

EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

Guidance for Chaperones

The Children (Performance and Activities)(England) Regulations 2014

The following information is taken from The Children (Performance and Activities)(England) Regulations 2014 which lays down the Regulations for Matrons or Chaperones as they are now known.

Responsibilities

The holder of the licence is responsible for ensuring that, during the period beginning with the first performance and ending with the last performance covered by the licence, the child is in the charge of a person who has been approved by the licensing authority for this purpose, except when he/she is in the charge of his/her parent or a teacher. The regulations describe this person as a matron (but will be referred to as Chaperone in the following guidelines), who may be a man or a woman.

A Chaperone while in charge of a child under this Regulation shall have the care and control of the child with a view to securing his/her health, comfort, kind treatment and moral welfare.

The Education Welfare Service shall not approve a Chaperone unless satisfied that he/she can exercise proper care and control of the child(ren), and that he/she will not be prevented from carrying out his/her duties as a Chaperone by other duties.

A private teacher may act as a Chaperone, once approved as such by the licensing authority, provided that the number of children in his/her care does not exceed three, and that the licensing authority are satisfied that the arrangements will not adversely affect the children's education or welfare.

When approved, Chaperones are required to notify the Education Welfare Service in writing within seven days of:

- Any arrest for any offence triable in a Court of Law, or any conviction in such a Court, whether in the United Kingdom or otherwise
- Any serious or notifiable illness or debility
- Any change of address or name

The Chaperone should keep the certificate of approval in a safe place, and ensure that they take it with them each day that they are employed as a Chaperone, and have it available for inspection should the need arise.

The Education Welfare Service does not find employment for Chaperones, and will not recommend Chaperones to employers.

Chaperones must ensure that the applicant for the licence gives them a copy of the licence when issued so that they can ensure that the conditions are complied with, including rest periods, arrangements for tuition, meals etc. A record should be kept of the various periods during the hours of the licence.

The Chaperone should be thoroughly familiar with the terms of the licence granted by the Education Welfare Service and see that, as far as it lies within his/her power, the conditions are properly fulfilled.

The Chaperone should have a basic understanding of emergency first aid treatment and also establish that the licence holder has made appropriate provision under The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations.

The Chaperone should have a basic understanding of the “duty of care” in a workplace situation and be satisfied that suitable risk assessments have been carried out by those responsible for the rehearsal/performance. The Chaperone should be satisfied that any risks which may affect the child/children in their care have been identified and that effective control measures are in place.

Below is a list of typical hazards associated with theatrical and film performance. The list is not exhaustive but covers some of the more common areas that may give cause for concern:

- Fire Procedures
- Safe place to stand in wings or off the set
- Movement of scenery
- Flying scenery
- Movement of any machinery
- Periods of temporary darkness (eg scene change)
- Falls from a height
- Smoke effects and dry ice
- Noise (e.g. bomb tanks)
- Pyrotechnics
- Trapdoors
- Animals
- Electrical cables

If the performance is outdoors then in addition to some of the above the following may need to be considered:

- Protection from weather
- Movement of vehicles

Duties of Chaperones

The Chaperone's first duty is to the child/ren in his/her care; while he/she is acting as a Chaperone he/she may not engage in any activity that would interfere with the performance of his/her duties. Except when a child is in the care of a teacher, the Chaperone is in loco parentis and should exercise duty of care which a parent might be reasonably expected to give that child.

The Chaperone shall be in charge of the child at all times, except when the child is in the charge of his/her parent or a tutor.

The maximum number of children a Chaperone should have in his/her care is 12.

The Chaperone's duties will vary according to the nature of performance ie theatre or filming.

Children should be provided with nutritional food and not have take-away snacks. Any special diets for medical reasons, or on moral or religious grounds, must be provided for.

The Chaperone must be satisfied with the arrangements for the dressing rooms (children 5 years old and above must only change with other children of the same sex), toilets etc and know the procedure for the evacuation of the building in case of fire.

