

BARN THEATRE, WELWYN GARDEN CITY

Risk Assessment Guidelines for School Groups

These guidelines are based on the *Offsite Visits Manual* produced by Hertfordshire County Council's Children, Schools and Families Department. The manual's procedures are mandatory for community schools in the county, but are only advisory for voluntary aided and grant maintained schools.

Copies of the HCC forms OV1 and OV4 relating to visits of this nature can be downloaded from the Barn Theatre website: [<http://www.barntheatre.co.uk/barn-theatre-schools-information.php>] in Microsoft Word format. They have been partially filled in for you, but you will of course need to add specific information about your own arrangements.

Both forms should be submitted to the person responsible for approving off-site visits at your school, who should also be able to help you with any queries that arise. Theatre visits are treated as low risk, or "level 1" activities, and once a risk assessment has been carried out for a theatre (on form OV4) other visits to it may be arranged without repeating the procedure, although it must be reviewed annually. Similar "generic" approval has probably already been given to transport arrangements.

Form OV1 is used to apply for individual visits.

Background information about the Barn Theatre and its safety arrangements.

The theatre is owned by the Barn Theatre Trust Ltd., a registered charity (no. 284143). It is a member of the Little Theatre Guild of Great Britain, the organisation which represents the leading amateur theatre societies in the country. The Barn Theatre Club Ltd is a non-profit company related to the Trust; it has over 600 members, puts on 10 productions at the Barn every year, and runs three thriving youth groups.

The theatre holds a theatre licence granted annually by the Welwyn Hatfield District Council. Renewal of the licence is conditional on the theatre meeting the safety requirements laid down by law, and the District Council arranges annual inspections to ensure that. The inspections cover, amongst other things, fire safety, electrical safety, emergency lighting and emergency evacuation procedures.

During a public performance an experienced House Manager is responsible for the safety of the public in the theatre. He or she carries out pre-performance checks on fire extinguisher, emergency lighting, and emergency exits, and records them for subsequent inspection, if required, by the licensing authority. Similar checks are carried out by back-stage personnel. The House manager remains in the foyer until the public leave the theatre. During the performance itself, two stewards remain in the auditorium and are responsible for evacuating the audience in an emergency. There are three emergency exits from the auditorium (capacity 139 seats) and several others elsewhere in the building.

The building is equipped with recently installed, state-of-the-art emergency lighting and fire alarm systems. First aid boxes are kept both front of house and back stage. There are two telephone lines and a total of three telephone extensions. All materials used on stage and in the auditorium are flame proofed. Smoking is banned throughout the building. The use of cigarettes or naked lights on stage is strictly controlled by the licensing authority.

If your visit includes a workshop for the students, the person giving it on behalf of the Barn Theatre will be a qualified teacher with CRB clearance.

Disabled access

All public areas of the building are accessible by wheelchair. The auditorium has space for one wheelchair, subject to prior notification at the time of booking. There is a T-loop system in the auditorium for users of hearing aids. There is one toilet adapted for wheelchair users.

Any school wishing to verify these details is invited to contact the licensing authority, WHDC Environmental Health Dept, 01707 357402, Sarah Mardon). Visits to inspect the theatre can also be arranged by contacting John Davies on 01707 882209.

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