

The Licensing of Children for Public Performances

Back in November 2004 we held a general meeting at which Ildi Arbery of Sutton's Education and Welfare Service spoke on this subject and the December Newsletter included everything covered by her. One or two of our theatre groups were concerned about the subject back in the Autumn of 2009 and since there seemed to be conflicting opinions about exactly what was required (and the regulations also appear to be tightening) your Executive thought it would be wise to reissue the guidelines. Ildi has been replaced by Carol Clarke and the following notes have been vetted by her to ensure their accuracy.

- If you are going to be using any children up to the age of 16 in a production you need to think about licences for them - this includes any child in school year 11 who may reach the age of 16 by the time the 'production' takes place.
- If a child is only doing three performances then a licence will probably not be required. If in doubt ring Carol for advice - 020 8770 6612 (Tuesdays and Wednesdays 9am - 4pm).
- If a child has to take time off school (ie for a matinee performance) then a licence is definitely required and the school will have to provide a letter authorising absence which has to be included with the licence application.
- Licence application forms are available from Carol.
- Licence applications have to be made to the local authority **in which the child lives**. Please note that the authorities have a networking arrangement and Sutton will be made aware of children living outside the Borough who are appearing in productions within Sutton.
- Whether licensed or not children must always be supervised by a licensed chaperone - and this includes AT REHEARSALS. However, if you are only using one or two children then their parents can be chaperones but parents can only chaperone their own children.
- Licensed chaperones will always have an ENHANCED CRB and you should check that these are up-to-date. Carol suggests you keep a note of the certificate number and the date it was issued for your records.
- An enhanced type CRB check is always done when a person is likely to be dealing with children in any capacity - and you may get someone volunteering to help who has this type of CRB. However, unless they have a chaperone's licence they cannot be left **alone** in a dressing room with children.
- Each chaperone can only supervise up to 12 children of one sex, therefore if that 12 includes both boys and girls you will need two chaperones.
- Children cannot be in the same dressing room as adults and obviously boys and girls must be in separate rooms.
- The same rules apply to **Dance School Shows**.
- See below on how to apply to become a chaperone. Please note that you have to apply to the Local Authority **in which you live** and the process may vary slightly from authority to authority. I can put you in touch with the appropriate people for most of the LAs in the area.
- Note that it can take between eight to ten weeks to complete all the necessary checks so you must bear this in mind if members of your group are going to apply for chaperone licences.

APPLYING TO BECOME A CHAPERONE (OR RENEWAL OF EXISTING LICENCE) - SUTTON

1. Apply by telephone (020 8770 6612) or write to the Licensing Officer, The Grove, Carshalton, Surrey, SM5 3AL and request an 'application pack'. The same pack is needed for new applications or renewals.
2. Once you have completed all paperwork, this will need to be taken to the Grove Offices along with the required ID. You will need to telephone the above number to make an appointment. (Nobody will be seen without an appointment).
3. All ID will be photocopied while you wait - and the procedure will take approx 10-15 mins.
4. The complete process will take between 8 - 10 weeks.
5. You will receive your CRB in the post. Once you receive this you should telephone the Grove offices to make an appointment to collect your chaperone licence. You will need to take your CRB form with you so this may be photocopied and put onto your file.
6. Your chaperone licence can then be issued. (This will take approx 10-15 mins). Please note - chaperone licences are only issued to you in person and are not put in the post.
7. Licences are valid for 3 years.

Dawn Lambert
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