

### An Introduction to Working with Children at the BBC

The contribution of children to our content is much valued by the BBC and we want to make sure that they have a safe and enjoyable experience. Therefore, chaperones are required, in a professional capacity, to act in the place of each child's parent(s) to ensure their well-being whilst working on a production or visiting the BBC as a contributor.

Your role is to support us in ensuring that the best interest of the child is at the heart of everything we do. You must ensure that no-one, whether cast, crew, directors, other children or tutors as well as the child themselves, does anything detrimental to the child's wellbeing, while remaining focused on the task at hand. **It is therefore important that you read the BBC Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct and this Guidance prior to taking up your duties.**

For further information follow this link:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/howwework/policiesandguidelines/child\\_protection.html](http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/howwework/policiesandguidelines/child_protection.html)

Sometimes, fast paced production crews can forget that a child's needs are different to that of working adults and children are not always equipped to make mature and appropriate decisions in the workplace. It is therefore a your responsibility to represent the child's interests on and around set and take appropriate opportunities to highlight to the production team if and when a child's needs are not being fully met. The BBC works hard to protect and safeguard children and, in order to maintain this, we rely on constant communication with you.

Working with children at the BBC can be great fun. We need all chaperones to take pride in their work, use initiative to help children be the best they can be and help the BBC continue to achieve high standards in managing the welfare of children.

### The role of the Chaperone when working for the BBC

The BBC promotes the use of professional chaperones whenever possible. That is not to say that parents cannot accompany their child, particularly if they are under 5 years of age, but they will not be required to act as the child's chaperone. If a parent is licensed by their Local Authority as a chaperone, they may be contracted to chaperone other children, but not their own. This is to reduce any conflict of interest that may occur between what is best for the child and the needs of production.

## **Settling In**

### **Children over the age of 5 years**

Getting to know new people can be daunting and the child will be given a period of settling in with their chaperone and their parent(s) are welcome to accompany them. Some productions prefer that the parent(s) accompanies their child for the first day of filming only and, after this point, would prefer the child to attend work without their parent(s) unless more time is needed to help settle the child with the chaperone. However, this can be negotiated between the parent and production.

### **Children under the age of five years**

A responsible adult (parent/grandparent/aunt/uncle) attending with the child will be accompanied by a licensed chaperone. This is simply to reinforce our commitment to ensuring that children's welfare is properly managed at the BBC and that we are maintaining best practice. You will be expected to make your way to the place of filming and meet the child/parent on arrival. You may be required to accompany the parent(s) and the child if the child is travelling abroad.

## **Babies and Toddlers**

If working with babies or toddlers, you must have the child physically in your sight at all times and not just via a monitor. You must be confident and able to interrupt a scene if you feel a baby or toddler is going to be in any potential danger. Even when the child is performing, you remain responsible for the child. This responsibility does not transfer to the actor(s) they are performing with.

## **Supporting Artist (SA) children**

You must make your way to the place of filming and meet each child you are responsible for. You must hand over each child to their parent(s) at the end of the filming day. You must ensure that children under 5 are accompanied by a parent.

## **Transport**

When you travel to work with a child in transit, you will be on duty from the moment the child is in the vehicle with you. Sometimes, when children are required to travel to the

place of filming, a BBC vehicle will collect you and then make its way to collect the child and you will travel together to the location. The same will happen on the return journey. Otherwise it is your responsibility to travel to your starting point of work, which is usually the child's home or school and to ensure that the child is wearing a seat belt if travelling in a vehicle together.

You must not smoke in transit with children on the way to or from work or at any time whilst you are chaperoning any child.

For children under 5 or SA child, you must make your way to the place of filming and meet the child and parent on arrival. If travelling abroad, you may be required to travel with the parent and child.

If you experience any problems with the transport or private hire car, such as it is late or the car is unavailable, please inform production without delay. If the problem is child protection concern then you must inform the Child Protection Adviser immediately.

### **Day to Day Responsibilities**

You must ensure that you have read and understood the conditions of the child performance licence, the BBC Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct and the name of the Child Protection Adviser.

You should ensure that you have been given the name of the person to contact when you arrive at your place of work. You will then be provided with a daily filming schedule and any relevant risk assessments if appropriate. You will also need to discuss any tutoring arrangements with production, if required.

You must ensure that the child is dressed appropriately for all weather conditions. If for any reason they are not, in the first instance, please speak to Costume who usually can provide immediate solutions. In regards to supporting artists and their own clothing, please inform the production office who will follow up with the agent.

Although you will have a filming schedule, you will also need to be flexible and prepared to work with the crew/costume and makeup teams to get the child ready in good time for filming, particularly around meal/break times.

