

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

Education Welfare

Guidance For Chaperones/Matrons Working With Children And Young People Who Perform

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*'.

This brief guide is designed to answer some basic questions, but there may be occasions when further clarification and greater depth into the Regulations will be required and for this you should contact either: your licensing authority (Local Authority), the child's licensing authority (Local Authority) or the authority where a performance is taking place (Local Authority).

Chaperoning Skills

- 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 need to take account of a child's concentration span, their exposure to adult conversations and expectations and peer pressure.
- Health & Safety issues on stage or on set i.e. 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 be in school but that doesn't mean the hours they are tutored are less important than those spent at school.
- You need to be able to tell when the child is ill, tired or upset. Don't ignore them in order to meet the production's schedule. Remember, they are children. 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.
- A child's concentration span is far shorter than that of an adult (depending on age) therefore you need the skills to be able to occupy, or enable them to occupy, their non-performance time which 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 waiting 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. Bullying behaviours should be addressed immediately.
- Performing should be an enjoyable experience for the child and for you. Good communication and negotiating skills, with the child and/or with the variety of adults involved in a production, are essential.

Registration To Become A Chaperone

Applications for a Chaperone Licence should be made to Northumberland County Council. (NCC)

Northumberland County Council requires:

- a completed application form together with a passport sized photograph (name on reverse side)
- two references
- a satisfactory DBS check (confidential)
- an interview

Once all the checks have been satisfactorily completed a Chaperone Licence will be issued. **Note:** as *several checks have to be made, the time span between NCC receiving an application and the issuing of a Chaperone Licence can take from between 2 to 8 weeks.*

Chaperones approved by Northumberland County Council are registered for 3 years at which time they must reapply for registration.

The licence holder will be the employer of the chaperone.

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 in *loco parentis*. It is your responsibility, together with the Performance Licence Holder, to ensure that the Regulations (and any additional requirements issued by the child's Licensing Authority) are upheld at all times. You may find yourself under pressure, by the production company from time to time, to relax the Regulations due to re-scheduling but you must remember that your first duty is to the **care of the child**. Therefore, having a good knowledge of the Regulations, knowing where to go for additional advice, coupled with firm negotiating skills, are all crucial elements to good chaperoning.

1. You should be with the child **at all times** whether: on set/stage area, dressing rooms, recreation, 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. If the facilities are not suitable **YOU** should negotiate better facilities with the producer. Children's care is paramount at all times. You can obtain additional support from: NCC, the child's licensing LA or the LA in whose area the performance is taking place.
2. The law states that the maximum number of children in your care should not exceed 12.
3. Although a maximum length of time for travelling is not laid down in the Regulations, due 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 blocks per week (rather than an odd day here and there throughout a week) or 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.*
4. Illness or injury – at no time should a child perform when unwell. If a child falls ill or is injured while in the Chaperone or Tutor's charge, medical assistance must be gained and the parent/guardian and licensing LA informed immediately. **Always** have a contact number for parents.
5. Living away from home – the Chaperone is responsible for the child. This includes seeing that his/her lodgings are satisfactory in every way; and that she/he is properly occupied during his/her

spare time. If there are problems here that cannot be resolved, contact the child's licensing LA or the LA in whose area the performance is taking place.

6. Dangerous Performances - NO child (generally) under the age of 16 may take part in dangerous performances.

7. Records, by law should be available to a visiting officer of the LA by Producers. Chaperones are often designated to keep these in respect of the child:-

- times child is at the place of performance
- times child performs and/or rehearses
- times child has breaks and meals
- times child is waiting between performances, i.e. re-scheduling

If you feel pressurised to accommodate a production's schedules and you are unsure of the legalities of what they may be asking of the child - **Stop! Think! & Check** the Regulations before agreeing to anything. Failing a satisfactory conclusion, phone the LA either at the time or as soon as is practically possible for further advice or support. One of a Chaperone's greatest strengths is her/his ability to negotiate with the production company 'on site' and be able to say 'no.'

