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**Policy for Safeguarding**

**& the Protection of Children**

### POLICY STATEMENT & CODE OF CONDUCT

**The Ballet and Dance Academy** is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people up to the age of 18. We recognise our responsibility to take reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation.

Everyone at The Ballet and Dance Academy shares an objective to uphold the commitment of The Ballet and Dance Academy to safeguard and promote the welfare of all its students by adhering to the following principles as a code of conduct:

* Providing a safe environment in which to learn
* Giving enthusiastic and constructive criticism to our dancers rather than negative criticism
* Promoting the ethos that bullying will not be accepted or condoned
* By being positive role models
* Supporting children’s development in ways which will foster a sense of self-esteem
* Fostering a learning environment in which every student feels valued and able to articulate their wishes and feelings in their preferred method of communication, in an atmosphere of acceptance and trust.
* Working to ensure that students, volunteers, parents, and carers all understand how to raise a concern and know how to ask for any help at any time.

This policy sets out how The Ballet and Dance Academy discharges its statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are students at the school. Our policy applies to all staff, paid and unpaid, working at the school and includes volunteers at external or special events. Teaching assistants, backstage helpers/chaperones as well as teachers can be the first point of disclosure for a child. Concerned parents/carers may also contact the school.

**There are four main elements to our policy:**

1. **Prevention** through safe teaching practice plus the creation and maintenance of a whole school protective ethos.
2. **Procedures** for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
3. **Supporting children** by believing that the welfare of the child is paramount. Staff willact appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse

#### **Preventing unsuitable people working with children.** Processes are followed to ensure that those who are unsuitable to work with children are not employed by the school or allowed to work as a volunteer at any dance events.

The Ballet and Dance Academy has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) responsible for the maintenance and regular review of this policy in accordance with legal and statutory guidelines, as well as ensuring that all staff have read and agreed to abide by this policy. The DSL for The Ballet and Dance Academy is the School Principal Suzanne Shanks.

This policy applies to:

* all children under the age of 18
* all staff, contractors, freelance staff, volunteers, and consultants working within The Ballet and Dance Academy or on our premises.

The Ballet and Dance Academy will therefore:

1. establish and maintain an environment where children feel safe, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to,
2. ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty and their concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon as appropriate, and
3. establish a protective ethos in which all individuals feel safe and respected and know who to approach if they are worried and their concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon.

This policy is available to parents via the school website. This policy is reviewed annually or more frequently if legislation or guidance changes.

# Prevention

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

* protecting children from maltreatment,
* preventing impairment of children's health or development,
* taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

We seek to prevent harm occurring. It is our policy that all Ballet and Dance Academy staff, teachers and volunteers will care, promote and safeguard the wellbeing of all students.

We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends, and open and good quality lines of communication with all adults help to protect children and young adults.

We will endeavor to ensure that children are protected from harm while they visit or are attending classes. We will do this by:

1. making sure all our staff have a valid PVG,
2. establishing and maintaining an ethos where all children and young people feel secure and are encouraged to talk, to feel respected and listened to,
3. taking all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of any child,
4. taking all reasonable steps to prevent any staff member, persons working for us or member of the public from physically, emotionally or sexually abusing any child or adult at risk,
5. reporting to The Principal any evidence or disclosure that a child has been physically, emotionally or sexually abused,
6. reporting any evidence or disclosure to the relevant local authority.

Everyone working or applying to work for The Ballet and Dance Academy will be made aware of this policy. Furthermore, this document will be issued to all staff and other people who are likely to have contact with children as part of their work with us.

# Procedures

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection and Adults at Risk is:

Suzanne Shanks

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

Take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.

Ensure that every member of staff, paid and unpaid, knows who the Designated Personnel are and the procedures for passing on concerns from the point of induction.

Ensure every member of staff knows:

* how to pass on and record concerns about a student,
* that they have an individual responsibility to be alert to the signs and indicators of abuse, and for referring child protection concerns to the DSL
* that they have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn

Ensure that all staff, paid and unpaid, recognise their duty and feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice regarding children, and that such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with agreed whistle-blowing policies.

Ensure that this policy is available publicly either via the school website or on the studio noticeboard*.*

**Reporting a concern**

Anyone, (student, parent, carer, teacher, staff member, volunteer), may report a concern, and should feel that they will be listened to carefully and taken seriously when they do.

If you are concerned about a student or anyone at The Ballet and Dance Academy, a specific incident occurs, or a situation arises that causes you concern, then you should report it as soon as is possible to the DSL to a member of the Ballet and Dance Academy staff or teacher who is present. You may do this in person, by phone or in writing.

If you believe that the child is at immediate risk of harm, then do not wait to contact the DSL, report the concern immediately to the police or to children’s social care.

The DSL can support and advise you on the details if needed, but it is best to state as clearly as possible what occurred, without bias, what was said by whom and if possible, verbatim. The DSL will then decide whether this is an issue that requires further escalation, or, if it is a concern that does not reach the threshold for referral, should simply be added to a student’s record.

Safeguarding referrals will be made by the DSL as is required in Renfrewshire

1. by phone to the students school
2. To Children's Social Care Services,
3. by contacting the police in the event of a serious emergency or life-threatening situation using the 999 service.

Where a referral needs to be made, the DSL will discuss this with the parents/guardians beforehand, unless there is a reason why the child would be put in harm’s way if this discussion took place.

