

## **Safeguarding Policy August 2023 – Danceworks**

### **Updated March 2025**

Danceworks is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all of our students up to the age of 18. We recognise it is our responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation and it is our legal duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse as defined in the Children Act 2004, the Education Act 2002 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

The purpose of this policy is to protect children and young people who dance at Danceworks from harm. All teachers, reception staff, teaching assistants, chaperones and volunteers will work together to respect the rights of children, young people and adults. Our policy is to protect our students on site, at our branch schools, at performance venues and any other activity linked to Danceworks.

We will provide parents, staff and volunteers with guidance for our approach to child protection and what they should do if they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing or is at risk of harm.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Katie Cresswell. Our Deputy Safeguarding Lead is Laura Bishop. They are responsible for ensuring the child protection policy is followed and will track and record any safeguarding concerns and share with the correct authorities.

Our DSL will provide information through trainings and regular meetings. Any updates to our safeguarding policy will be communicated to all Danceworks staff.

Our duties include: -

- Providing a safe environment for class work, performances and examinations.
- Identifying and responding to children, young people and vulnerable adults in need of support and / or protection.
- Supporting children and young people's development in ways which will foster a sense of self-esteem and independence.
- Providing an environment in which children feel valued in an atmosphere of acceptance and trust.

We believe that: -

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind.
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that: -

- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by: -

- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies
- recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance. Only appropriate staff will have access to any parent consent/emergency consent forms for all children taking part in any activities.
- using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers.
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers.
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have procedures to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise.
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law.
- ensuring staff over 18 hold an enhanced DBS check.
- taking reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of any child or vulnerable adult in contact with us.
- taking all reasonable steps to prevent any staff member, persons working for us or member of the public from putting any child or vulnerable adult in a situation in which there is an unreasonable risk to their health and safety.
- making sure all accidents involving anyone will be recorded in our accident book immediately or as soon as practicably possible.
- using photographs and/or films of our students if we have received consent from a parent or guardian.
- only administering First Aid with the permission of the child's parent or guardian. If the parent is not at the premises, we will contact the parent on their phone number provided. However, if a child is alone and seriously injured or unconscious, the situation will need to be dealt with immediately. If at all possible, treatment will only be given by a trained First Aider.
- where physical touching is only used for instructional purposes and for making corrections. Physical contact will be provided in an open manner.
- private and unobserved contact will be avoided wherever possible unless authorisation has been given by a parent or guardian.

All staff will behave professionally and treat everyone with respect. Staff will report any suspicions to the DSL as soon as possible. Staff are responsible for reporting suspected cases of child abuse to the DSL or agencies.

The NSPCC has a written document which outlines the requirements for professionals reporting child abuse in the United Kingdom. This information is available at <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse>

All teaching staff and reception staff will hold an up to date DBS check. They all have a duty to report anything concerning that has happened in class or any other concerns to the DSL at the first available opportunity. This must also be confirmed in writing as soon as possible if the initial conversation is verbal. Our teachers will take practical steps to keep our students safe from harm and abuse, including no disclosing of sensitive/personal information, keeping children safe from hazards in class and responding appropriately in the event of an accident.

If a member of staff discloses information to the DSL and there are concerns about the safety of a child, this must be referred to the Gloucestershire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). We will seek consent from the parents/carers involved who will be informed that we are referring a case and why. If parents, carers or children refuse consent to information being shared, we are still able to refer to Gloucestershire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, but it must be reported why consent is not given and this must be recorded. There are some instances where consent may not be sought:

- In the event of seeking medical attention (child is in immediate danger)
- If obtaining consent from the parent/carer could place the child or another family member at risk
- If having a discussion with parents/carers will put you or a staff member at risk

It is our legal duty to disclose necessary information to relevant authorities as part of our responsibility for child protection. Any decisions to share information to protect a child from harm must be recorded with the reasons for the disclosure and whether or not the information has been shared. If the information is shared, you must record what has been shared and who with.

### **Child Protection:**

Child Protection is part of safeguarding and focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Significant harm is when someone may abuse or neglect a child when harm is inflicted or if there has been failure to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused by those known to them. Abuse can be inflicted by an adult(s) or other children. All teachers and volunteers must be able to recognise and know how to act upon evidence of harm or abuse where a child's health or development is impaired. Any concerns must be recorded and shared with the DSL.

### **Allegations against staff:**

Any report of concern about the behaviour of a member of staff or allegation of abuse against a member of staff must immediately be reported to the DSL who will refer to the appropriate Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), If this is an allegation that a member of staff may have caused harm to a child. The member of staff who reports the allegation or the member of staff alleged against must not have any part of any further investigation including questioning the children.

**The LADO for Gloucestershire is:**

**Nigel Hatten: 01452 426994 or [nigel.hatten@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:nigel.hatten@gloucestershire.gov.uk)**

### **Disclosure of abuse: -**

If a child confides in you that abuse has taken place:

Remain calm and in control, but do not delay in taking action.

Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.

Don't promise to keep it a secret. Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the DSL. Make it clear to the child that you will need to share the information with others and that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help.

Reassure the child that they 'did the right thing' in telling someone.

Tell the child what you will do next.

Speak immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities.

Never investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where a child makes a disclosure.

As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was said, using the child's own words. Note the date, time, any names that were involved or mentioned, and who you gave information to. Make sure you sign and date your record.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will discuss concerns with a parent/carer if this was thought not to place the child at further risk. When the disclosure is about something a parent/carer has done, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should always seek advice from Gloucestershire MASH team on 01452 426565

### **Types of abuse:**

Neglect is ““the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs” (Department for Education, 2018)”. This is a form of abuse that can happen at any age; sometimes before a child is born due to maternal substance abuse.

There are four main types: physical neglect (not meeting basic needs such as food, clothing or shelter and not providing for safety), educational neglect (not ensuring a child receives an education), emotional neglect (ignoring, humiliating, intimidating or isolating a child), medical neglect (not providing appropriate health care or refusing care).

Sexual abuse is when a child is forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities whether or not they are aware what is happening. This can be physical contact (including assault by penetration or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, touching outside of clothing) or non-contact activities (flashing at a child, encouraging or forcing a child to watch/hear sexual acts, making, viewing or distributing child abuse images) and can be online and offline (Department for Education, 2018). Children may also be groomed with the intent of abuse or sexually exploiting a child for money, power or status.

Emotional abuse is emotional maltreatment of a child which has a severe and persistent negative effect on the child's emotional development (Department for Education, 2017). Children can be emotionally abused by anyone (e.g. parents/carers, family members, other adults, other children). It may include ignoring the child and not showing affection or

rejection such as verbal humiliation, criticism or excluding a child from activities. Children may also have their social interactions restricted causing isolation. It may also include exploitation of children by encouraging or forcing them to take part in criminal activities or activities that are not appropriate for their stage of development or threatening violence, bullying or deliberately frightening a child. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all other types of maltreatment but can also occur alone.

Physical abuse is defined as deliberately hurting a child and causing physical harm (Department of Health, 2017; Department for Education, 2018). Injuries may be inflicted such as: bruises, broken bones, burns, cuts and may involve hitting, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning and any other method of causing non-accidental harm to a child. Physical abuse may also occur when a parent/carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Please note: this is not a complete list but contains examples. It is not your responsibility to determine whether abuse has taken place but simply share your concerns with your DSL. For more information about types of abuse and how to recognise them please visit the NSPCC website (<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect>) for detailed information.