



DIGITAL SAFETY POLICY

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DEFINITIONS

Pastoral Staff refers to those who have the responsibility of looking after participants 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 participants 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.

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

NYMT promotes Three Golden Rules for the use of mobile devices:

1. **Switch off** – don't miss out on opportunities to learn or to make or build friendships. Don't self-isolate. Put down your device at least half an hour before bed.
2. **Heads up!** – Value human contact over what is on the screen. Know when to put the device down or away.
3. **Good manners trump interruptions** – don't be a slave to the latest message or notification. Silence your device in rehearsals and don't let it 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 parents?
3. **Is it fair?** Be thoughtful, balanced, honest, helpful.
4. **Is it kind?**

USE OF MOBILE DEVICES ON RESIDENTIAL COURSES

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

Participants 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 a participant or other members of the NYMT community.

Going Off Site & Travel Safety

Participants going off site unaccompanied in accordance with NYMT policy are required to have at least one working mobile phone in each group. Participants 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

Participants are cautioned against the creation of group chats, particularly where this crosses large age gaps. Participants are reminded of this at the beginning of each residential course. Participants 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 participants 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 participants 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 participants to feel comfortable and confident in expressing concerns.

SOCIAL MEDIA

NYMT creates closed 'groups' on Facebook for each production which allow participants 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 participants 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 participant, even after the course has ended, and remains in effect until the child is 18 and has left school.

REMOTE LEARNING

There are clear parameters and expectations that apply both to participants 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 participants 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. 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 participants 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 participants in the Place Acceptance Forms for each course, with provision for parents/participants to opt out of specific uses or all uses. The law recognises participants' own rights – from the age of 13 – to decide how their personal information, including images, is used.

Permission should be sought from participants **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 participants.

There are some circumstances when consent from a participant (or their parent/carer for young people under 18) should be gained for a photograph of the participant 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).

Participant 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 participants 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 June 2023

Date of next review: June 2024.

The following updates were made since the previous version:

- Updated section on Sexting (Sharing nudes and semi-nudes) to reflect updated guidance from the UK Council for Internet Safety.
- Updated section on internet access, filtering and supervision in response to updated guidance in KCSIE 2023.
- Minor corrections