

Working with children and young people at the BBC.

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Welcome

Informing, educating and entertaining young audiences is right at the heart of the BBC's remit as a public service broadcaster.

To achieve this we work directly with a significant number of children and young people as contributors to content; actors/performers under licence; spectators and participants at shows and events; and visitors to our buildings.

Who is this guide for?

If you are working directly with children for, or on behalf of, the BBC then this guide is for you. That includes BBC employees in all divisions and in any role, Talent (presenters/actors/celebrities); freelancers, contractors, and Indies (independent production companies).

How to use this guide

This guide will lead you through the process of working with children and young people in a way that safeguards their welfare at all times. Start with the [Checklist](#) on page 03. It lists all the key points you need to consider – then click through for more detailed information.

In this guidance

The term “children and young people” (often shortened to just “children”) means people under 18 years old.

Editorial issues for making children's content are not covered in this publication; these can be found within [BBC Editorial Guidelines Section 5: Harm & Offence](#).



Checklist

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This checklist includes all the key points you need to consider when working with children for, or on behalf of, the BBC in any capacity.

Have you read:

- The BBC Child Protection Policy?**
www.bbc.co.uk/workingwithchildren
- The BBC's Code of Conduct for working with children?**
Page 06
- Online Safety Guidance?**
Page 07

- Do you know who your local Contact at the BBC is for child protection?**
Page 13
- Have you carried out the appropriate Staff checks to ensure that everyone working directly with children on your project is suitable?**
Page 08
- Do you have appropriate records of Consent?**
Page 10
- Do you have the correct performance Licences in place?**
Page 11
- Does your Risk assessment take into account specific risks to children?**
Page 12



Child protection^{1/2}

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Our approach

At the BBC, child protection is everybody's business. We all have a responsibility to report any concerns and keep children and young people safe. Our child protection policy and protocols apply to everyone working for, or on behalf, of the BBC. This includes BBC employees in all divisions and in any role, Talent (presenters/actors/celebrities); freelancers, contractors, and Indies (independent production companies).

If you are at all concerned about the welfare of a child, or the behaviour of an adult working with children, you should refer to the BBC Child Protection Policy, and alert your local Contact at the BBC for child protection (page 13), who will take the matter forward as appropriate.

People often worry they might make a situation worse by reporting a concern of this nature. Everyone has a duty to raise their concern, but you will not be expected to make a judgement call or take the matter forward - that is the role of your local Contact (page 13).

**At the BBC,
child protection
is everybody's
business.**



Child protection^{2/2}

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Working directly with children

If you work directly with children in any capacity for, or on behalf of, the BBC, it is essential that you read and comply with:

- **The BBC Child Protection Policy**;
www.bbc.co.uk/workingwithchildren
- **Our Code of Conduct** – ten golden rules to guide your behaviour around children; and
Page 06
- **Our Online Safety Guidance**, which explains how to keep children safe in online spaces.
Page 07

It's also crucial that you know who your local Contact at the BBC is for child protection (page 13).

Bringing children to work

If anyone working for or on behalf of the BBC has problems meeting childcare needs, they should not bring their children into the workplace. However, it is recognised that sometimes exceptional circumstances can arise which mean this is necessary. In such cases the individual must get permission from their line manager; contracting manager or commissioning editor.

If permission has been given for a child to be brought into the workplace, the child must remain under the direct supervision of their parent/guardian at all times.

This applies to BBC employees in all divisions and in any role, Talent (presenters/actors/celebrities); freelancers, contractors, and Indies (independent production companies).



Code of conduct

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Follow these ten golden rules when you interact directly with children and young people in any capacity on behalf of the BBC:

- 01 **Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the child at all times.**
- 02 **Never take sole responsibility for a child; if a child needs care alert the parent or chaperone.**
- 03 **Only take on practical caring responsibilities, for example, taking a child to the toilet, in an emergency.**
- 04 **Never give out your personal contact details, and do not ‘friend’ or ‘follow’ children you are working with on social networking sites.**
- 05 **Remember they are children first, and contributors or participants second.**
- 06 **Never lose sight of the fact that you are with children – behave appropriately and use appropriate language at all times.**
- 07 **Listen to and respect children at all times; don’t patronise them.**
- 08 **Avoid favouritism, and treat children and young people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination.**
- 09 **Always act within professional boundaries; ensure all contact with children is essential to the programme/event/activity/project you are working on.**
- 10 **Ultimately, if you feel anyone is behaving inappropriately around children, you have a duty to report your concern to your local Contact at the BBC for child protection (page 13).**



Online safety

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Children and young people can be particularly vulnerable in online spaces. When you're working with children you must consider online safety as part of your risk assessment, particularly if the project has an online element.

Production/project teams should have a conversation about the possibility of unwanted attention online as part of their initial discussions with young contributors/on-screen talent and their parents/chaperones/management.

For example, depending on the circumstances, it may be appropriate to recommend that a young contributor's social media profiles are temporarily suspended.

