

# YOUTH PROTECTION & MANDATORY REPORTY POLICY



Adopted by Executive board: Fiscal Year 2026

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## I. Purpose

The Theatre Company of Saugus (“TCS”) is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment for all minors participating in its programs, including but not limited to the Youth Theatre Workshop (YTW).

This policy establishes standards for:

- Youth safety and supervision
- Professional boundaries
- Reporting obligations
- Compliance with Massachusetts mandatory reporting laws (M.G.L. c. 119 §51A)

## II. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Board Members
- Youth Theatre Workshop Committee Members
- Directors, Producers, Stage Managers
- Teaching Artists, Interns, Volunteers
- Contractors working with minors
- Any adult in a supervisory or instructional capacity over minors

All covered individuals must review and acknowledge this policy prior to working with youth.

## III. Definitions

**Minor:** Any individual under the age of 18.

**Mandated Reporter:** Individuals required by Mass law to report suspected abuse or neglect.

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**Abuse:** Physical, emotional, or sexual harm, or risk thereof.

**Neglect:** Failure to provide adequate care, supervision, or protection.

## IV. Code of Conduct & Professional Boundaries

To protect both youth and adults, the following standards apply:

### A. Two-Adult Rule

Whenever feasible:

- Two adults shall be present during rehearsals, workshops, or backstage supervision.
- No adult shall be alone in a closed space with a minor.

### B. Physical Contact

- Must be appropriate, non-sexual, and instructional in nature.
- Consent-based and limited to what is necessary for theatrical instruction.
- Intimacy, choreography, and physical direction must follow best practices.

### C. Communication

- No private direct messaging with minors.
- Communication must include parent/guardian and/or occur through official channels.
- Social media “friending” or private engagement with minors is prohibited.

### D. Transportation

- TCS personnel may not transport minors alone.
- Transportation requires parental authorization and two-adult presence when possible.

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## E. Overnight Activities

- If ever overnight programming occurs, separate accommodations by gender identity (with inclusion and safety considerations) must be arranged.
- Clear supervision plans must be documented in advance.

## V. Supervision Standards

- Attendance must be tracked daily.
- Sign-in and sign-out procedures must be documented.
- Parents/guardians must provide emergency contact information.
- Health and allergy information must be collected prior to participation.

## VI. Mandatory Reporting Requirements

Under Massachusetts law (M.G.L. c. 119 §51A):

Certain individuals are mandated reporters and must immediately report suspected child abuse or neglect.

### If abuse or neglect is suspected:

1. Ensure immediate safety of the child.
2. Call the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) Child-At-Risk Hotline:
  - 1-800-792-5200 (24/7)
3. Submit a written 51A report within 48 hours as required by law.
4. Notify the TCS President (unless the concern involves that individual).
5. Document the incident factually (no opinions or speculation).

**Failure to report may result in:**

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- Legal consequences
- Removal from position
- Organizational discipline

## **VII. Internal Reporting**

Even if uncertainty exists, individuals must report concerns internally to:

- The President
- A designated Youth Safety Officer
- Or the Board Executive Committee

TCS strictly prohibits retaliation against anyone who reports a concern in good faith.

## **VIII. Investigation & Response**

Upon receiving a report:

- TCS will cooperate fully with DCF and law enforcement.
- The accused individual may be suspended pending investigation.
- Confidentiality will be maintained to the fullest extent possible.
- Board Executive Committee will oversee response.

## **IX. Training Requirements**

All individuals working with minors must:

- Complete CORI clearance
- Review this Youth Protection Policy annually
- Participate in periodic safety training as determined by the Board

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**X. Policy Oversight**

**This policy shall be:**

- Reviewed annually
- Updated in accordance with Massachusetts law
- Included in Board onboarding materials
- Distributed to all YTW personnel

**Affirmation**

**Theatre Company of Saugus affirms that protecting children is a shared responsibility. Youth safety is foundational to our artistic mission and community trust.**