Croydon Youth Theatre Organisation

Workshop Volunteers' Policy

1. Purpose of this policy

Croydon Youth Theatre Organisation (CYTO) welcomes volunteers who wish to support the delivery of its workshops and activities. Volunteers play an important role in helping to create a safe, positive, inclusive and enjoyable environment for all participants.

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear expectations, responsibilities and boundaries for anyone volunteering at CYTO workshops, off-site visits and production weeks.

2. The role of a workshop volunteer

The primary role of a CYTO workshop volunteer is to assist and enhance the experience of the participants.

Volunteers are there to support the workshop, the facilitators and the young people taking part. They are not participants themselves and should not treat volunteering as an opportunity to take part in the activities for their own enjoyment.

Volunteers are expected to:

- Help create a welcoming, supportive and inclusive environment.
- Assist workshop leaders with activities, exercises and practical arrangements.
- Encourage and support participants without taking over their work or creative decisions.
- Help participants feel comfortable, confident and able to engage.
- Assist with setting up and clearing away equipment and materials.
- Follow instructions from the workshop leader and other designated CYTO staff.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with all participants.

Volunteers should not:

- Join in workshop activities as though they are participants, unless specifically invited to demonstrate or assist with an exercise by the workshop leader.
- Compete with, dominate or draw attention away from the young people.
- Use workshop time to pursue their own creative interests or personal development.
- Undermine the authority or instructions of the workshop leader.

- Make decisions about workshop content, participant behaviour or safeguarding matters independently.

The focus of every workshop must remain on the participants' experience, development and enjoyment.

3. Break Times and Use of Staff Areas

Volunteers should be aware that staff and members' scheduled break times do not necessarily coincide with volunteer break times. During participant breaks, volunteers may be required to support the Sign-In Desk team in maintaining appropriate supervision and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of participants. This includes helping to ensure that:

- Participants' behaviour remains appropriate and in line with the organisation's expectations.
- Adult hirers do not access toilet facilities designated exclusively for under-18s.
- Participants do not leave the building unaccompanied or without the appropriate authorisation.

To ensure that volunteers and staff are able to take comfortable breaks and have sufficient time to eat, these responsibilities should be shared through an agreed rotation between staff and volunteers. Duties should be alternated wherever possible to ensure that no individual is expected to remain on duty throughout the break period.

On the rare occasions where a volunteer commits to more than six hours of volunteering in a single day, they will be entitled to an uninterrupted break of no less than 20 minutes.

Use of the Office and Designated Break Spaces

The office is no longer considered an appropriate space for volunteers to spend their breaks or wait before the start of a session. The office is a busy operational workspace where staff require a suitable environment to concentrate and carry out their duties. It is also a space where confidential and sensitive matters, including safeguarding concerns, may be discussed.

Volunteers are therefore asked to respect the privacy and working requirements of the office by not using it as a social or waiting area.

When not in use for workshops, The Link, the kitchen or the foyer are suitable spaces for volunteers to take their breaks or wait before sessions begin. Volunteers should use these designated areas rather than the office, ensuring that all spaces are left clean, tidy and ready for their intended use.

Personal belongings, including bags, wheelchairs etc, can be stored in the small office. At the volunteers' request, this space can be locked and unlocked by David Page, Lynda Morgan and/or Andrew McPherson.

4. Safeguarding and mandatory training

The safety and welfare of young people is CYTO's highest priority.

All workshop volunteers must complete CYTO's in-house safeguarding training before undertaking any volunteering duties. This training will explain CYTO's safeguarding procedures, expectations, reporting arrangements and the boundaries of the volunteer role.

Volunteers must:

- Read and understand CYTO's safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Attend and complete the required in-house safeguarding training.
- Understand how to recognise and report safeguarding concerns.
- Report any concerns, disclosures or incidents immediately to the designated safeguarding lead or appropriate member of CYTO staff.
- Never promise a participant confidentiality when a safeguarding concern has been raised.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries in all interactions with participants.
- Never put themselves in a situation where they are working inappropriately or unnecessarily alone with a young person.
- Be in a 1-2-1 capacity with a young person - if this occurs they must be escorted to the foyer, where they will find another volunteer at the sign in desk.

Safeguarding training must be completed before a volunteer begins working with participants.

5. DBS checks

All workshop volunteers must obtain an appropriate volunteer Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, in accordance with CYTO's safeguarding requirements and applicable legislation.

CYTO will cover the cost of the volunteer DBS check.

