

## **HERSHEY AREA PLAYHOUSE**

### **POLICY**

#### **WORKING WITH CHILDREN**

It is the belief of the Board of Directors of the Hershey Area Playhouse that the safety and welfare of a child is paramount regardless of age, culture, disability, ethnic origin, gender, language, race, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity and that everyone who may use or visit the theatre, has a right to protection from emotional, physical, sexual and verbal abuse. Because some positions with the Hershey Area Playhouse in the course of their duties may have direct contact with children, the Hershey Area Playhouse Board of Directors requires that all employees, contractors and/or volunteers adhere to the following policy for Hershey Area Playhouse activities involving children. “Child(ren) in the context of this policy refers to any individual under the age of eighteen (18) years.

The Board of Directors of the Hershey Area Playhouse recognizes that volunteers make valuable contributions to the operation of the Playhouse and, as an all-volunteer organization, the Playhouse cannot function without a solid, reliable corps of volunteers. Therefore, the use of volunteers is fully endorsed by the Board, subject to legal requirements and reasonable operational procedures. In all cases, the use of volunteers is a decision made by the Director/Producer/Facilitator

of an event and/or the Board. The Board reserves the right to determine, on a case by case basis, which persons it deems necessary to possess current background checks and clearances as noted in the following paragraphs. In addition, the Board reserves the right to refuse appointment and/or use in any Hershey Area Playhouse activity of any individual (if so designated) who either does not submit the required clearances within the time limit established by the Board or submits clearances that are determined by the Board's designee as not meeting the standard necessary for use as a volunteer in that Hershey Area Playhouse activity. The decision of the Board designee may be appealed to the Board Chairperson. The decision of the Board Chairperson shall be final.

### **Hershey Area Playhouse Board of Directors**

All persons appointed to the Board of Directors of the Hershey Area Playhouse shall be required to obtain the following clearances:

- A Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Background Check (application may be made, free of charge, at <https://epatch.state.pa.us/> and
- A Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance (Act 151 of 1994, 23 Pa. C.S. §6355) (application made be made, free of charge, at <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home> ; and,

- An FBI background check (Act 34 of 1985, 24 P.S. §1-111(e)), (the requirement for an FBI background check is waived for all current members of the Board who submit a Volunteer Verification Form and have lived in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania continuously for the past ten (10) years and for all future members of the Board who submit a Volunteer Verification Form and have lived in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania continuously for ten (10) years as of the date of her/his appointment to the Board). FBI clearance applications may be completed at <https://uenroll.identogo.com/workflows/1KG6ZJ>

Clearances presented to the Board must be current (less than five (5) years old) upon initial appointment and must be remain current during the Director's tenure on the Board. In addition, it is the policy of the Board that all members of the Board of Directors be considered mandated reporters of child abuse and as such, the above appointees shall undergo training for mandated and permissive reporters of child abuse and submit a certificate of completion to the Board. The Board shall not be responsible for any costs associated with the application for the above clearances. The above clearances must be presented to the Board Chairperson bby July 1, 2016. The Board reserves the right to discontinue board service for any Board member to fails to fulfill this requirement.

**Note: It shall be the policy of the Hershey Area Playhouse that no adult shall be working alone with an individual child unless within the sight of another adult.**

### **Theatre Academy Employees/Teaching Staff**

All persons appointed to the Hershey Area Playhouse Theatre Academy as teaching staff shall be required to obtain the following clearances:

- A Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Background Check (application may be made, free of charge, at <https://epatch.state.pa.us/> ; and
- A Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance (Act 151 of 1994, 23 Pa. C.S. §6355) (application made be made, free of charge, at <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>; and,
- An FBI background check (Act 34 of 1985, 24 P.S. §1-111(e)),

All clearances (less than five (5) years old) must remain current throughout the duration of each teaching semester for which a staff member is appointed. The above clearances must be submitted to the Board designee at least two weeks prior to the start of each session of classes. FBI

clearance applications may be completed at

<https://uenroll.identogo.com/workflows/1KG6ZJ>

**Note: It shall be the policy of the Hershey Area Playhouse that no adult shall be working alone with an individual child unless within the sight of another adult**

### **Appointed Crew Members**

It shall be the policy of the Board that the person appointed to the position of Director of any Hershey Area Playhouse activity involving, as participants (actors or members of the crew) children under the age of eighteen (18) years is, by virtue of that appointment, responsible for the safety and well-being of the children involved in that Hershey Area Playhouse activity and, as a result, will be required by the Board of Directors to obtain the following clearances:

