



## **“SAFEGUARDING POLICY”**

*The Dance Collective is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in its care. It recognises the responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures a child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).*

*Staff and volunteers will work together to embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of children and young people.*

*This document outlines The Dance Collective’s commitment to protecting children.*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

All sporting organisations which make provision for children and young people must ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- Child protection is everyone's responsibility.
- Children have the right to express views on all matters which affect them, should they wish to do so.
- Organisations shall work in partnership together with children and parents/carers to promote the welfare, health and development of children.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff (paid/unpaid) working with children have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate safeguarding officer.

## **2. POLICY STATEMENT**

- The Dance Collective has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in any activities with The Dance Collective from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be considered.
- The Dance Collective will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved with The Dance Collective through adherence to the safeguarding policy and procedures of The Royal Academy of Dance.

### **3. POLICY AIMS**

The aim of The Dance Collective Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice through:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of The Dance Collective.
- Allowing all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

### **4. GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

#### **Good practice means:**

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with students (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Making dance fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents, teachers, coaches or officials work in pairs.

- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by The Royal Academy of Dance's 'Safe Touch' good-practice guidelines. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people and their parents should always be consulted and their agreement gained. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance.
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults - avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act *in loco parentis*, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

**Practices to be avoided:**

The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of the principal, child protection officer or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session:

- Avoid spending time alone with children away from others.
- Avoid taking or dropping off a child to an event or activity without prior written consent from child's parent/carer.

### **Practices never to be sanctioned:**

The following should **NEVER** be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Share a room with a child.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

**N.B.** It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the children involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

### **Incidents that must be reported/recorded**

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the appropriate safeguarding officer and record the incident. You should also ensure that the parents of the child are informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a student.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

## **5. USE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC / FILMING EQUIPMENT**

There is evidence that some people have used performances as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled people in vulnerable positions. All organisations should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer. The Dance Collective will always request written parental consent before any photographs or filming takes place in accordance with GDPR protocols.

### **Videoing as a teaching aid:**

There is no intention to prevent dance teachers and assistants using video equipment as a legitimate teaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is part of the teaching programme and their consent obtained, and such films should be stored safely.

## **6. RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF STAFF**

The Dance Collective recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Pre-selection checks must include the following:

- All volunteers/staff should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo).

**Interview and Induction:**

All employees (and volunteers) will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers should receive an induction, during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).
- Their qualifications should be substantiated.
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- Child protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified.
- They should adhere up to The Royal Academy of Dance's Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

**Training:**

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is not likely to result in allegations being made.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
- Work safely and effectively with children.

### **The Dance Collective requires:**

- Safeguarding Officers to attend recognised safeguarding training to ensure that the practice of employees within The Dance Collective is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection.
- Staff to receive advisory information from the nominated safeguarding officer outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.
- Relevant personnel to gain a national first aid training (where necessary).
- Update training when necessary. Information about meeting training needs can be obtained from The Royal Academy of Dance and the NSPCC.

## **7. RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS**

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in The Dance Collective in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate safeguarding officer or the appropriate authorities.

The Dance Collective will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- a criminal investigation
- a child protection investigation
- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision.



### **Reporting concerns about poor practice:**

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice the designated Safeguarding Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

If the allegation is about poor practice by The Dance Collective Safeguarding Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the principal who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

### **Reporting concerns about suspected abuse:**

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to The Dance Collective Safeguarding Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. The Dance Collective Safeguarding Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police. The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department. If the Safeguarding Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Principal who will refer the allegation to Social Services.

### **Reporting concerns outside the immediate environment (e.g. a parent or carer):**

Report your concerns to the Safeguarding Officer, who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible. If the Safeguarding Officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact social services or the police immediately. Social Services and the Safeguarding Officer will decide how to involve the parents/carers.

The Safeguarding Officer should also report the incident to the Principal. The Principal should ascertain whether or not the person/s involved in the incident play a role in The Dance Collective. Maintain confidentiality on a **need to know** basis only.

### **Providing information to police or social services:**

Information about suspected abuse must be accurate and a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. It should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also, any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

## 8. CONFIDENTIALITY

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a **need to know** basis only. This includes the following people:

- The Safeguarding Officer
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Social services/police
- The Principal

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser (or parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

### **Internal enquiries and possible suspension:**

The Safeguarding Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries. Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the Principal will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Principal must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

## DECLARATION

On behalf of The Dance Collective we, the undersigned, will oversee the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and will take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

**Signed:**



**Print Name:**

MRS EMMA CHRISTINA FENGHOUR

**Position:**

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

**Date:**

23/08/2023