PRESS RELEASE

*Embargoed until XX XX 2018*

**Children’s arts charity announces key issues threatening opportunities for children**

Action for Children’s Arts (ACA) campaigns for children across the UK to have access to the arts. Today it has announced current areas of immediate risk, as identified by its members and patrons.

* As the UK faces its most significant changes and challenges in a generation, **ACA considers it is essential that the voices of children should not be excluded from the national conversation.** “Listening to Children” will for the first time be the focus for a celebratory event to be organised in association with the National Theatre this year.

"*The government is squeezing creativity out of our children’s learning"*

**Rufus Norris**, Artistic Director, The Royal National Theatre, writing in The Guardian newspaper

* **The continuing threat of the imposition of the EBacc, if carried through, will lead to reduced arts opportunities for all children, and particularly those in deprived areas.**

“*The government insists that the arts and culture should be available in all schools, and quite rightly so! But by and large it is the private schools that offer this access, and consequently it is too often available only to the elite. This is unfair and unjust. All children should benefit from the richness of the arts in their school lives.”*

ACA Patron **Sir Tony Robinson**

* **Play is an essential part of learning in the Early Years**. ACA aligns itself with the many signatories to the letter of concern sent in response to the Ofsted report Bold Beginnings, which threatens to narrow the reception curriculum to focus more heavily on literacy and mathematics, with overly formal teaching and less opportunity for play.

*“Early* *Years are a crucial time within a human life for the development of emotional intelligence.*Play, which develops imagination, is being lost in childhood because of the increasing pressure of early school assessment.*We must* *remember it is every child's right, every day, to have time to create, imagine and play."*

ACA Trustee, and BBC Children’s TV presenters, **Chris Jarvis and Pui Fan Lee**

* **The continued threat to the future of libraries is of great concern to ACA**. All children and families should have access to a range of literature and a place in which to explore it.

*“We all of us want the best for our children, for them to grow strong in heart and spirit, body and mind. That so many children do not have the start in life they need to flourish, is society's fault, our fault.*

*We need to give them, their parents and their teachers the tools to do the job. To close a library, to deny children opportunities for reading, for developing a love of literature,  is to exclude children from their culture, their birthright, from fulfilment of their creative potential, and, most importantly, from the knowledge and understanding they will need to comprehend  better the world about them, the lives of others, and themselves.*

*Without this empathy, without such knowledge and understanding, where are they? And where are we?”*

ACA Patron, **Sir Michael Morpurgo**

* ACA notes with concern the reports of charges being introduced in schools for Music GCSE classes. **Access to music and music tuition must remain part of the UK school curriculum and not become the preserve of the wealthy.**

*“It is a tragedy. All our children deserve access to the arts. The UK has traditionally been a world leader in culture – we should be supporting and encouraging the arts instead of jeopardising young people’s choices through these short-sighted cuts”.*

ACA Patron, **Julian Lloyd Webber**

ACA believes that, in the context of current political policy, there is an urgent need to reinforce the importance of the arts as part of a broad and balanced education for all – not just for those who can afford it.

*Notes for Editors*

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Action for Children’s Arts is a national membership organisation embracing all those who believe that every child deserves access to artistic and creative activity. The charity is dedicated to the promotion, development and celebration of all creative and performing arts, for and with children.

ACA is proud that its membership ranges from individual artists, to National Portfolio Organisations, to parents and teachers – all championing the cause of giving **every** child access to the arts.

President: David Wood, OBE

Chair: Vicky Ireland, MBE

Patrons: David Almond, Jenny Agutter OBE, Sir Alan Ayckbourn CBE, Baroness Floella Benjamin OBE, David Bintley CBE, Malorie Blackman OBE, Sir Quentin Blake CBE, Sir Matthew Bourne OBE, Mrs Felicity Dahl, Dame Carol Ann Duffy CBE, Peter Duncan, Michael Foreman, Jamila Gavin, Anna Home OBE, Shirley Hughes CBE, Sir Nicholas Hytner, Terry Jones, Judith Kerr OBE, Julian Lloyd Webber, Joanna McGregor OBE, Michelle Magorian, Roger McGough CBE, Sir Michael Morpurgo, Nick Park CBE, Philip Pullman CBE, Lynne Reid Banks, Sir Ken Robinson, Sir Tony Robinson, Michael Rosen, Dame Jacqueline Wilson, Benjamin Zephaniah.