When you are told that the child will be needed on set soon, you must get them ready to go on. Encourage them to pack away games/toys etc. Get all parts of their costume on. Going to the toilet at this point is also a good idea to prevent a hold up for filming and check the child is ready to concentrate.

On set, work out / agree with the child / children where you are going to wait and watch. A child should never leave set without a chaperone even if a crew member tells them to.

We need to be very careful with food and drink. As a chaperone you must make sure you know whether the child has any dietary needs/allergies/medical conditions. Children should always change into their own clothes for lunch but, if having a snack between scenes, please cover their costumes to avoid them becoming soiled.

Everything on the production is confidential and storylines must not be discussed with anyone outside of the programme.

Never be afraid to ask any questions or raise any concerns you might have about the production including scripts, content or performance. However, where you can, please ensure this happens **prior to filming** so that the relevant people can be informed.

You and Production are jointly responsible for logging a child's work, rest and tutor periods on a chaperone time sheet and ensure they are clear to depart.

In line with the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 and the Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014, you have discretion to allow a child to perform for a period not exceeding 1 hour (and not exceeding the actual performance hours) immediately following the latest time permitted (which is 11pm for children over 5 and 10pm for children under 5). **England only**. If you exercise this discretion you must inform the licensing authority and the local authority where the performance is taking place, no later than the following day and explain the reason for having made this decision. For example, you may consider that allowing the child to stay a bit longer would be in the child's best interests because it allows them to finish filming a scene so they do not have to attend again the following day.

You must immediately make production aware of any contraventions in child performance legislation that come to your notice. In the event that you believe your concerns aren't being acted upon without delay you must inform the Child Protection Adviser as a child safeguarding issue.

You must maintain good communication with your key contact in the production team throughout the day as to your whereabouts and the progress of the day. This is vital so any problems can be averted before they occur.

### **Pastoral Care**

You are the intermediary between the child and the production team. Children are not 'little adults' and it can often be difficult for children to communicate their feelings to adults.

Relationships between chaperones and children require careful management. We expect you to be friendly, but to also remember that you are acting in a professional capacity with all the responsibilities that role brings with it.

You must set out clear boundaries with children and it is your responsibility to make a child aware if they have behaved inappropriately and to inform production about any such incident. At no time should a child be physically chastised or verbally humiliated. It is important that you update production on any child welfare or behavioural issues, no matter how trivial, so that production have an overview of each child working on their programme in order to fully manage their wellbeing.

As well as the standards of behaviour set out in this document you are required to follow the BBC Code of Conduct which can be found here:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/howwework/policiesandguidelines/child\\_protection.html](http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/howwework/policiesandguidelines/child_protection.html)

You may be required to assist children to make age appropriate decisions and to understand the rationale, particularly as they will be in a working environment.

You must act accordingly to protect children from exposure to adult conversation or inappropriate behaviour whilst on set or resting. The adult's quiet rooms are out of bounds to ALL children even when accompanied by you.

If a child needs to meet with a member of the production team, you must always accompany the child to the meeting.

No production is forever, so whether an actor decides to leave or a character is written out, you should carefully consider how to manage the child's expectations as well as those closest to them.

### **Overnight Stays and WiFi**

It is important that we take steps to ensure that children and young people are unable to access age-inappropriate content on the internet using wifi services provided by the production, when staying overnight in rented accommodation provided by the BBC.

Wherever possible, the highest level of parental control provided by the internet service provider must be switched on at all times in children's accommodation, and during the hours when children would normally be expected to be asleep, i.e. overnight, consideration should be given to switching the wifi off. The switching on and off of both the wifi and the parental controls must be pin-protected wherever possible, and managed by the house chaperones.

If for any reason the parental controls provided by the internet service provider cannot be switched on, chaperones must make the Production aware of the fact so that alternative arrangements can be considered.

### **Health & Safety**

You must ensure that you are aware of and understand any health and safety issues whilst working on set and on location and make sure to pass on this information to children in your care. Children should never run on set and never walk ahead of their chaperone. Please be aware of the nearest fire exit and fire assembly point. In the event of a fire alarm, you should follow the fire safety policy.

You are responsible for reporting any accidents or near misses that involve either themselves or the child in their care. This should be reported to the Production Manager. The production team will then inform the parent and you will then need to complete and return an Incident Report Form.

Children must not be exposed to secondary smoke inhalation and the child must remain with you at all times. Smoking is not permitted in any of the interior or exterior sets. We do not therefore see an opportunity for you to smoke while you are on duty.

You are not permitted to purchase or consume alcohol prior to or whilst on duty, and this includes overnight duties. Furthermore, you must not purchase alcohol for those in your care or others on the Production, including but not limited to members of cast.

