NATIONAL YOUTH MUSIC THEATRE

DIGITAL SAFETY POLICY

P-DS-2611/1

IN TUNE WITH YOU

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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 CEO 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 risks fall into four areas: content (harmful, illegal or misleading material, including misinformation and conspiracy theories); contact (harmful interaction with others, including adults posing as young people and AI tools that simulate relationships); conduct (behaviour that causes harm, such as bullying or making and sharing explicit images, including AI-generated ones); and commerce (scams, gambling, phishing and financial exploitation).

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. Get permission before sharing or altering.
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. NYMT does not permit the use of smart glasses or other wearable devices with recording functionality, without written permission from the DSL.

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 details for the Pastoral Staff in their group, to be used solely for emergencies.

Group chats

Young Company Members are reminded at the beginning of each residential course that NYMT expects the same standard of personal conduct in group chats as it does in person, and how to report content that content that worries them. The Adult Young Company Member safeguarding training includes a section on the risks of group chats involving children and adults. Young Company Members found to be messaging 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. Staff do not join group chats created by Young Company Members.

Overnight

NYMT recognises that for many young people, their residential may be their first time, or one of their first times, away from home, and that a blanket policy of device removal may not be appropriate. 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.

Before each residential, the Pastoral Lead confirms with the venue whether filtered Wi-Fi is available to Young Company Members and how they connect, and records this in the activity risk assessment.

SOCIAL MEDIA

NYMT uses closed, invitation-only groups on BAND for each production, through which Young Company Members and staff communicate. Young Company Members aged 12 and under join through BAND for Kids, by invitation from a parent or carer. Groups are set up and administered by NYMT staff.

NYMT Staff must not follow, 'friend', message or otherwise connect with Young Company Members under 18 on any personal social media, messaging or gaming platform, or allow them access to their personal profiles. This applies during and after NYMT activities, until the Young Company Member 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.

ONLINE SESSIONS

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 CEO 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.

STAFF COMMUNICATION WITH YOUNG COMPANY MEMBERS

Staff communicate with Young Company Members only through NYMT-approved channels (the project BAND group and NYMT email), using NYMT accounts where provided. Communication is for NYMT purposes, transparent and kept to reasonable hours.

Staff do not hold private one-to-one conversations with Young Company Members by message, social media or phone. Where individual contact is necessary – for example, for safety while off site – it is brief and factual, and is copied to or logged with the Pastoral Lead. 1:1 messaging on BAND is disabled except for group administrators.

Where a child has a personal email address registered with NYMT in addition to their parent or carer's, the parent or carer will always be included in email correspondence. Parents of under-18s are invited to join the relevant BAND group.

Any message from a Young Company Member that raises a concern, or is inappropriate, is reported to the DSL.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Young Company Members and staff must not use AI or editing tools to create, alter or share images, video or audio of anyone else without their permission, and never in a sexual, humiliating or harmful way. Creating or sharing sexual images of anyone under 18, including AI-generated or altered images, is a criminal offence and is dealt with under the Safeguarding Policy.

Staff must not enter Young Company Members' personal data, images or safeguarding information into any AI tool unless NYMT has approved that tool for that purpose.

Staff should be aware that AI chatbots and companion apps can expose young people to harmful content or unhealthy relationships, and should report any concerns to the DSL.

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 Acceptance Forms for each project, with provision for parents/Young Company Members to opt out of specific uses or all uses. For Young Company Members under 18, NYMT seeks consent from parents and carers, and also respects the young person's own wishes: if a Young Company

Member objects to an image of them being used, NYMT will not use it. Consent can be withdrawn at any time for future use.

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. No one may take photographs or video in bedrooms, bathrooms or changing areas, or in dressing rooms while anyone is changing.

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).

Staff take photographs or video of Young Company Members only for the purposes above, on NYMT devices where these are provided. Where a personal device is used with the Pastoral Lead's permission, images are uploaded to NYMT's shared storage and deleted from the device by the end of the activity, and are never shared on personal social media or messaging.

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.

MAKING OR SHARING NUDES AND SEMI-NUDES

See the NYMT Safeguarding Policy (Appendix A), available on the NYMT website.

CYBER SECURITY AND PARTICIPANT DATA

Young Company Members' personal data, including images and safeguarding records, is held only on NYMT systems, with access restricted by role and protected by multi-factor authentication. Staff use NYMT accounts for NYMT business, do not keep participant data on personal devices, and report suspected phishing or data breaches to the CEO immediately.

APPENDIX A: POLICY UPDATES & REVIEW

This version dated 1 November 2026

Date of next review: November 2027

The following updates were made since the previous version:

- Updated to reflect KCSIE 2026, including the "4 Cs" of online risk and generative AI
- Added sections on staff communication with Young Company Members, artificial intelligence and cyber security and participant data
- Updated Social Media: production groups now on BAND, and staff rules extended to all personal platforms
- Added venue Wi-Fi checks to residential planning
- Revised photography and video: consent wording, staff devices and private areas
- Retitled Remote Learning as Online Sessions
- Retitled and updated the reference to making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes
- Minor corrections to terminology and role titles