

# A guide for chaperones on working with children who perform



**achieving  
forchildren**

Providing children's services for  
the **Royal Borough of Kingston** and  
the **London Borough of Richmond**

## Chaperoning

This document is designed to guide chaperones through the large raft of legislation that has been produced to protect children taking part in performances and thus ensure that the experiences of these children is safe and rewarding.

It aims to provide chaperones approved by Achieving for Children (AfC) with guidelines on how to carry out their duties of care to children appearing in performances. Achieving for Children is a community interest company created by the Royal Borough of Kingston and the London Borough of Richmond to provide their children's services.

The holder of the performance licence (for example, usually the producer of the show or programme, stage school or theatre) is responsible, throughout the period covered by the licence, for ensuring that the child will be in the charge of a responsible adult. This person is known in law as a 'Matron' (referred to by Achieving for Children as a chaperone). The legislation is very complex and appears daunting, but you must have a working knowledge of the regulations to carry out your duties with confidence.

Additional information on children in entertainment can be found at the AfC website or on the National Network for Child Employment and Entertainment Website: <http://www.nncee.org.uk>.

If you have any queries in relation to any of your duties or require clarification of any part of the legislation, please contact:

### **For Richmond Borough residents**

Child Licensing Officer  
Education Welfare Service  
Achieving for Children  
Civic Centre  
44 York Street  
Twickenham  
TW1 3BZ

Telephone: 020 8487 5217

Email: [ews@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:ews@achievingforchildren.org.uk)

### **For Kingston Borough residents**

Child Licensing Officer  
Education Welfare Service  
Achieving for Children  
Guildhall 2  
Kingston  
KT1 1EU

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## Introduction

The licensing officer is responsible for the approval of any proposed chaperone who lives within their local authority. Approval can be withdrawn if there are concerns about the conduct of the chaperone.

### What does the law say?

All children who perform on stage, in television, films, commercials, work in paid or professional sport or as models, have their welfare and safety protected by the following legislation.

- The Children and Young Persons Act 1933
- The Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Act 1999
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014

### Chaperoning skills and child protection

The law states that the chaperone is acting '**in loco parentis**' and should exercise the care which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give that child.

The child will be working in a very adult environment and you need to be able to ensure that they understand what is expected of them, taking into account their age and experience.

You also need to take account, and be aware, of a child's concentration span, their exposure to adult conversations, expectations, peer pressure and relationships with other adults and children in the production.

You also need to be aware of health and safety issues on stage or on set such as smoking policy. Electrical equipment such as leads, sound equipment and cameras can all be very dangerous. Children should not be allowed to fool around.

The child may not actually be in school, but that doesn't mean the hours they are tutored are less important than those spent at school (three hours maximum tutoring required on a school day).

You need to be able to tell when the child is ill, tired or upset. Don't disregard a child in order to meet the producer's schedule. Remember, children are not little adults. It can often be difficult for children to communicate their feelings in a way in which adults understand, therefore, you will be the intermediary between them and the production company.

The concentration span of a child is far shorter than that of adults (depending on age), therefore you need the skills to be able to occupy, or enable them to occupy, their non-performance or non-tutoring time. This is especially important during filming and when on location. This may include physical activities or it may be that the child should just rest and quietly read a book.

Different skills will be required when chaperoning in a theatre as opposed to a film set or on location. There is much more hanging about time during filming and the weather may lead to the child being confined in a caravan for quite long periods. Remember their energy level is far higher than ours and the children may need more individual attention.

You must always be aware of bullying as it can be very subtle. It may be easy to spot a physical fight or sideways kick, but it's not always quite so easy to spot the odd word or joke directed, albeit innocently, towards one particular child. This sort of behaviour should be stopped immediately otherwise it could affect both the child and the production.

You should be aware if the company has a child protection policy and a nominated contact person with child protection training or experience as a point of reference for both staff and chaperones. Ask and make enquiries.

Regarding safe practice, all production staff, actors, cast, crew and chaperones (including dressers and makeup) should be mindful of their conduct around children. Any unnecessary physical contact should be avoided, as it could be misconstrued, either by the child themselves or by others. Be sensible, you should never leave a child alone with other adults or put yourself in a vulnerable position.

Any unusual or disturbing behaviour or comments by a child regarding an adult member of the production or a peer should be reported to a senior member of the production (or nominated child protection person) and where appropriate referred onto Children's Services. In serious situations or in an emergency, call the police.