### **Personal Arrangements**

You must not bring your own or other children and/or family members to work. The only exception to this is in a genuine emergency, and only if the Production Manager has given their prior written consent within their absolute discretion. Where such permission has been given the children/family members are not permitted to go on set. Children under 16 years old must remain with a designated, appropriate adult, this may be a family member, nanny or chaperone. Persons over the age of 16 must remain in the dressing room or other nominated area.

### **Best Practice Do's and Don'ts when working as a chaperone for the BBC**

#### DO

- Ask to see a copy of the child's performance licence (where a licence is required)
- Keep a note of important contacts, for example, the child's licensing authority, the local authority in whose area the child is performing, the child's agent and the child's parent/legal guardian.
- Check the child is comfortable - you are the person to whom the child looks for guidance, protection, clarification and support.
- Exercise discretion where that is in the best interest of the child.

- Be the child's champion - one of a chaperone's greatest strengths is their ability to say no when what is being requested of the child is contrary or detrimental to the child's health, well-being and/or education.
- Be alert to all possible risks to the child. and know what the child protection policy requires you to do.
- Challenge people and / or behaviours and if you continue to be concerned know who to escalate your concerns to. At the BBC this will be the Child protection Adviser or the Head of Child Protection & Safeguarding.

#### DO NOT

- Let the child perform if they are unwell.
- Leave the child alone with another adult (unless it's their parent or teacher).
- Take photographs/videos of the child/ren that you have been employed to chaperone or tutor, however much you may want to have a memento. If you see anyone else doing this you must inform production as soon as possible.
- Seek autographs from performers or get star struck.
- Ignore or down play questionable behaviour from adults or other children.
- Allow the child to be pushed into things that they don't want to do.
- Use inappropriate language or smoke whilst on duty.
- Consume alcohol or be under the influence of alcohol whilst on duty.

#### **Use of Social Media**

Following a few common sense rules will help you to use your social media accounts without breaching any BBC guidelines. Remember that even if your account is a purely personal one, while you are working with the BBC it could be perceived as an official BBC account, and so you need to be careful about what you post.

Be alert to impersonators, and if you are concerned about anything, report it to the Production Manager.

#### DO

- make sure that your account is a personal one, and not associated with the BBC
- Remember to set the appropriate privacy settings on your accounts. Don't leave your Facebook account open to general view
- Think about what you post and don't say anything that would bring you or the BBC into disrepute
- Ensure that each child knows that they should never 'chat' or send images of themselves to people on social media that they don't know. They should also not engage via social media with anyone from the production as this is against BBC policy.
- Inform the Child Protection Adviser immediately if you think a child is being groomed online (remember that the child may not realise it themselves). The Child Protection Adviser will be responsible for ensuring the BBC Child Protection policy is followed. In addition to this referral, you can also report it to the Child

Exploitation and Online Protection service using the Report Abuse button on their website - <http://ceop.police.uk/safety-centre>

### **DO NOT**

- Friend or follow children or young people you are or have worked with
- Post any pictures/videos taken on set / location/the office particularly
- Say anything that could embarrass you or the people you're working with
- Swear, use inappropriate language, or post photographs online that could cause offence.
- Follow or retweet users that you know or believe to be children under the age of 16
- Break the rules and guidelines of the social media site you are using

### **Press Enquiries**

If you receive any direct approaches from the Press, you must ask the caller to ring the BBC Press Office. You must not agree to any other communication with the press, interviews or photo shoots without prior written permission from the BBC.

### **Fees**

You will be paid as a freelancer and need to register with the BBC online invoicing system. Purchase Orders for chaperone fees are usually made the week after a shoot has finished filming. This can then take another week before the payment is released. Therefore, it can take up to 3-4 weeks to get paid.

The BBC is happy to pay you direct or via an agent. Please inform us which is preferable. Payments will be paid automatically and will be made from the information provided by the Production on any filming day.

If you are unclear about your fee, or the ways in which to claim it, please talk to the production office or accounts department.

Although the BBC cannot offer financial or tax advice to individuals, you should be aware of the following:

- All chaperones are paid gross and are therefore considered self-employed. This means tax is not deducted at source and chaperones are responsible for paying their own tax and national insurance.
- If you do not register to pay your tax, you can be fined. More information is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/working-for-yourself/what-you-need-to-do>



**Contact**

If you have any concerns that are not addressed in these guidelines or need any further information about carrying out your duty as a chaperone, please contact Production or the Child Protection Adviser in the first instance. If they are unable to help or you are still concerned you can also contact:

- Alison Cresswell, Senior Adviser Working with Children,
- Catherine McAllister, Head of Safeguarding & Child Protection, Childrens OR
- Caroline Brant, Head of Child Protection & Safeguarding.

**Declaration**

I confirm that I have read and understood the information within this guidance.

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Signature

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Date