate risk of abuse then a statutory agency (local children's services or the police) should be contacted immediately. Concerns relating to adults at events must have factual evidence to support action and they must be reported

## 7. Photography

No one working with or on behalf of Alpha and Omega should take any form of image, still/video/ - film or digital - for promotional, historical or private reference nor take any photos or film for third parties of any part of a production where any part of the captured image or film could contain images, still or film of children without consent, either given by parent/guardian in writing (consent form) or in person. In the case of a chaperone asking for photography clarification from the event management may be required.

This includes photography on mobile devices as well as professional cameras.

In all cases, all photographs and film must be checked for accidental back of shot capture of activities such as quick change etc. In no situation will any Alpha and Omega staff take pictures of any child wearing anything less than 50% body clothing covering Torso including but not limited to Chest, Back, Abdomen, Pubic, Inguinal and Perineum areas – even if express permission has been granted. This is not to be awkward but to safeguard both the child and the adult.

The minimum acceptable, for any film or photograph, being a full leotard (under age of 16) and a minimum of leotard, or dependant on circumstances; dancers shorts and crop tops that may show abdomen (for 16+). Although where modifications to shorts to show more gluteal or inguinal areas (just above pubic inline with and below of hips) then careful consideration should be made as to whether the appropriateness of capturing such images are indeed necessary.

In productions where there are costumes not meeting the minima above (I.e. Chicago) then no photos are to be taken of any cast.

In all circumstance all children being photographed shall be made aware.

## 8. Responding to suspicions or concerns

Alpha and Omega encourages and supports “whistle-blowing” and will, where appropriate, notify the statutory agencies of any allegation and work in partnership with them. The wellbeing of the child must be central to any procedures involving them.