



Adult/Youth Engagement Policy

Updated September 13, 2019

Reviewed and Approved January 8, 2026

Policy Statement: Children's Theatre Company (CTC) has zero tolerance of child abuse. As an organization that primarily serves children, our highest priority is child safety. It is the policy of CTC to diligently empower and protect Youth by providing safe spaces for theatre education and experiences. We work every day to ensure our policies, procedures and practices embody the highest safety standards for the young people that we serve.

CTC has a painful history that is a constant reminder of the importance of being rigorous with our child protection policies. In the 1970s and early '80s, former CTC staff members sexually abused some CTC students. The CTC Board of Directors made changes immediately that included changes in leadership, stricter child safety policies, practices, and trainings, and closed the school. While those former staff no longer have any connection to CTC, their abhorrent acts will remain a scar on the organization and will forever inform the rigor with which we enforce rules for our interactions between Adults and Youth at CTC. We are committed to doing everything we can to create and strengthen a culture that protects and respects children, while embracing the joy and impact of theatre.

This policy is communicated and applied to staff, student actors, students taking CTC classes, volunteers and contractors. It is also shared with parents/caregivers of students engaged at CTC. Questions about interpreting this policy should be directed to Children's Theatre Company's Managing Director or Director of Human Resources.

Policy Summary: This policy is a codification of the Adult/Youth engagement policy language included in CTC's Employee Handbook and found throughout CTC procedures, manuals and agreements. The following areas are covered by this policy:

1. Mandatory Background Checks
2. Fraternalization
3. Appropriate Language and Communications
4. Social Media and Electronic Communication
5. Child Abuse/Neglect -Mandatory Reporting
6. Non-retaliation
7. Additional Procedures and Practices for Youth
8. Disciplinary Action

Definitions: For purposes of all areas of CTC's Adult/Youth Engagement Policy and any related policies, the following definitions apply:

- **Adult:** any person 18 years of age or older who is an actor, performing apprentice, employee, independent contractor, or volunteer at CTC.
- **Youth:** any person 17 years of age or younger, involved in CTC programming, who is a student, actor, volunteer, intern, apprentice, or employee, whether on-site or off-site. Individuals are considered a Youth at CTC throughout a particular program or production in which they are involved, even if they turn 18 during the course of the program or production participation or are an 18-year-old high school student.
- **Private Space:** All non-public spaces including elevators, any office space, dressing room, bathroom, rehearsal room and classroom.
- **Public Space:** any common space accessible to the general public or to those granted security access to the facilities including lobbies, theatres and hallways.
- **Rule of 3:** CTC practices safe Adult to Youth ratios with a Rule of 3, meaning no Adult will be one-on-one with Youth in Private Space. For the purposes of this Rule of 3, any Youth who starts the program or production at age 17 will be considered a Youth even if the individual turns 18 during their participation in the program or production

1. **Mandatory Background Checks**

Background checks, including criminal history and the National Sex Offender database checks, are conducted for every position prior to hire. These background checks are conducted in compliance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act and other legal requirements. Background checks are not permitted for individuals under 18.

CTC conducts periodic rechecks for positions working directly with children. CTC will recheck all employees at least every 5 years and will recheck those with direct contact with children at least every 3 years. CTC reserves the right to randomly check any employee or all employees more frequently than the stated 3- or 5-year intervals.

2. **Fraternization**

CTC prohibits Adult interactions with Youth outside of scheduled rehearsals, performances, classes or CTC sanctioned professional activities.

Safe Ratios / Rule of 3: See Rule of 3 in Definitions. Specific guidelines with respect to fraternization include, without limitation:

- a. Adults must comply with the Rule of 3. However, should Adults need to work one-on-one with Youth (beginning of class while waiting for other students, end of class before student is picked up, during class for discussion, instruction, or coaching), the door to any Private Space will remain fully open providing access to Public Space and to other personnel on the floor.

- b. Adults may not offer and/or give rides to Youth at any time, for any reason. However, in certain limited circumstances where CTC-sanctioned professional activities require it and where parent/caregiver authorization is provided, an Adult may provide a ride to a Youth.
- c. Adults may not host or accept invitations to parties hosted by Youth or their family, unless the entire cast or class is invited and the Youth's parent/caregiver is present.
- d. We recognize that Adults may have relationships with a Youth's family outside of CTC (whether familial or otherwise) and section b and c do not apply to those relationships and apply only to CTC related rides or parties.