If an allegation is made against a member of the production, chaperone, cast or helper, full cooperation will be sought from those in charge, the individual member of staff and the licensing authority. In the case of serious allegations, it may be necessary to suspend the member of staff immediately until the investigation is concluded. It may be necessary to exclude the person against whom the allegation has been made from the theatre, rehearsal rooms, location, film set, and so on or ensure that they do not have unsupervised contact with any child.

Remember, performing should be an enjoyable experience for the child and for you. Good communication and negotiation skills, be they with the child or with the variety of adults involved in the production, is vital.

## Responsibilities

Your first responsibility is to the child in your care. While you are chaperoning you must not be performing any other duties. Remember, you are there in place of the parent (in loco parentis) except when the child is in the care of a tutor.

- The child should not perform if a licence has not been granted, unless they fall within the exemption criteria.
- Chaperones should not presume that a child is licensed. Always ask to see a child's licence on arrival at a place of performance.
- If the production company cannot prove that a child is licensed, chaperones should contact the child's local authority urgently, otherwise a contravention may have occurred.
- You should make yourself familiar with the terms of the performance licence granted by the local authority and see that as far as lies within your power, the conditions are properly fulfilled.
- Chaperones should be gender appropriate. This means that for a mixed cast of boys and girls requiring separate dressing rooms there should be at least two chaperones, one male and one female.
- In the event of any contravention of the licence or incident affecting the wellbeing of the child or children, you must inform the licensing authority at the earliest opportunity.
- It is your responsibility, together with the licence holder, to ensure that the regulations (and any additional requirements or conditions placed on the licence by the child's licensing authority) are upheld at all times. You may find yourself under pressure by the production company, to relax the regulations due to re-scheduling, but you must remember that your first duty is the care of the child. Having a good knowledge of the regulations, knowing where to go for help and advice, coupled with firm negotiating skills are all crucial elements to good chaperoning.
- Remember, if things aren't right and you object, you are not creating a fuss. The reason and expectation behind your local authority issuing you with a chaperone licence is to care and

protect the child. You may fear that if you object the company will not employ you again. We are aware that this can be a real fear, but it should not override your main responsibility, which is to the child or children in your care. Please report any incidents to your licensing authority to enable them to follow up with the company concerned.

### Supervision

You should be with the child at all times whether on set, in the stage area, dressing rooms, recreation, on a meal and break areas etc. You are the key person to whom the child looks for protection, clarification and support – you are the key to a happy performing experience. You can obtain additional support from your licensing local authority, the child's licensing local authority or the local authority in whose area the performance is taking place.

### Maximum number of children

The law states that the maximum number of children in your care should not exceed 12. In a lot of instances, 12 may be far too high if there are several very young children and several adolescents that need more individual attention. These factors should be taken into account when deciding on the number of children you agree to chaperone. We would strongly recommend, for all types of performance, a maximum of eight children per chaperone, providing you with a higher standard of care to the children.

### Travel arrangements

Although a maximum length of time for travelling is not laid down in the regulations, consideration should be given to the child's age, the length of time at the place of performance and the duration of the production. Therefore, taking into account the child's welfare, it may be more sensible for a production company to schedule each child's performance days in a block (rather than an odd day here and there throughout). Alternatively they could provide accommodation nearer to where the performance is taking place rather than travelling several hours each day or every other day and attending school in between. Remember schedules can be amended if they are not working satisfactorily. If the travelling is proving a problem for the child, you could raise this with production and agree accommodation in a hotel.

### Living away from home

The chaperone is responsible for the child. This includes seeing that the child's lodgings are satisfactory in every way, and that the child is properly occupied during their spare time. Generally, you may need to exercise a greater amount of supervision than if the child was living at home. Again, if there are problems that cannot be resolved, contact the licensing local authority for where the performance is taking place.

### Illness or injury

At no time should a child perform when unwell. If a child falls ill or is injured while in the chaperone's or tutor's charge, medical assistance must be sought and the parent, guardian and the licensing local authority informed immediately. **Always** have a contact telephone number for parents.

### Dangerous performances

These must be authorised before a licence is issued and is the responsibility of the licence holder. If you think a performance is dangerous and not authorised, consult with Production Company and their health and safety officer. If you believe what is being asked of the child is still unacceptable stop the performance until you are satisfied the issue has been resolved. It may help to talk to the local authority in whose area the performance is taking place, the local environmental health service or the theatre's or studio's health and safety officer. The production company will know who these people are and will have their contact telephone numbers.

