



South London Theatre Chaperone policy **March 2025**

Introduction

In addition to the Youth Theatre annual production, children and young people are also cast in a number of shows within the South London Theatre main season.

If someone under legal school leaving age is cast in a show, the law requires that they are accompanied by their parent, carer or a registered chaperone whilst performing or rehearsing a show.

Safeguarding children and young people is of paramount importance at SLT. As part of our commitment to their safety and wellbeing we will ensure that we are compliant with both the spirit of and the law on chaperoning.

This document explains who can chaperone, the duties of a chaperone and how chaperoning is managed at South London Theatre.

Further information for SLT Show Directors is contained in SLT guidance 'Casting Children and Young People in South London Theatre Shows, Main Season'.

When a chaperone is needed

By law, children and young people performing or rehearsing for a public performance, such as South London Theatre productions must be with their:

- Parent
- Carer or
- a registered chaperone

A family member or friend cannot look after a child who is performing instead of their parent, unless they are a registered chaperone.

A child legally needs to have a chaperone until they have completed their compulsory education.

Registered Chaperone - definition

A registered chaperone is someone who has successfully completed approved chaperone training and has an enhanced DBS Certificate. Their role is to safeguard, support and promote the wellbeing of children and young people whilst they are taking part in a performance, rehearsal or other activity carried out by the theatre.

Anyone over 18 years of age can apply to the Local Authority in which they live to train as a chaperone and hold a chaperone licence which is transferable amongst venues.

Alternatively, for SLT members wishing to chaperone for SLT shows, our Youth Theatre manager can arrange for chaperone training (via the NSPCC)" and an enhanced DBS certificate for a limited number of people each year. For more information about NSPCC chaperone training please see here: [NSPCC: chaperone training](#)

The South London Youth Theatre Manager keeps a record of qualified chaperones known to SLT and will arrange chaperone cover, subject to adequate notice.

Child performance licence

As well as a chaperone, a [child performance licence](#) is required if the performance runs longer than three days. To avoid the need for this, South London Theatre recommends casting two children in each role, so they can alternate performances.

Guidance for Chaperones

All chaperones must work within the South London Theatre policy and guidance and be familiar with the SLT Safeguarding Policy. The full chaperone role is vitally important during public performances when there are more people around and most people's attention is focused on the stage.

Every youngster should be assigned a chaperone, whose sole duty is to look after the children and young people in their care.

A chaperone can look after up to 12 children and young people of the same sex at one time. However, the number of children, their ages, genders and their roles in the performance, will all help to determine how many children a chaperone can realistically look after for any particular show. The ratio of chaperone to children must be agreed with the SLT Youth Theatre Manager. Email training@southondontheatre.co.uk.

Arrivals and Departures from the Building

Chaperones must make sure that children and young people are signed in by parents/carers when arriving at the premises and signed out when leaving the premises.

Children and young people must be accompanied by their chaperone from the moment they arrive, whether they are backstage, in the green room or elsewhere in the building. The chaperone must escort them around the premises (toilets, dressing room, etc.)

There must be an agreed procedure when under-18s leave the building. Younger cast members may be picked up by a parent after each performance, while others may have written permission to make their own way home.

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to ensure that children get home safely from theatre activities. The chaperone must be informed by a child's parent/guardian if they will be collected by another adult or are not being collected.

In accordance with the 'Children in Performance Act' any child who is not collected one hour after the designated time and, after all reasonable efforts have been made to contact the child's parent/guardian, Social Services should be called and the child should be declared abandoned. Adults/chaperones must not take it upon themselves to take the child home.

Procedures for costume changing

Chaperones should be present and able to observe the child or young person at all times (except on stage). Where this is not possible (for example to visit the toilet) children should not wander the building alone, but be accompanied by the chaperone or another age-appropriate child. Young people will be provided with a separate changing room from the adult cast. Where possible they will be asked to attend in leggings and t-shirt so changing into costumes is minimal. Chaperones can wait outside the dressing room while youngsters are changing.

First aid/medical treatment

Chaperones will have the emergency contact details of the children (emergency contact details form also holds details of the child's doctor and any medical conditions) and hold any medication e.g. inhalers, etc. for the children in their care. If a child needs hospital treatment, then a chaperone is to take them to the hospital after contacting the parent(s) and arranging to meet them at the hospital. The chaperone should take emergency contact details with them. Chaperones are to make a note of any accidents in the incident/accident book (located in the First Aid box in the Foyer). and inform the parents when they collect the child.

Mobile Phones/Electronic Devices

Mobile phones and electronic devices must not be used for taking photos during rehearsals or in the dressing rooms by either children or adults.