

# **YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

## **LA CROSSE COMMUNITY THEATRE, INC.**

### **I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

La Crosse Community Theatre (LCT) seeks to support youth in their artistic and personal growth through instruction and mentoring and by providing opportunities to perform and participate in theatre programming. LCT seeks to assure participants, parents, and the community that the environment, staff, and volunteers are safe for youth and that safety for youth is a shared responsibility between LCT and families.

### **II. CARE FOR ALLEGED VICTIM**

LCT believes the safety of youth is of paramount importance and, in the event of an allegation of abuse, LCT will:

- A. Ensure the youth is placed in a safe environment
- B. Ensure, in consultation with parents, that an alleged victim is given proper support and is referred for an evaluation to identify treatment needs.

### **III. HIRING/TRAINING OF STAFF**

- A. All staff must undergo a state and federal criminal background check, including the sex offender registry, prior to hiring.
- B. Reference checks will include references pertaining to the applicant's character in interacting with youth.
- C. All staff members must participate in training on an annual basis.

### **IV. VOLUNTEERS**

- A. All volunteers who interact with youth will undergo a background check consisting of at least a CCAP or similar computer check of criminal history of any state in which the volunteer is known to have resided within the last ten years as well, as a sex offender registry check.
  - a. Interact means activity that involves contact with youth as a significant part of the activity and is ongoing. This does not include activity in which contact with youth is incidental or occasional, e.g. ushering, etc.
- B. All volunteers must sign an acknowledgement that they have been given and have read and understand the Code of Conduct.

### **V. CODE OF CONDUCT**

- A. No staff member or volunteer shall be alone with a youth in an isolated area. Two adults shall be present at all times. If it is necessary for a staff member or volunteer to meet individually with a youth, it should be done in an area in which all are clearly visible by others.
- B. Youth may be released from activities only to individuals designated by the parents. Parents shall at registration provide a list of persons authorized to transport their child. This list may be updated verbally, with a record of the date, time, and participants being maintained by LCT.
- C. LCT will not release a child to an authorized person if there is question that the child's safety will be compromised.

- D. Staff members will allow themselves to “friend” youth only on social media sites approved by the Executive Director and communicated to parents. The Executive Director reserves the right to require that any or all staff also “friend” the Executive Director and Director of Youth Theatre on any social media site in which they are “friended” to LCT-involved youth.

## VI. REPORTING PROCEDURES

- A. Staff and volunteers are to immediately report any instance in which he/she has reason to suspect that a youth has been the victim of physical or sexual abuse or neglect.
- B. Any report should be made to La Crosse County Human Services. A contemporaneous report shall be made to the program director or Executive Director. Any program director shall notify the Executive Director who shall also notify the Board President. If the suspect is the Executive Director, the board president shall be notified.
- C. Reports shall be made to the Protective Services intake worker at La Crosse County Human Services:
  - Monday through Friday, 8:00 to 4:30:  
La Crosse County Human Services  
300 4th St. North  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
608-784-4357
  - After 4:30 p.m. weekdays, holidays, and weekends, call 608-785-5962, police non-emergency dispatch.
- D. Any interview of a youth shall be limited to determining whether there is reason to suspect abuse. Greater detail will be elicited through forensic interviews conducted by law enforcement or child protective services.
- E. The suspected perpetrator or other responsible adult may be interviewed by LCT staff after consultation with law enforcement.
- F. Parents shall be notified if it is clear that the suspected perpetrator is a non-family member.
- G. The Executive Director shall have the options of suspending a volunteer, or staff member’s activities, terminating employment and/or retaining the status quo. In any event, the Board shall be notified if a report is received by LCT.

## VII. TRAINING AND EDUCATION OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

- A. All staff members shall attend an annual training that includes LCT policies pertaining to youth safety, abuse symptoms and dynamics, and mandatory reporting practices, and must sign a statement acknowledging receipt of LCT policies and Code of Conduct. Documentation of all training will be maintained in each individual’s personnel file.
- B. All volunteers must sign a statement acknowledging receipt and understanding of policies and the Code of Conduct.

## VIII. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

- A. LCT recognizes that social media and digital communication allow LCT staff to quickly communicate with others and share information and ideas. On the other hand, social media carries the potential for abuse and victimization. LCT seeks to promote safe and effective use of social

media by limiting interaction between staff and youth to forums developed or approved and monitored by LCT.

- B. Staff members will allow themselves to “friend” or communicate with youth only on social media sites developed by LCT or approved by the Executive Director. Only such sites as will allow monitoring by LCT may be approved.
- C. Parents will be advised of the sites utilized by LCT so they may monitor communications between their child and LCT staff.
- D. Staff members are strongly discouraged from using social media for personal purposes during working hours or accessing social media sites on LCT property, including computers, laptops, and smartphones, or through LCT’s network. Staff members’ personal use of social media during non-work hours must comply with the applicable provisions of this Policy. Staff should not use their work email address for accessing personal social media accounts.
- E. Staff members are prohibited from using social media at any time to engage in discrimination, unlawful conduct, threatening violence, harassment, vulgarity/obscenity or defamatory statements toward or about LCT, its patrons, volunteers, or other staff members.
- F. When using social media, staff members are expected to comply with other applicable LCT policies, which are now in place or may be in the future
- G. Information technology equipment, including computers, laptops, and smartphones, and networks are the property of LCT, which has the right to access and review use of social media on LCT property or through LCT networks, and staff members have no expectation of personal privacy with respect to such use.
- H. LCT recognizes that in certain circumstances, staff members may have legitimate reasons to access or use social media on behalf of LCT. LCT is the sole owner of all LCT social media accounts, including Facebook pages, Linked-in accounts, Twitter, and other accounts used by LCT for business purposes or otherwise. Staff members who have legitimate business needs to access or use social media on behalf of LCT must seek approval from the Executive Director or designee before such access or use. When using social media on behalf of LCT for work-related reasons, staff members should remember the following:
  - a. Staff members should disclose that they are a representative of LCT and identify their position.
  - b. Staff members should represent LCT accurately, avoiding misstatements or typographical errors. If a misstatement or error is made, it should be corrected as soon as possible.
  - c. Staff members may not publish information, including pictures, logos, links or other information about LCT’s partners, vendors, or patrons without their express written consent.
- I. If a staff member has questions or concerns about any content to be published or posted on behalf of LCT, the staff member must confer with the Executive Director before publishing the content.
- J. Nothing in this policy is intended to interfere with any staff member’s right to engage in concerted activity under the National Labor Relations Act or other applicable law.
- K. Violation of this policy may give rise to disciplinary action.

Approved by La Crosse Community Theatre Board of Directors 10-28-2014