**Body of Persons Approval (BOPA)**

What is a BOPA?

Under Section 37(3)(b) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, Bedford Borough Council has the authority to issue an exemption to an organisation that would normally be required to individually license any children taking part in performances. This exemption can allow children to take part in performances without the need for individual licences being applied for. These are known as a Body of Persons Approval (BOPA)

A BOPA can be issued for an organisation (known as a ‘body of person’s approval’) for a specific performance or for a limited period of time as set out in the approval, to put on performances involving children.

The granting of a BOPA to an organisation replaces the need to apply for individual licences from each child’s home local authority during the period of approval – as long as the BOPA criteria and conditions continue to be fulfilled.

Who can apply?

The organisation responsible for putting on the performance, and for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the children taking part, must apply. There must be no reduction in safeguarding arrangements.

Any type of organization can apply; it doesn’t matter if they are a professional company, amateur group, stage or broadcast - as long as no payment (other than expenses) is made for the child to take part.

BOPAs are issued by the local authority where the performance is taking place.

What needs to be considered?

The decision whether to issue a BOPA is at the discretion of the local authority. The local authority would want assurance that the body had clear, robust and well embedded policies for safeguarding children.

A BOPA does not authorise absence from school for any child involved in the performances. If the performance involves absence from school that should be approved by the school – but see 3.2 in respect of the ability to approve absence from school.