In the event of any contravention of the licence, or incident affecting the wellbeing of the child(ren), the Chaperone must inform the local authority who issued the licence at the earliest opportunity.

The Education Welfare Service requires that any Chaperone authorised by them ensures that no child is discriminated against on grounds of race, gender, age, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin.

Filming

A child appearing in a film may be at the studios or place of location for much of the day. During the whole of this time he/she is in the Chaperone's charge, except when having lessons, and it is for him/her to accompany the child from the dressing room or school room, as well as remaining on the set while he/she is there.

The Chaperone is required to keep records of the times the child is on the set and the times he/she rehearses and performs, so as to ensure that the periods permitted under the Regulations are not exceeded. The Chaperone must also ensure that the child does not get less than the required number of breaks for rest and meals.

The Chaperone must ensure that any child in his or her supervision has suitable opportunities for recreation, and that the child is protected from stress, strain, bad weather and any other conditions likely to cause harm.

The Chaperone may allow a child to perform for another half-an-hour beyond the latest permitted hour or have a meal interval shorter by half-an-hour, if the total number of hours, including the half hour, does not exceed the maximum number of hours permitted; if the Chaperone thinks the welfare of the child will not suffer, and the circumstances are outside the control of the licence holder (for example, serious dislocation of film production schedules). When any such extension is authorised, the Chaperone must

notify the local authority in whose area the child is working either the same day or the following day.

Theatre

If the child is working in a theatre, the times of when he/she is to be at the theatre and when he/she will be on stage are known in advance, and must come within what is permitted in the Regulations.

The Chaperone's main duties will be to ensure that, when the child is not actually performing (including the period in between performances if there are two performances on the same day and he/she does not go home or back to his/her lodgings) he/she is properly supervised and has adequate meals, rest and recreation.

Children on Tour

If the child is living away from home the Chaperone is responsible for him/her throughout the currency of the licence. This includes seeing that his/her lodgings are satisfactory and that he/she is properly occupied in his/her spare time. In general a Chaperone needs to exercise a greater amount of supervision than if the child were living at home during the period of the licence.

The Chaperone must ensure that there are suitable arrangements for meals. Food should normally be provided at the lodgings. The children must be in the constant charge of the Chaperone, who must accompany them at all times.

The Chaperone must arrange to sleep in the accommodation in which the children sleep near to the rooms occupied by the children.

It is a special responsibility of the Chaperone to see that adequate comfortable and clean lodgings are found for the children. These lodgings have to be approved by the local authority in whose area they are, but if for any reason she/he thinks them unsatisfactory, the Chaperone should insist on a change of accommodation.

The Chaperone must ensure that, if necessary, there is transport to and from the place of entertainment. No child should normally have more than 3 hours journey. The child(ren) should have plenty of exercise.

Illness or injury

If a child suffers any injury or illness while in the charge of a Chaperone or teacher, the holder of the licence shall ensure that a doctor is called and that the parent of the child named in the application form and the local authority are notified immediately of such injury or illness.

It is advisable that the Chaperone keeps a record of any instances where this should happen.

Should the child fall ill whilst on tour and is too ill to perform, the Chaperone must make arrangements for the child to be sent home under proper escort.

In the case of serious illness/accident the child should be sent to hospital and the child's parents informed immediately. The authority who issued the licence should also be informed as soon as possible.

No child should perform if unwell.

Inspections

The Education Welfare Service will make inspections without prior notice at places of entertainment within the East Riding of Yorkshire. Most Local Authorities have similar policies. Inspections are normally carried out by Education Welfare Officers. The Officer should make his or herself known to the Chaperone on arrival and will have proper identity cards.

Chaperone's should under no circumstances hand any child over to, or let the child be examined by any other person. The only exceptions to this are unless with the prior approval of the child's parent, or emergencies, and then under the supervision of a doctor, police officer in uniform or other suitable persons.