

CHILD PROTECTION RECORDS RETENTION AND STORAGE POLICY

1. Principles of Record Keeping

In line with data protection expectations, any documents containing personal details must always be:

- Appropriate, relevant, and limited to what is genuinely needed.
- Correct, complete, and regularly updated.
- Stored only for the length of time required for legitimate organisational or safeguarding purposes.
- Current data protection legislation, including GDPR, applies, but does not change the established guidance for retaining safeguarding information.

2. Responsibilities at West End Wonders

As an organisation working with children and young people, West End Wonders must:

- Be clear about why we hold personal records relating to participants and/or adults involved in our workshops.
- Determine how long each category of information should be stored.
- Establish secure procedures for the eventual destruction of records when they are no longer needed.

To maintain data security, we will:

- Label and organise files carefully.
- Store confidential or sensitive material in secure locations, accessible only to authorised individuals.
- Keep a record of who has accessed confidential information, when, and for what purpose.
- Participants (and where appropriate, their parents/carers) will always be informed about:
 - What information we collect,
 - Why it is necessary, and
 - Who it may be shared with under safeguarding or legal obligations

3. Recording Concerns About a Child or Young Person

If a member of staff is worried about a child's wellbeing or safety, it is vital that a clear, detailed record is made—regardless of whether the concern is escalated to a statutory agency.

Records will include:

- Date and time of the incident or disclosure.
- Date and time the report was written.
- Name, role, and contact details of the person who initially received the concern.
- Name, role, and contact details of the person completing the report (if different).
- Names of everyone involved, including any witnesses.
- A factual account of what happened, what was said, and by whom.
- Actions taken in response.
- Further follow up (for example, if a referral was made).
- If a referral was not made, the reasons for this decision.

Opinions or interpretations must be clearly identified as such.

All reports must be signed by the staff member who wrote them.

4. Storage of Child Safeguarding Records

Each child must have their own safeguarding file. Files should be opened as soon as a concern arises and not kept together in a single central log.

Retention Periods – Children

Child protection records must be kept until the young person reaches the age of 25.

In certain circumstances, files may need to be retained for longer (see “Exceptions” section).

5. Recording Concerns About an Adult Working With Children

Concerns may arise about an adult's behaviour if they have:

- Acted in a way that has harmed or may harm a child.
- Committed an offence involving, or relating to, a child.
- Shown behaviour that suggests they may be unsuitable to work with young people.

For these situations, West End Wonders will record:

- The nature of the allegation.
- How the matter was investigated.
- Actions taken in response.
- The final outcome, including any decisions about the individual's suitability to continue working with children.

Storing Records About Adults

These records are kept securely in the person's confidential personnel file.

A copy will also be given to the individual concerned.

Retention Periods – Adults

Records must be kept:

- Until the person reaches 65, or
- For 10 years,
whichever period is longer.

This applies to both volunteers and paid staff, regardless of whether the allegation was upheld.

If an allegation is found to be malicious, the record will be removed immediately.

If the individual leaves the organisation, records must still be retained for the required time.

6. Exceptions – When Records Must Be Kept Longer

Some files may need extended retention, for example when:

- The records form part of a child's personal history and may later be requested.
- They are being held for approved research.
- They relate to legal action that is ongoing.
- They have value for organisational, legal, or historical purposes.
- Where legal proceedings are involved, professional legal advice will be sought.
- Certain statutory records (e.g., for children looked after by the local authority or foster care arrangements) have separate legal retention requirements.

Any information that may be required in an official inquiry must be preserved until the inquiry instructs otherwise.

7. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

West End Wonders **will not** keep copies of DBS certificates unless there is a dispute regarding the outcome.

Instead, we will record:

- Date the check was completed.

- Level and type of check.
- DBS certificate reference number.
- Employment decision made, and the reasons for the decision.

If a certificate must be kept due to a dispute, it will be destroyed within six months.

8. Destruction of Safeguarding Records

When the retention period ends:

- Paper records will be securely shredded or incinerated under supervision or handled by a specialist confidential waste service.
- Electronic files must be permanently deleted.
- If paper files cannot be destroyed immediately, they must be sealed in a clearly marked confidential bag and locked in secure storage.

If West End Wonders ever ceases operation, arrangements must be made for continued safe management, retention, and disposal of all safeguarding records.

We review our policies and procedures every year to ensure best practice and legal compliance.

This policy was last reviewed on: 13th February 2026

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. L.', written in a cursive style.

Director of West End Wonders