

COMPLAINTS AND REPORTING PROCEDURE (CHILDREN)

Scope

This Complaints Procedure applies to any person (child or adult) involved with CLOC Musical Theatre including:

- any adult (over the age of 18) that may work with children at any time such as:
 - * volunteers in leadership and management roles, administration, instructors, workshop facilitators, production and venue personnel (production team, actors, stage management, chaperones, technical crew, ushers, etc.)
 - * contractors and sub-contractors
 - * any other individual in the organisation that may deal with children
- children (under the age of 18 years unless otherwise specified)
- parents/legal guardians

1. Making a Complaint

Who can make a complaint?

Any person including volunteers, parents/legal guardians and children should promptly raise their concerns or lodge a complaint about:

- inadequate conditions for children
- conduct not in keeping with CLOC's policies and procedures (including those relating to child safety)
- suspicion of child abuse or mistreatment by any other participant in CLOC activities. If anyone suspects or witnesses an incident of unacceptable behaviour towards a child, during any CLOC activities they are obliged to report the incident (as detailed below).

In addition to reporting the incident, the person concerned should ensure that the child is safe from any immediate risks.

CLOC will provide children and parents with contact details for the Head Chaperone (including a mobile number) should they have any concerns or complaints.

What type of concerns should be raised?

Any of the following should be reported to the Head Chaperone promptly:

- alleged, suspected or observed incidents of abuse or neglect (as a matter of urgency)
- conduct not in keeping with CLOC's child safe policies and procedures
- perceived risks in CLOC's environment

Abuse and neglect includes:

- Physical abuse: purposefully injuring or threatening to injure a child
- Emotional abuse: an attack on a child's self-esteem e.g. through bullying, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or isolating the child
- Sexual abuse: any sexual act or sexual threat imposed upon a child
- Neglect: harming a child by failing to provide basic physical or emotional necessities.

Who should complaints be made to?

Complaints or concerns by a child or regarding a child should initially be made to the Head Chaperone. The Head Chaperone's name and contact details will be provided to children, parents/legal guardians and other CLOC volunteers at the beginning of each production. Where the complaint cannot be reported to the Head Chaperone, and is of a serious and urgent nature, it should be reported to CLOC's Administrator or President.

Any complaint regarding the Head Chaperone should be directed to CLOC's Administrator or President.

Where any adult becomes aware of an incident of sexual abuse of a child or physical abuse causing injury to a child occurring during any CLOC activity, that incident should immediately be reported directly to the police and the child kept safe from any immediate risks.

2. Investigating Complaints

How will complaints from children be handled by the Head Chaperone?

The Head Chaperone who receives a complaint from a child will:

- let the child talk about their concerns in their own time and words, as well as give the child the necessary attention, time and space to raise their issues
- be a supportive and reassuring listener
- tell the child that raising their concerns was the right thing to do and let them know in plain language the process by which their concerns will be addressed and acted upon
- record the nature of the complaint in the child's own words
- notify CLOC's President and Administrator of the complaint
- contact the child's parents/legal guardians if appropriate.

How will all complaints be handled by CLOC Musical Theatre?

CLOC Musical Theatre is committed to being responsive to concerns raised by volunteers, children and parents/legal guardians, and seek to resolve issues with the welfare of children as a first priority.

The appointed Head Chaperone will investigate the nature of the complaint raised in a timely fashion, allowing the person against whom the complaint has been made the opportunity to respond. If a complaint has been made in regards to the actions of another child, their parents/legal guardian will be informed. If appropriate and in the best interests of the children involved, the Head Chaperone will seek to resolve the complaint and rectify any issues raised to the satisfaction of all parties in the first instance. The Head Chaperone may enlist the support or assistance of the CLOC President or Administrator in investigating a complaint.

While procedural fairness should be accorded to a person who is the subject of a complaint where possible, the child's welfare must always be considered paramount and where informing a person of a complaint may place a child at risk of any form of harm or abuse, the investigator is not required to disclose the complaint.

Any complaints or concerns about perceived risks in the organisation's environment will be addressed by CLOC through the CLOC Administrator and rectified promptly.

If CLOC becomes aware of, or has been alerted to, a risk of child abuse by someone involved with the organisation, CLOC will act to reduce or remove the risk and protect the child as a first priority. CLOC will promptly contact police when a child or adult alleges any criminal activity has occurred in the course of any CLOC activity, such as physical or sexual abuse of a child.

The child and (if appropriate) parents/legal guardian will be informed of the steps CLOC is taking to address the complaint.

3. Outcome

What happens if unacceptable conduct towards a child has occurred?

In the event a complaint is proven to be accurate, the Head Chaperone will inform CLOC's President and Administrator of the allegation and the outcomes of the investigation. The Head Chaperone may also recommend an appropriate course of action.

4. Resolution

How will the complaint be resolved?

The CLOC President and Administrator shall determine if:

- a person should be disciplined in accordance with the misconduct committed and within the CLOC's authority and means;
- a dispute resolution or conciliation process should be undertaken in order to resolve the complaint; or
- the matter should be referred to an appropriate authority for further investigation and action pursuant to the law.

For procedural fairness, any person involved in a complaint about unacceptable conduct towards a child is encouraged to seek support from any other relevant person.

All complaints about unacceptable conduct shall be documented, including:

- record of action taken
- any internal investigation conducted
- any reports made to statutory or external bodies.

In accordance with security and privacy requirements, these records will remain confidential unless otherwise required to be released by law. With due consideration of confidentiality and fairness in regard to any person whom a complaint is made against, the risk of harm to children is the primary concern.