**Record keeping**

The DSL will ensure that record keeping at The Ballet and Dance Academy is in line with protocols advised by Renfrewshire Council Safeguarding Partnership Board. They will:

* keep clear, detailed, accurate, written records of concerns about children (noting the date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to refer the matter to Social Care immediately and ensure that all electronic/digital records are kept securely in a reserved area of the server with appropriate password protection.

**Confidentiality and information sharing**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

* disclose information about a student to other members of staff on a ‘need to know’ basis.

**Dealing with child-on-child abuse**

We recognise that peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This can include but is not limited to: bullying, control, cyberbullying, sexual violence, sexual harassment, being coerced to send sexual images (sexting), teenage relationship abuse and physical abuse. **All** forms of peer-on-peer abuse are unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

The school will therefore:

* create a whole school protective ethos in which peer on peer abuse, including sexual violence and sexual harassment cannot thrive and will not be tolerated,
* ensure that staff members follow the procedures outlined in this policy when they become aware of peer-on-peer abuse.

The school will:

* work to create a shared environment that supports positive relationships between peers, so that peer-to-peer abuse might be prevented,

# **Supporting children at risk**

The school recognises that **any** child may be subject to abuse and neglect. As such will support all Ballet and Dance Academy students by:

* creating an ethos that actively promotes a positive, supportive and safe environment and values the whole community, where students feel that they are listened to, heard and respected,
* developing productive and supportive relationships with parents/carers, and
* liaising with other agencies which support the student such as Social Care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, or Early Help teams.

We promote high standards of practice and will ensure that children with disabilities or additional needs know how to raise concerns. We will take the necessary time to build supportive networks with these students and their parents/carers and to get to know them well.

# Preventing unsuitable people from working with children

1. The school will operate safe recruitment practices including ensuring appropriate PVG and reference checks are undertaken according to Part Three of ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ (2022).
2. Any allegation of abuse made against a member of staff should be reported straight away (also known as ‘whistleblowing’).
3. The school will ensure that all staff, paid and unpaid, are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationships with students and parents/carers.
4. The school will ensure that communication between students and adults, by whatever method, are transparent and take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries and are open to scrutiny.

# Roles and responsibilities of staff, and other related policies

All staff and volunteers will be required to:

* take all reasonable steps to protect all Ballet and Dance Academy students & carers from hazards,
* observe and demonstrate in action the code of protective behaviour outlined throughout this document,
* take appropriate action if an accident occurs,
* take all reasonable steps to prevent abuse of children or anyone within the school, and
* report any incident or suspicion of abuse immediately to the DSL.

### Roles and responsibilities for all staff – Code of Conduct

* Safety of participants and staff is always of prime consideration. Individual risk assessments should not only be completed annually by all staff and teachers, but should be applied in practice.
* All accidents involving anyone should be recorded by the DSL immediately or as soon as practicably possible.
* Staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with building/facility safety issues, such as, fire procedures, location of emergency exits and first aid equipment.
* Staff are responsible for reporting suspected cases of child abuse to the named responsible person and/or agencies.
* In the event of any child experiencing distress, upset or accident during a class, staff will contact their parent, guardian or named emergency contact using the emergency contact details.
* Staff should ensure that their activities start and end on time.
* Staff are expected to articulate, promote, demonstrate, and incorporate the values of respect, trust and professional ethics throughout their activities.
* Staff should ensure that they are adequately insured, to protect against claims of negligence, through their organisation or their own personal insurance if acting as a self-employed agent.

### Photographing students

Photographs or video footage of any student should only be taken if parental consent has been obtained in advance. A parent or carer may withdraw consent at any time. It should be made clear to students that there is never any pressure to participate in filmed footage for any reason, and no sense of shaming should be attached to this decision. Students should be encouraged to make the decision for themselves and be supported in that process.

Photos and videos will be taken as part of the annual performances and will be advised each year at the time of signing up to the event so that the parents of those involved will have given permission in advance or chosen not to take part.

### Social media

### If photographic consent has been given photographs may be used on social media for marketing purposes. The names of children and young people will never be mentioned without further parental consent.

### Personal phones/iPads/tablets

It is understood that many teachers carry music needed for teaching on their iPads/Tablets and phones, and that as such, these are used, visible and present in class.

It is understood that students may need to carry their phones with them when they come to classes for reasons of safety or personal choice. Phones should be switched off when students come to the studio, they should not be used to take pictures of themselves or anyone else on studio premises and if they are brought into class then they should remain in bags. Teachers and group leaders are asked to remind the relevant-aged children from time to time about this.

### Changing

It is occasionally necessary to escort or assist young children in toileting when they need to go to the bathroom during a lesson. Whenever this occurs, the teacher or teaching assistant in that class should help the child leave the class and go to find the child’s parent together if they need assistance or allow the student to go to the bathroom by themselves – monitoring the absence age-appropriately, to ensure all is well.

If, however, the parent is not available, or the situation is urgent for a very young child, then the teaching assistant or teacher should take the child to the bathroom. At all times, the adult should ask the child to determine the support they need and act accordingly. Most appropriate is that the child enters the bathroom by themselves, and the adult waits outside the door for them to finish.

Occasionally a child needs more assistance – for example if they wet themselves during a class. In this case, the adult may need to assist the child and will do so in as discrete a manner as possible if the parent/carer is not available. The parent should be advised of the incident immediately/on pickup and any concerns addressed. At all times, any anxiety or concern seen in or voiced by the child should be addressed kindly and considerately. Sensitivity to the child’s age and gender should be considered at all times.

### Dropping or collecting children

### All students must be collected from the classes by an appropriate adult, no young person will be allowed to make their own way home without written consent from their parent or carer.