- A Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Check (application may be made, free of charge, at <https://epatch.state.pa.us/>; and
- A Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance (Act 151 of 1994, 23 Pa. C.S. §6355) (application made be made, free of charge, at <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>; and, if necessary,

- An FBI background check (Act 34 of 1985, 24 P.S. §1-111(e)), (the requirement for an FBI background check is waived for all current Directors who submit a Volunteer Verification Form and who have lived in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania continuously for the past ten (10) years and for all future persons appointed as Directors who submit a Volunteer Verification Form and who have lived in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania continuously for ten (10) years as of the date of her/his appointment as a Director of a Hershey Area Playhouse activity). FBI clearance applications may be completed at

<https://uenroll.identogo.com/workflows/1KG6ZJ>

Clearances presented to the Board must be current (less than five (5) years old) upon each individual appointment as Director of a Hershey Area Playhouse activity and must remain current throughout the run of the activity. The Board reserves the right to refuse appointment to any individual who fails to meet the above requirements. In addition, it is the policy of the Board that all persons appointed to the position of Director be considered mandated reporters of child abuse and as such, the above appointees shall undergo training for mandated and permissive reporters of child abuse and submit a certificate of completion to the Board. The Board shall not be responsible for any costs associated with obtaining the above

clearances or training. However, the Board Chairperson, at her/his discretion after discussion with the Board appointed contact person for the Hershey Area Playhouse activity, may approve the reimbursement of the cost of the clearances as a Hershey Area Playhouse activity expense. The above clearances must be submitted to the Board designee at least two weeks prior to the start of rehearsals.

**Note: It shall be the policy of the Hershey Area Playhouse that no adult shall be working alone with an individual child unless within the sight of another adult.**

### **Volunteers/Crew Members**

A Volunteer is any individual who provides services to the Playhouse, without compensation, and who works directly under the supervision and direction of the Board (or, if a Board member, under the supervision or direction of the Chairperson of the Board) or under the supervision and direction of a person appointed by the Board to Direct, Produce or Facilitate an event. The Board contact for each Hershey Area Playhouse activity, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board and/or the Director of the Hershey Area Playhouse activity shall determine which additional members of the crew (if any) shall be

required to obtain clearances and shall recommend that determination to the Board of Directors. That determination shall be made based on the necessity, in the course of her/his duties, of that volunteer's/crew member's direct contact with children and/or a determination that said crew members is charged with being responsible for the safety and well-being of the children involved in the Hershey Area Playhouse activity. If it is determined that additional crew members will be designated as requiring clearances, each person so designated shall present the following clearances to the Board:

- A Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Check (application may be made at <https://epatch.state.pa.us/>; and
- A Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance (Act 151 of 1994, 23 Pa. C.S. §6355) (application made be made at <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home> ; and
- An FBI background check (Act 34 of 1985, 24 P.S. §1-111(e), ) may be obtained by registering at <https://uenroll.identogo.com/workflows/1KG6ZJ> ( NOTE: the requirement for an FBI background check is waived for all current Crew Members designated as requiring clearances who submit a Volunteer Verification Form and who have lived in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania continuously for the past ten (10) years and for all future



crew members designated as requiring clearances who submit a Volunteer Verification Form and who have lived in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania continuously for ten (10) years as of the date of her/his appointment as a Director).

Clearances presented to the Board must be current (less than five (5) years old) upon her/his appointment and must remain current throughout run of the Hershey Area Playhouse activity. The Board reserves the right to refuse approval to participate in a playhouse Hershey Area Playhouse activity in any way for any person who fails to meet the above requirements. In addition, it is the policy of the Board that all persons so designated be considered mandated reporters of child abuse and as such, the persons so designated shall undergo training for mandated and permissive reporters of child abuse and submit a certificate of completion to the Board. The Board shall not be responsible for any costs associated with the application for the above clearances or training. However, the Board Chairperson, at her/his discretion after discussion with the Board appointed contact person for the Hershey Area Playhouse activity, may approve the reimbursement of the cost of the clearances as a production expense. The above clearances must be submitted to the Board designee at least two weeks prior to the start of rehearsals.

**Note: It shall be the policy of the Hershey Area Playhouse that no adult shall be working alone with an individual child unless within the sight of another adult.**