Volunteers must:

- Complete the necessary DBS application and verification process.
- Provide the information and documentation required to facilitate the check.
- Inform CYTO of any relevant changes in circumstances that may affect their suitability to volunteer.
- Follow CYTO's guidance regarding the renewal or updating of DBS checks.

No volunteer may begin their volunteering duties until the required safeguarding checks and approval procedures have been completed.

6. Chaperone Licenses

Upon successful completion of the probationary period (one full term), Workshop Volunteers will be invited to apply for Volunteer Chaperone status.

Becoming an approved Volunteer Chaperone is optional for volunteers whose role is limited to assisting with workshops. However, it is mandatory for any volunteer wishing to assist during production weeks or accompany participants on off-site visits. Volunteers undertaking these activities must successfully complete the Volunteer Chaperone application and approval process, including any required safeguarding checks and training, before taking on these responsibilities.

CYTO will cover the cost of Chaperone Licenses where necessary.

7. Limits on consecutive volunteering sessions

To ensure that volunteering remains a supportive role and that appropriate boundaries are maintained, volunteers must not volunteer for more than **two workshop sessions in one day.** The volunteer's Line Manager will specify which workshops they will assist should there be more than two workshops in any given day.

After volunteering for two sessions, a volunteer must take at least one session away from volunteering before returning.

This limit is intended to:

- Maintain a clear distinction between volunteers and participants.
- Ensure that volunteers remain focused on their support responsibilities.
- Prevent volunteers from becoming an informal or permanent part of the participant group.
- Allow opportunities for different volunteers to support the programme.

Any exceptional arrangements must be discussed and approved in advance by CYTO management.

8. Conduct and professional boundaries

All volunteers are representatives of CYTO while undertaking their duties and are expected to behave in a responsible, respectful and appropriate manner.

Volunteers must:

- Treat all participants, staff and fellow volunteers with respect.
- Be inclusive and mindful of different backgrounds, abilities and needs.
- Respect participants' personal space, privacy and individual boundaries.
- Use appropriate language and behaviour at all times.
- Avoid favouritism or developing inappropriate personal relationships with participants.

- Follow CYTO's policies on photography, social media, communication and the handling of personal information.
- Raise any concerns about the workshop environment or their role with the workshop leader or CYTO management.

Volunteers should never use their position to seek personal attention, influence or authority over participants.

9. Supervision and accountability

While in sessions, volunteers work under the direction and supervision of the designated workshop leader or CYTO staff member.

The workshop leader is responsible for allocating tasks, providing guidance and ensuring that volunteers understand their responsibilities.

The Line Manager of all workshop volunteers is the Artistic Director. Any absences, concerns or safeguarding disclosures should be made directly to the Artistic Director, either in person, via email andrewmcpherson@cyto.org.uk, or via WhatsApp.

Volunteers should not independently:

- Discipline or sanction participants.
- Make decisions about a participant's continued involvement in a workshop.
- Manage safeguarding disclosures beyond reporting them.
- Change planned activities or workshop arrangements.
- Act as a substitute for a member of CYTO staff.

Any difficulties, concerns or uncertainties should be referred to the workshop leader.

10. Attendance and reliability

Reliability and strong communication is crucial for CYTO workshop volunteers. An absence for whatever reason could cause the cancellation of sessions, if the absence causes us to be under the correct adult to young person ratio.

Volunteers are expected to arrive on time (no more than 30 minutes before a session), attend agreed sessions and notify CYTO as early as possible if they are unable to attend.

Volunteers should communicate any difficulties with their availability so that appropriate arrangements can be made to ensure workshops remain properly supported.

Workshop volunteering opportunities must be treated with the same commitment, respect and reliability that would be required of a paid position.

11. Review of volunteering arrangements

CYTO reserves the right to review, amend or end a volunteer arrangement if a volunteer does not follow this policy, breaches safeguarding procedures or behaves in a way that is inconsistent with CYTO's values and responsibilities.

The organisation is committed to ensuring that volunteering remains a positive and valuable contribution to the experience of its young participants.

12. Policy acknowledgement

All volunteers are required to read and agree to this policy before undertaking volunteering duties with Croydon Youth Theatre Organisation.

By agreeing to this policy, volunteers confirm that they understand their role is to support the participants' experience, rather than participate in the workshops themselves, and that they will comply with all safeguarding, training, DBS and conduct requirements.

Croydon Youth Theatre Organisation (CYTO)

Created by: Andrew McPherson
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Signed  **Date** 11/11/26

Andrew McPherson

Artistic Director

Signed  **Date** 11/11/26

Anna Shields

Co-chair of Board of Trustees