Adults are prohibited from dating Youth or otherwise having outside personal contact with Youth or encouraging an emotional and/or sexual relationship with a Youth who is in any way affiliated with the Theatre or its programs. State laws prohibit sexual contact or sexual intercourse with anyone under the age of 18. Consent of a minor is irrelevant in the eyes of the law. This includes improper touching; one must be aware that even a casual gesture may cause emotional injury, particularly to a child.

3. Appropriate Language and Communications

Adults and Youth are expected to comport themselves with respectful behavior and to use age-appropriate language at all times. Sharing inappropriate language, images, materials and content is prohibited. See also CTC's IT use policy, which also relates to inappropriate use of CTC resources.

4. Social Media and Electronic Communication

Outside of formal communication relevant to the business of CTC, Adults may not:

- connect with Youth on social media (follow, be followed by, friend or accept a connection request)
- email, text, or conduct phone calls with Youth
- photograph Youth or post images of Youth

Where pre-existing relationships exist between an Adult and a Youth related to social media or other electronic communication, the Adult will notify in writing their supervisor or Managing Director.

5. Child Abuse/Neglect - Mandatory Reporting

Consistent with Minnesota Law, CTC is committed to protect children whose health or welfare may be jeopardized through neglect, physical or sexual abuse. CTC requires its employees to be familiar with the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors law (see Minnesota Statute Section 626.556 at <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=626.556>), which mandates, in certain circumstances, reporting of possible child neglect or abuse.

Under Minnesota law, Adults may have a mandatory obligation to report actual or suspected child neglect and physical or sexual abuse. Therefore, Adults who know or have reason to believe that a child is being neglected or physically or sexually abused or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years, are required to immediately (as

soon as possible, but in no event longer than 24 hours) report this information to the local welfare agency or other appropriate governmental agency. If the reporter is unsure about the appropriate governmental agency to which the report should be made, contact Hennepin County Child Protective Services at 612.348.3552. If the child is immediate danger, call 911. In addition, the reporter should notify one of the following as soon as possible: (1) the Artistic Director; (2) the Managing Director; (3) the Chair of the Board of Directors; or (4) the reporter's department head.

The Minnesota Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors statute defines in detail neglect and physical and sexual abuse, as well as other key terms. (See link to statute above.) All Adults are expected to be familiar with the law, including any definitions set forth therein.

Under the Minnesota Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors statute, the obligation to report is mandatory and failure to report may result in criminal prosecution.

6. Non-retaliation

CTC strictly prohibits retaliation against any person in any form in response to reports made in good faith under this policy, including retaliation against the reporter, the child with respect to whom the report was made, or anyone involved in a related investigation. Individuals who are found to have engaged in retaliation will be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment. If there are any questions or concerns about retaliation please contact a supervisor, the Managing Director or Director of Human Resources.

7. Additional Procedures and Practices for Youth

CTC Employee Handbook

CTC Student Actor Handbook

CTC Performing Apprentices Handbook

Parent/Caregiver Handbook

Theatre Arts Training Teacher Handbook

Additional policies protecting Youth may be found within the handbooks above, including but not limited to harassment, food policies, alcohol/tobacco usage, photo/video documentation, door monitoring and building access, medical emergencies, reporting incident/accidents, lost/missing students, and evacuation. Individual programs or departments may have more rigorous procedures and practices. Adults are expected to be familiar with these additional procedures and practices. When CTC programming is at a host site, Adults should comply with this policy and those policies determined by the host site.

8. Disciplinary Action

Interaction with Youth that violates CTC policies will result in discipline, up to and including termination, as well as reporting of the incident to relevant authorities as required by law.

Adult/Youth Engagement Policy Acknowledgement Form

Please print, sign and date below, to verify the following:

- I understand the policy explained herein.
- I will ask my supervisor or other appropriate party at CTC if I have questions or concerns about this policy.
- I know where to find other relevant policies, including the Employee Handbook.
- I understand that I am required to report any and all good faith concerns regarding interactions with Youth to my supervisor or other appropriate party at CTC.
- I understand I will not be retaliated against for making a good faith report under this policy.
- I understand my department or program may have additional guidelines, procedures, and practices to protect Youth and that I will review and adhere to them.
- I have received, read, and understand CTC's Adult / Youth Engagement Policy and I am aware that any violation of this policy may constitute grounds for my immediate dismissal.

Name: (print) _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____