

Chaperones/matrons

Duties of chaperones/matrons

The matron's first duty is to the children in her/his care.

While s/he is acting as matron s/he may not engage in any activity that would interfere with the performance of her/his duties. Except when a child is in care of a teacher, the matron is in loco parentis and should exercise the care which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give that child.

Her/his precise duties while the child is at the place of performance will vary according to the nature of the performance. If the child is working in the theatre, the times when s/he will be on stage are known in advance, and must come within what is permitted by the Regulations. The matron's main duties will be to ensure that when the child is not actually performing (including the period between performances if there are two performances on the same day and the child does not go home or back to his/her lodgings) s/he is properly supervised and has adequate meals, rest and recreation.

A child appearing in a film may be at the studio or place of location for much of the day. During the whole of this time s/he is in the matron's charge, except when having lessons, and it is for her to accompany him/her from the dressing room or school room to the set, and take him/her back to the dressing room or school room, as well as remaining on the set while he/she is there.

The matron is required to keep a record of the time the child is on the set and the times s/he rehearses and performs, so as to ensure that the periods permitted under the Regulations are not exceeded. The matron must also see that the child gets no less than the required number of breaks for rest and meals. The matron should make sure that the child has suitable opportunities for recreational activities, and is protected from stress, strain, bad weather and from any other conditions likely to harm him/her.

If a child is living away from home the matron is responsible for him/her throughout the currency of the licence. This includes seeing that his/her lodgings are satisfactory in every way; and that s/he is properly occupied during his/her spare time.

No child should be allowed to perform when unwell. If a child falls ill or is injured while in the charge of a matron or teacher, a doctor should be called and the licence holder must immediately notify the parent named in the application form and the local authority.

In general the matron may need to exercise a greater amount of supervision than if the child were living at home.