Regulations

Children involved in any performance, whether it is a village hall pantomime or a long running broadcast performance, must be accompanied by a registered chaperone. Similarly, if the performance runs longer than three days the child will need a performance licence.

Children should not take part in performances or rehearsals on more than six consecutive days.

- a child age 0 to 4 must not take part in a performance that lasts more than two hours.
- a child age 5 to 8 must not take part in a performance that lasts more than three hours.
- a child age 9 and over must not take part in a performance that lasts more than five hours.
- a child must only appear in one performance or rehearsal on any day they attend school for the whole day.

CHILDREN IN ENTERTAINMENT

RESTRICTIONS IN RELATION TO ALL PERFORMANCES

TOPIC	AGE 0 TO 4	AGE 5 TO 8	AGE 9 AND OVER
Maximum number of hours at place of performance or rehearsal (Reg. 22)	5 hours	8 hours	9.5 hours
Earliest and latest permitted times at place of performance or rehearsal (Reg.21)	7am to 10pm	7am to 11pm	7am to 11pm
Maximum period of continuous performance or rehearsal (Reg.22)	30 minutes	2.5 hours	2.5 hours
Maximum total hours of performance or rehearsals (Reg.22)	2 hours	3 hours	5 hours
Minimum intervals for meals and rest (Reg.23)	Any breaks must be for a minimum of 15 minutes. If at the place of performance or rehearsals for more than 4 hours, breaks must include at least one 45 minute meal break.	<p>If present at the place of performance or rehearsal for more than 4 hours but less than 8 hours, they must have one meal break of 45 minutes and at least one break of 15 minutes.</p> <p>If present at the place or rehearsal for 8 hours or more, they must have the breaks stated above plus another break of 15 minutes.</p>	<p>If present at the place of performance or rehearsal for more than 4 hours but less than 8 hours, they must have one meal break of 45 minutes and at least one break of 15 minutes.</p> <p>If present at the place or rehearsal for 8 hours or more, they must have the breaks stated above plus another break of 15 minutes.</p>
Education (Reg.13)	N/A	3 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.	3 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.
Minimum break between performances (Reg. 23)	1 hour 30 minutes	1 hour 30 minutes	1 hour 30 minutes
Maximum consecutive days to take part in performance or rehearsal (Reg.26)	6 days	6 days	6 days

Note: Regulation 5 allows the licensing Local Authority to further restrict these permitted hours, breaks etc. and place additional conditions on the licence if this would be in the best interests of the individual child.

Night Work

A licence may be granted for a child outside of the permitted hours if it can be shown that scenes involving children are essential at these times.

The Local Authority may grant a licence for a performance after midnight if they are satisfied that it is impracticable to complete the work before then.

Licence Holder Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Performance Licence Applicant/Holder to ensure that:-

- a child does not perform unless the applicant, who applied for the Performance Licence i.e. producer, agent and so forth is in **receipt** of the child's Licence.
- each child's Licence and Chaperone/Tutor records are available at the place/places of performance, and held by the Licence Holder for a minimum period of 6 months at the address given on the Licence Application (which needs to be the Head (main) Office and NOT the location address i.e. temporary residence of a production at a studio or location) if requested for inspection by an officer of the LA.

Note: An authorised officer of the LA in whose area a performance takes place may at any time enter any place where a performance licensed or unlicensed to which S.37 applies and may make enquiries about any child taking part in a performance.

- suitable travel arrangements are provided.
- suitable arrangements for meals are provided.
- suitable accommodation and sanitary provision is provided.
- suitable meal, rest, recreational & educational facilities are provided.
- adequate protection against inclement weather is provided.
- a Health & Safety 'risk assessment' has been undertaken at the place of the performance by the production company. Other areas, for example: fire regulations are satisfactory; a first aider is present at all times; staff, chaperones and children are made fully aware of evacuation procedures in case of emergencies such as fire

PLUS – Any other conditions or provisos placed on the child's Licence by the issuing LA together with the legal requirements under the ***Children (Performances) Regulations 1968 (Miscellaneous Amendment 1998) are met***