



# Working with Children in projects for BBC Audio & Music

## A guide for Independent Production Companies (“IPCs”)

### 1 Introduction

The BBC is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children. In this respect the BBC acknowledges its position as a powerful medium of influence. The BBC works with many children every year in a variety of ways and has a Child Protection Policy to support putting into practice the BBC’s commitment to safeguarding the welfare of children.

In the context of child protection, ‘children’ refers to ‘children and young persons under 18 years of age’. It is used in this manner in this document except where specified otherwise.

It is recognised that it is the perception of children and their parents/carers that their involvement is with ‘the BBC’ even when an IPC is making the programme or leading the event. This guide therefore supports the BBC child protection policy by providing guidance to IPCs on practice and procedure in areas of child protection.

### 2 Principles of Good Practice

The BBC undertakes to:

- treat children with care, respect and dignity;
- recognise that those working for the IPC will be perceived by children as trusted representatives of the IPC and/or BBC;
- ensure communication with children is open and clear;
- assess the risks to children of its activities;
- ensure staff avoid physical contact with children except for reasons of health and safety, or under supervision.

The BBC requires every IPC to abide by these principles

### 3 Defining the nature of relationship between staff and children

It is anticipated that on all except the most exceptional occasions in Independent productions or projects for the BBC involving children, the nature of the relationship with children will be ad hoc and IPC staff will be in the presence of those responsible for the welfare and supervision of children, e.g. parents/carers, chaperones or teachers. In this event it is important that IPC staff do not assume caring responsibilities. Practical guidance is given in the ‘good practice’ paragraph below.

There may be a very limited number of circumstances where staff will be working in positions which entail regularly caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of young persons. IPC staff must not be asked to undertake such roles without their specific consent, and will require CRB disclosure (see below). In such a case it is very important that the staff involved are aware of their child caring responsibilities.

### 4 CRB and Personal Disclosure

The BBC is registered with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) who provide a disclosure service for organisations who have employees whose work involves regular contact with children. The BBC is authorised to request the CRB to carry out disclosure checks on those engaged by IPCs who will be working with children in circumstances set out below.

In cases, which should be exceptional, where those engaged by the IPC will be involved in an unsupervised position with children, ie regularly caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children, a disclosure from the CRB is mandatory before the role may be undertaken together with a completed Child Protection Personal Disclosure Form. Where the assignment involves supervised contact with children, those engaged by

the IPC will be required to complete a Child Protection Personal Disclosure Form. Persons who disclose that they have been convicted of any offence relating to children or young people; and/or subject to any disciplinary sanction relating to children, will not be permitted to work on any production/project which involves contact with children.

## **5 Nominated Managers**

In any IPC which is engaged to make a programme which will involve contact with children, there must be a manager nominated to be the focal point for all child protection questions within the IPC. The role includes:

- Identifying events involving children and ensuring child protection measures are put in place;
- Deciding which positions require CRB disclosure, or completion of the Personal Disclosure Form, and to hold the Personal Disclosure forms in safekeeping
- Providing advice and guidance to staff who during the course of their work, believe that a child may be at risk of harm, and/or are told by a child of a child welfare issue;
- Maintenance and monitoring of records of any child protection issues arising;

The Nominated Manager will have been expected to have undertaken training to the level minimum level of the NSPCC Child Protection Awareness programmes.

## **6 Children and the BBC**

Children are most likely to be involved with an IPC on a project for the BBC when:

- Being involved as actors and participants in BBC programmes across all genres;
- Being audience members or attendees at an event;
- Corresponding by letter, email, text or phone;

To safeguard children, those engaged by IPCs must be compliant with the BBC's Editorial Guidelines which set out the BBC's values which include safeguarding the welfare of children. This is the responsibility of the Nominated Manager within the IPC.

The BBC's Online Editorial Guidelines sets out the procedures to be followed by staff in order to safeguard children visiting BBCi internet sites.

The Nominated Manager within the IPC is responsible for ensuring that their staff working with children have received a copy of this guide.

## **7 Schools and Events**

Schools are responsible for the care of children attending school and are covered by legislation in this respect.

IPC productions and events involving visits to schools on behalf of the BBC should write to school or event organisers concerned to advise that the IPC and BBC has a child protection policy in place and inform the school or event organisers that :

- IPC staff who attend are in compliance with the policy;
- IPC staff will not ask for the personal details or contact details of any child or offer their own details. Only generic BBC contact details will be provided.
- IPC staff will not be placed in a caring or supervisory position, without the express agreement of all parties which has been made in advance of the visit/event etc

In furtherance of their responsibilities, some schools and events organisers may require that IPC staff have been subject to CRB disclosure.

## **8 Health and Safety**

The IPC is responsible for compliance with H&S legislation. The BBC requires that the IPC has proper management arrangements for managing risk. Where children are involved, the risk assessment must take account of their particular vulnerabilities which will include child protection. The risk assessment should set out

what arrangements are in place for their care and supervision, e.g. by a school, parent, guardian or chaperone and how these will be communicated to the appropriate parties.

The health and safety controls in place will include those needed for:

- the people staff and children will meet;
- the environment they will be in;
- the equipment they will be using;
- the work they will be doing;
- the way the work will be organised and carried out;
- the pattern and hours of work;
- any transport arrangements.

#### First Aid

The IPS is responsible for making sure there are adequate arrangements to deal with injury or ill health

Anyone providing first aid to a child or young person should be a qualified first aider or appointed person, and do so within the accepted good practice (see section 11). The child's parent, guardian or chaperone should be present.