Remember that most social networks are not intended for children under the age of 13, and therefore should not be used to speak to this age group.

Talk to your local Contact (page 13) at the BBC for child protection for advice about safeguarding under 18s online and also if you have more serious concerns such as:

- If you think that a BBC presenter, actor, production team or brand - particularly if it is one that is popular with children or young people - is being impersonated online.
- If you have been sent something that you have reason to believe may be child abuse images or video (NEVER open or forward suspect attachments).
- If you have reason to think a child is being groomed online.

Please note

As stated in the BBC Code of Conduct for Child Protection, do not 'friend' or 'follow' children or young people you are working with on social networking sites.



Staff checks^{1/2}

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When you are planning a production, event, activity or project involving children, you must take steps to ensure that everyone working with you who will (or might) interact directly with children is suitable for this role.

Some suggestions of how to approach this are below:

- If eligible, request a DBS/PVG check (page 09)
- Take into account their previous experience of working with children
- Consider any training they have done or could do
- Ask for references

In addition to the above, you must make sure everyone working on your project is fully aware of the BBC's approach to child protection. It's particularly important to highlight the Code of Conduct (page 06).

Record your conclusions and any related actions in your risk assessment.



Staff checks^{2/2}

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What are DBS/PVG checks?

DBS checks and PVG scheme membership will reveal all unspent convictions, and spent convictions, cautions, final warnings and reprimands which are not eligible for filtering. They can help to prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children, and therefore play an important role in safeguarding their welfare.

What are the criteria for a DBS/PVG check?

We are only permitted by law to request checks for specific activities and positions. Typically, in the context of the work of the BBC, a DBS/PVG check might be carried out when an individual is required to:

- Care for, teach, train, supervise or personally assist (eg. costume fitting or removing make-up) a child

as part of their normal duties or for intensive periods.

- Drive a vehicle solely for children without supervision.
- Monitor online content or services used mainly by children for the purposes of child protection
- Provide a service as a registered professional, such as a doctor or solicitor.
- Manage someone taking on an activity eligible for a DBS/PVG check.

For the full details of the types of role that can be DBS checked visit the Disclosure & Barring Service website:
<http://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check>

For full details of the types of role that can be PVG checked, visit the Disclosure Scotland website:
<http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk>

How do I request a DBS/PVG check?

BBC staff should follow the guidance available on Gateway (search for Working with Children)

Indies (independent production companies) should check their own staff and liaise with their Commissioning Editor.

Freelancers should raise any queries they have with their contracting manager at the BBC.



Consent

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Informed consent from the child and an individual or organisation with parental responsibility for the child should always be obtained in advance of working with children in any capacity. Keep documented evidence of consent.

16–17 year olds can sign their own consent form if the project is not contentious as stated in the BBC Editorial Guidelines.

If you're on location it's a good idea to print a few spare consent forms and have them with you. Use the template consent letter and form available at www.bbc.co.uk/workingwithchildren



Licences

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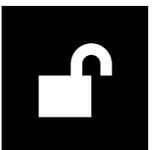
A child or young person contributing to BBC content as an actor or performer may need a 'Child Licence'. These are granted by the Local Authority for the area where the child lives.

There are specific regulations regarding working with children under licence – for example, limited working hours or number of breaks.

Children working as actors, performers or 'under licence' in other instances must always be accompanied by an adult. This can be a parent or guardian of the child, but a licensed chaperone is preferable. In either case, the adult should be solely focused on the safety and wellbeing of the child – make sure they don't get carried away by the excitement of programme making!

For daily news, documentaries and some other appearances a licence may not be required. Seek legal advice before proceeding.

The BBC's full Guidelines for Child Licensing and forms for recording working hours and tuition are available at www.bbc.co.uk/workingwithchildren



Risk assessment

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Finally, all of your thinking around safeguarding children and young people should be recorded in your risk assessment.

Some additional points to consider in your risk assessment:

Health & Safety

When considering health and safety risks, remember that children are generally:

- Less able to recognise danger;
- Likely to be in an environment which is unfamiliar to them;
- Very inquisitive, which can mean they are more likely to take risks; and
- Likely to be more prone to tiredness, anxiety and stress in response to pressure and long hours.

Aftercare

It's also really important to consider any potential long-term consequences for the child.

Are there likely to be any post-transmission repercussions such as bullying or unwanted attention? If you do identify this kind of risk, ensure you explain it clearly to the participant and their responsible adult at the time of seeking consent. You might also need to consider what sort of support might be helpful to the child when the filming has finished.

Access the BBC's risk assessment tool online at www.bbc.co.uk/safety



Contacts

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If you are concerned about a child, or about the behaviour of an adult around a child, you should raise the matter with your local contact at the BBC as soon as possible.

BBC staff should contact the 'nominated manager' responsible for child protection in their division. An up to date list of nominated managers can be found on Gateway (search for Working with Children)

Indies (independent production companies) should contact their Commissioning Editor.

Freelancers should contact their contracting manager.