### Recording

By Law (Ref: 39 (5)) the production company should make records available to a visiting officer of

the local authority. Chaperones are often designated, by the production company, to keep these records for the child. These include:

- Times the child is at place of performance (arrivals or departures)
- Times the child performs and /or rehearses
- Times the child has breaks and meals
- Times the child is waiting between performance, i.e. scheduling

If you feel pressurised to accommodate a production's schedules and you are unsure of the legalities of what they are asking of the child stop, think and check regulations before agreeing to anything. If a satisfactory conclusion is not reached, phone the local authority either at the time or as soon as is possible for further advice.

## Regulations

### All performances

#### Rehearsals

The Children and Young Persons Act 1963 applies to performances, but not rehearsals. Rehearsals are, however, affected by the regulations if they take place during the duration of a licence (between the first and last performing day). Rehearsals are then subject to the same restrictions and conditions applicable to that licence, time at the place of performance, performing times and so on. Rehearsals also count as a performance when calculating the length of working week for example, five days broadcast, six days theatre, etc.

#### Education

(Reg. 10) A child must be taught on **ALL school days** (where they perform) for periods totalling at least three hours a day (minimum 30 minutes) during the hours when the child is permitted at the place of performance. Tuition must be within these hours and not in addition to the hours at the place of performance. (See Broadcast exceptions education aggregating hours)

#### Tutors

A tutor may only teach a maximum of five children on differing levels at the same time. If the children are at the same level they may teach up to a maximum of 12. Tutor, school and parent, in liaison with the child's local authority (*local authority's discretion*), may stipulate a record number of children to be taught at any one time. Tutors should liaise closely with the child's school, especially where long absences from school are scheduled, to ensure that the curriculum is adhered to avoid the child falling behind in their studies. Remember, the child's education is important and conditions may be placed on the child's licence, by the child's local authority, to accommodate the child's educational requirements.

For further information and advice about chaperone licences in Kingston or Richmond, please contact:

Child Licensing Officer (**Richmond**)  
Education Welfare Service  
Achieving for Children  
44 York Street  
Twickenham  
TW1 3BZ

or

Child Licensing Officer (**Kingston**)  
Education Welfare Service  
Achieving for Children  
Guildhall 2  
Kingston  
KT1 1EU

Phone: 020 8487 5217

Phone: 020 8547 5262

Table 1

Daily regime of children taking part in performances

Age of child	Earliest and latest permitted times at venue (Reg. 21)	Maximum number of hours at place of performance or rehearsal (Reg.22)	Maximum period of continuous performance or rehearsal (Reg.22)	Maximum total of hours of performance or rehearsal (reg.22)	Minimum intervals for meals and rest (Reg.23)	Education (Reg.13)	Minimum break between performances (Reg.23)	Maximum consecutive days to take part in performance (Reg.26)
0 to 4	07.00 am to 10.00pm	5 hours	30 minutes	2 hours	Any breaks must be for a minimum of 15 minutes. If at the place of performance for more than 4 hours, breaks must include at least one 45 minute meal break.	N/A	One hour 30 minutes	6 days
5 to 8	07.00 am to 11.00 pm	8 hours	2 hours and 30 minutes	3 hours	<p>If present at the place of performance for more than 4 hours but less than 8, they must have one meal break of 45 minutes and at least one break of 15 minutes.</p> <p>If present at the place of performance for 8 hours, they must have the breaks stated above plus another break of 15 minutes.</p>	Three hours per day (maximum of 5 hours per day). 15 hours per week, taught only on school days. Minimum of 6 hours in a week if aggregating over 4 week period or less.	One hour 30 minutes	6 days

9 and over	07.00 am to 11.00 pm	9 hours and 30 minutes	2 hours and 30 minutes	5 hours	<p>If present at the place of performance for more than 4 hours but less than 8, they must have one meal break of 45 minutes and at least one break of 15 minutes.</p> <p>If present at the place of performance for 8 hours or more, they must have the breaks stated above plus another break of 15 minutes.</p>	<p>Three hours per day (maximum of 5 hours per day). 15 hours per week, taught only on school days. Minimum of 6 hours in a week if aggregating over 4 week period or less</p>	One hour 30 minutes	6 days
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**Note: Local authorities should take note of Regulation 5 that allows the licensing authority to further restrict these permitted hours, breaks etc. And place additional conditions on the license if this would be in the best interests of the individual child.**