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DEFINITIONS

Pastoral Staff refers to those who have the responsibility of looking after Young Company Members at NYMT activities.

Pastoral Lead refers to the staff member designated by the Producer or Head of Pastoral Care as the person responsible for a group of Young Company Members and other pastoral staff, such as in a boarding house or other residency.

DSL is the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Mobile device refers to any device capable of network access and/or the capturing of audio, video or still images, and includes but is not limited to mobile phones, cameras, smart watches, tablets and laptops.

Further definitions can be found in the main NYMT Safeguarding Policy document.

PHILOSOPHY AND AIMS

The safety and security of the children in our care at NYMT is paramount. Use of digital devices and the internet provide enormous opportunities, particularly in respect of communication, teamwork and learning. However, these devices can also be a threat to personal safety and wellbeing when used inappropriately, and have been linked to sleep deprivation, poor mental health, bullying, harassment and the accessing of age-inappropriate content, misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories.

The aim of this policy is to minimise the risks posed by poor digital safety.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy is linked to the NYMT Safeguarding Policy, available on the NYMT website.

This policy has been authorised by the Board of Trustees, is available on request and is published on the NYMT website.

NYMT is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, Trustees and volunteers to share this commitment.

This policy is reviewed and updated at least annually.

DIGITAL ETHOS

Heads up! Don't miss out on opportunities to learn or to make or develop friendships. Value human contact over what is on the screen. Silence your devices in rehearsals and don't let them become a distraction or a nuisance.

When considering content shared with others, we ask four key questions:

1. **Is it mine?** Respect ownership: my account, my device, my property, my work.
2. **Is it decent?** Would you be happy showing it to staff/your family?
3. **Is it fair?** Be thoughtful, balanced, honest, helpful.
4. **Is it kind?**

USE OF MOBILE DEVICES ON RESIDENTIAL COURSES

Young Company Members are permitted to bring mobile devices on residential courses, though expensive devices are discouraged. They are asked not to use these devices in rehearsals as a matter of courtesy, except where permitted by staff.

Young Company Members use their devices at their own risk; NYMT cannot accept any liability for loss or damage.

NYMT reserves the right to remove access to mobile devices temporarily if it is necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of anyone in the NYMT community.

Going Off Site & Travel Safety

Young Company Members going off site unaccompanied in accordance with NYMT policy are required to have at least one working mobile phone in each group. Young Company Members working in London or on production weeks in other cities will be given emergency contact cards containing contact numbers for the Pastoral Staff in their group, to be used solely for this purpose.

Group chats

Young Company Members are cautioned against the creation of group chats, particularly where this crosses large age gaps. Young Company Members are reminded of this at the beginning of each residential course. Young Company Members found to be messaging such groups after the 'lights-out' times of members in such group chats will be dealt with in the same manner had they disturbed those children in the boarding house. Inappropriate content found to be shared in the presence of children will be dealt with in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

Overnight

The Pastoral Lead may decide, at their discretion, to remove overnight access to mobile devices, particularly to some or all children under the age of 16. This may be a proactive step rather than a punishment, and younger Young Company Members are advised to bring an alarm clock to residential courses if they prefer to wake themselves in the morning.

Parents are asked to respect the bedtimes advertised and not to encourage contact when their child is getting ready for bed or supposed to be sleeping. This request is advertised in the Course Information Packs.

Wi-Fi and internet supervision

NYMT does not provide its own Wi-Fi networks. Access to filtered Wi-Fi is provided to Young Company Members where rehearsal venues (schools) make it available. NYMT recognises the challenges resulting from mobile data internet access and care is taken to encourage, as much as possible, access to the internet through filtered and monitored Wi-Fi rather than via unfiltered means.

It is impossible for Staff to monitor fully the use of mobile network internet access or public-use Wi-Fi networks, or the use of devices more generally. All Staff are made aware in their safeguarding training about the risks presented by the ease of access to unfiltered mobile phone networks. All Staff are therefore encouraged to monitor device use where possible while also fostering an atmosphere that enables Young Company Members to feel comfortable and confident in expressing concerns.

SOCIAL MEDIA

NYMT creates closed 'groups' on Facebook for each production which allow Young Company Members and staff to communicate safely and securely.

NYMT Staff are instructed not to accept 'friend' requests or otherwise follow the social media profiles of NYMT Young Company Members under the age of 18 that would allow private contact between the staff member and child, or would give the child access to the personal profile of a member of staff. This rule applies for any member of staff and NYMT Young Company Member, even after the course has ended, and remains in effect until the child is 18 and has left school.

Additionally, NYMT Staff are not permitted to post or publish information, including media, pertaining to Young Company Members except where it has previously been published by NYMT.

REMOTE LEARNING

There are clear parameters and expectations that apply both to Young Company Members and staff when engaging online, just as they do for in-person activities.

Staff should ensure that any profiles used for work are adequately private and appropriate. Staff and Young Company Members should always be appropriately dressed when using video, and staff should be in a non-personal space.

All remote interaction should take place only with written permission from the COO or Artistic Director. Staff are reminded to be mindful of their safeguarding responsibilities: in particular to report any safeguarding concerns directly and immediately to the DSL. Staff should also report any inappropriate behaviour by Young Company Members to the Head of Pastoral Care as they would normally.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO

NYMT predominantly uses photography and video for three purposes: publicity, education (in the course of a learning exercise, for example as a reference for a dance routine) and parental communication.

NYMT sources permission for photography and video of Young Company Members in the Place Acceptance Forms for each course, with provision for parents/Young Company Members to opt out of specific uses or all uses. The law recognises Young Company Members' own rights – from the age of 13 – to decide how their personal information, including images, is used.

Permission should be sought from Young Company Members **and** the Pastoral Lead for any photography or filming (including mobile phones) backstage during productions, in dressing rooms or in any other circumstances in which photography or filming may embarrass or upset Young Company Members.

There are some circumstances when consent from a Young Company Member (or their parent/carer for young people under 18) should be gained for a photograph of the Young Company Member to be used. These include using a full name with the photograph; giving the image for use by a third party; or using the image very prominently on a public document (such as the front cover of a programme).

Young Company Member use of photography and video is monitored by Pastoral Staff and should conform to NYMT's Digital Ethos. Where Pastoral Staff judge photography or video use by Young Company Members to be inappropriate, restrictions of devices or other appropriate measures may be put in place.

SHARING NUDES AND SEMI-NUDES

See the NYMT Safeguarding Policy, available on the NYMT website.

APPENDIX A: POLICY UPDATES & REVIEW

This version dated 1 October 2025

Date of next review: October 2026

The following updates were made since the previous review:

- Minor update adding the risks of misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories in line with updated guidance in KCSIE 2025.