### **9 Transport**

#### **Children**

When children are being transported on behalf of the IPC they must be accompanied by a parent, carer, chaperone or teacher.

**All** licensed children **must** be accompanied by their registered chaperone whilst travelling and it is not acceptable for them to be brought in unaccompanied in a taxi under any circumstances. The registered chaperone is the name that appears on the licence.

In exceptional cases where a child/children who do not require a licence are to be transported unaccompanied by a parent, carer, chaperone or teacher, this must be by a member of the IPC's staff who has a satisfactory CRB disclosure and only with the specific prior consent of their parent or guardian.

#### **Young Persons**

(A Young Person is someone who is officially over school leaving age, so does not require a licence or chaperone, but is under 18)

Although outside of the sphere of responsibility for local education authorities the IPC has a duty of care for young persons when travelling on behalf of the IPC. Young persons employed on productions may be transported unaccompanied in a licensed taxi. Written parental/guardian consent should be sought for this or any other means of unaccompanied travel for a young person.

### **10 Accommodation**

#### **Children**

Any child will be accompanied by a registered LEA chaperone if required to stay overnight on any IPC production for the BBC. Should a parent prefer to accompany and stay overnight with their child then the IPC must follow their wish.

#### **Young Persons**

(A Young Person is someone who is over school leaving age, but under 18)

Ideally no Young Person under the age of 18 should be put up in hotel accommodation unaccompanied and a registered chaperone should be employed at all times to stay overnight in the same hotel as the Young Person, thus fulfilling the obligation of duty of care to any person who is not yet legally an "adult" - i.e. under 18. If a

Young Person is to stay unaccompanied overnight in accommodation written parental/guardian consent must be sought.

## **11 Good Practice**

IPCs should be guided by the following basic 'do's and don'ts' when engaged on a production or event where there is contact with children:

### **Planning**

- be clear who is to be responsible for child protection practice on the production or event;
- review necessary child protection measures as part of the risk assessment – using this document for guidance on best practice;
- be clear what is required from the children, and staff who have contact with the children;
- as required, ensure the necessary permissions are in place from the local council, education authority, school, etc;
- where possible choose a location where children will feel at ease;
- plan so there is no requirement for unsupervised contact;
- plan for appropriate first aid to be available including, where children under age 8 are involved, a first aider who is qualified to treat children;
- plan schedules taking account of the role of the children involved
- prepare letters to be sent to schools, parents etc setting out the nature of the event and the child protection measures which will be in place – using this document for guidance on best practice;
- prepare guidance for the staff involved, setting out the child protection measures which will be in place – using this document for guidance on best practice.

### **At the time of the recording or event**

- ensure they have the informed consent of the child and their parent/guardian (in the case of broadcast material or events entailing one-to-one contact) to be involved in the activity in question;
- avoid situations of one-to-one (ie unsupervised) contact with a child unless it has been specifically agreed with the parent/carer and Nominated Manager that it is necessary for the production or project;
- inform the contributor about the process of recording, the time it takes, the number of people watching, etc.
- recognise that children may change their mind about recording and/or participating - this must be respected; to help, allow for breaks and make sure refreshments are on hand;
- never put children in danger; if you are recording in a potentially hostile situation (e.g. investigative reporting), ensure you have contingency plans in place;
- unless specifically working in a caring position, never enter a room where children may be changing their clothes or not be fully dressed;
- don't engage in or tolerate any bullying or harassment of a child, either by adults or other children;

### **Physical contact**

- avoid physical contact, and situations where there may be physical contact, unless you are specifically working in a caring position and it is a necessary part of the role, e.g. nursery nurse;
- in other cases, eg costume, make up, audio operations, ensure you have the informed consent of the child and their parent or chaperone concerning the action required and avoid unobserved situations of unsupervised physical contact with a child. If it is unavoidable, always keep a door open and ensure you are within the hearing of others;

### **Interpersonal dealings**

- be clear and honest and outline how it is proposed to feature the young person's contribution in the programme – don't make promises that can't be kept;
- if the child's contribution is in any way controversial, ensure that both the child and their parent/guardian understand the potential implications of this;
- assign a member of the production team to be the main contact for the contributor; for a longer running series, this will mean being aware of their general welfare as it relates to the programme;
- never make suggestive remarks or discriminatory comments to a child;
- don't engage in or tolerate any bullying or harassment of a child, either by adults or other children;
- unless specifically working in a caring position, do not either offer personal details including contact details or ask for such details. Where an ongoing relationship is required for the production/project, this must be with the specific consent of the parent/guardian and endorsed by the line manager.

### **Managing sensitive information**

- Never leave children's personal details lying around - keep them securely. Dispose of personal details in confidential waste;
- in case of email correspondence, use the IPC generic email address and not a personal email address;
- Erase all personal details as soon as they are no longer needed;
- Do not use children's personal details for purposes other than the purpose they were given for;
- Do not pass on a child's personal details to anyone outside the IPC, without express consent of the child's parent or guardian;
- Ensure that the identity of the child is safe at all times, do not disclose any information that would put the child at risk in any way;
- Never broadcast or publish information that could identify a child. Under normal circumstances it is acceptable to broadcast a child's first name and the name of the large town or area they come from (not a small village!);
- Never let allegations by a child go unreported. Ensure that there is a well-known and swift referral process to the Nominated Manager at the IPC, who should notify Paul Smith, Head of Editorial Standards, A&M.

It is the responsibility of everyone at the BBC and IPC to protect the welfare of children with who they come into contact as part of their work. In following the above guidance, all involved are always expected to maintain a sense of proportion, apply common sense to situations and protect the child's welfare as priority.

BBC HR Policy

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