

MATTHEWS PLAYHOUSE OF THE PERFORMING ARTS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

The objective of the Protection Policy is to safeguard youth and children while in attendance at programs sponsored by Matthews Playhouse of the Performing Arts (MPH). Its purpose is to protect youth and children from potential abuse or malfeasance while attending MPH programs and to provide steps for properly screening MPH staff, volunteers and adult actors before they are placed in positions of responsibility with youth and children. This Protection Policy does not create contractual, common law or other duties or obligations owing to children or youth who attend MPH programs or to their parents or guardians.

I. SCREENING PROCEDURES FOR PAID STAFF:

A. DEFINITIONS: “Paid staff” includes full time or part time employees or independent contractors hired to administer or support a MPH program. “Children” is defined as persons under 12 years old. “Youth” is defined as persons ages 12 years old to 17 years old. “Adult” is defined as persons over 18 years old.

B. APPLICATIONS: All paid staff will complete an application for employment with MPH.

- a. Applicants will provide a professional resume for review.
- b. The application will verify that the paid staff has read this Protection Policy and through the applicant’s signature will affirm his/her understanding that the applicant must abide by it.
- c. The applicant will be made aware of a professional code of conduct for MPH
- d. There will be an **annual review** in which all staff will reaffirm their commitment to and understanding of our Protection Policy.
- e. The applications will be treated as confidential and will be kept with personnel files for paid staff.

II. SAFETY & PROTECTION PROCEDURES FOR ALL MPH PROGRAMS ON AND/ OR OFF SITE

A. APPLICABILITY: These procedures apply to all paid staff, independent contractors, volunteers and adult actors who work with children and youth and who use the facilities of MPH. These procedures apply to all MPH programs both at and away from the Matthews Community Center.

B. PRESENCE OF AN ADULT: At least one staff member present should be over 18 years of age and should be present at every function. An adult volunteer should also be present at each function. For large groups of children and youth, the number of staff will be increased accordingly. As staff and volunteers supervise children and youth, they should place themselves in a way that other staff or adults can observe them.

C. ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE: Staff should arrive before a scheduled activity and should keep watch over those in their care until an authorized person has picked up all children and youth.

D. SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH:

1. Staff shall never leave a child or youth unsupervised.
2. Once on Matthews Community Center property, children and/or youth

will not be permitted to leave the property, unless a parent or guardian provides express consent.

3. Staff, independent contractors, volunteers and adult actors will respect children's and youth's rights not to be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, and their right to say no to any form of physical contact at all. Other than appropriate bathroom assistance, children are not to be touched on areas of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit.
4. Staff, independent contractors, volunteers and adult actors may not verbally, emotionally, physically, or sexually abuse children and youth.
5. Staff, independent contractors, volunteers and adult actors may not discipline children and youth by the use of physical punishment or failing to provide the necessities of care.
6. Physical restraint of children or youth may be used only in situations necessary to protect the child or youth, other children or youth, or staff from harm.
7. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while working with children or youth in a MPH program is strictly prohibited.
8. Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life, and any kind of harassment in the presence of children or youth in any MPH program is prohibited.
9. No children or youth shall use power tools for set construction, strike or any other purpose without permission from the director. In addition, children or youth may use power tools only with appropriate training by the technical director or his/her designee or parental supervision.
10. MPH upholds a zero tolerance policy.

I acknowledge receipt of and understanding of this policy.

Signature

Date