Dance Direction Safeguarding Policy Statement September 2025

Dance Direction is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. It recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. Dance Direction acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. Paid staff and volunteers will endeavour to work together to encourage the development of an ethos which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children, young people and adults.

Dance Direction recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014, the Children Act 1989 and 2004 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 (in Scotland Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003), Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

Dance Direction believes 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;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- All members and employees of Dance Direction should be clear on how to respond appropriately

Dance Direction will ensure that:

- all children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity;
- the welfare of each child will always be put first;
- a balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers the children to share in the decision-making process;
- enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism;
- bullying will not be accepted or condoned;
- all adult members of Dance Direction provide a positive role model for dealing with other people;
- action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour;
- it will keep up-to-date with health & safety legislation;

- it will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children;
- it will undertake relevant development and training;
- it will hold a register of every child involved with Dance Direction and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

Dance Direction has safeguarding procedures which accompany this policy. This policy should also be read in conjunction with Dance Direction's Equal Opportunities Policy and Health & Safety Policy.

Dance Direction has a dedicated Child Protection/Welfare/Safeguarding Officer, who is in charge of ensuring that the safeguarding policy and procedures are adhered to. That person's name is Debby Tomlinson and she can be contacted on 07856 599215

In implementing this child protection policy Dance Direction will:

- Communicate to all workers/members their legal and moral responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation
- Communicate to all workers/members/volunteers/members their responsibility to work to the standards that are detailed by the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership, and the need to work at all times towards maintaining high standards of practice in protection of children
- Ensure that all workers/members understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a child or young person, or a worker's conduct towards a child/young person, to Dance Direction's named person for child protection
- Ensure that Dance Directions named person for child protection understands his/her responsibility to refer any child protection concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (i.e. Police and/or Children's Social Care)
- Ensure that any procedures relating to the conduct of workers/members are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner
- Facilitate opportunities for children and young people to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues in connection with the service they are provided with and to have access to Dance Direction's Complaints Procedure.
- Facilitate involvement of parents or carers in the work of Dance Direction and to make child protection policies and procedures available to them

This policy will be regularly monitored by the Executive Committee of Dance Direction and will be subject to annual review.

Date agreed: September 2025

Procedures

These procedures have been designed to ensure the welfare and protection of any child and/or young person who accesses the services provided by Dance Direction. The procedures recognise that child protection and safeguarding can be a very difficult subject to deal with to the extent that it is sometimes easier to close your eyes to what is happening or believe that it is somebody else's problem to deal with.

Dance Direction is committed to the belief that protecting children and young people is everybody's responsibility and therefore the aim here is to provide guidelines that will enable all workers/members and volunteers to act appropriately to any concerns that arise in respect of a child/young person.

There should be a clear reference to Dance Direction's commitment to equal opportunities

Section 2 - Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

This briefing aims to equip dance teaching professionals with an understanding of:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Disguised compliance

Evidence of any one indicator from the following lists should not be taken on its own as proof that abuse is occurring. However, it should alert practitioners to make further assessments and to consider other associated factors. The lists of possible indicators and examples of behaviour are not exhaustive and people may be subject to a number of abuse types at the same time.

Physical abuse

Types of physical abuse

- Hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, hair-pulling, biting, pushing
- Rough handling
- Scalding and burning
- Physical punishments
- Inappropriate or unlawful use of restraint
- Physical harm caused by a parent or carer fabricating the symptoms of, or inducing, illness

Possible indicators of physical abuse

Injuries caused by accidents are not uncommon in children, becoming less common as the child develops and grows. This means that recognising the signs of physical

abuse in children can be especially difficult and leave practitioners unsure of what may be abusive.

The following is a guide to injuries that are more likely to be accidental or abusive. However, it is not absolute and it is important that those working with children consider the child's stage of development, any pattern of injuries and the account given by the child, parents, carers or others of how the injury was sustained.

Typically accidental injuries

Accidental injuries typically involve bony prominences – the bones that are close to the surface and so more likely to become injured through falls, slips and trips. This can include:

- forehead
- knees
- elbows
- palms of hands
- nose

The injuries will match the account given by the child and parent/carer and be in-keeping with the child's level of development and activity.

Typically abusive injuries

Abusive injuries, however, tend to involve softer tissue and be in areas that are harder to damage through slips, trips, falls and other accidents. This may include:

- upper arm
- forearm (defensive injuries)
- chest and abdomen
- thighs or genitals
- facial injuries (cheeks, black eyes, mouth)
- ears, side of face or neck and top of shoulders ('triangle of safety')
- back and side of trunk.

Abusive injuries may be seen on both sides of the body and match other patterns of activity. They may not match the explanation given by the child or parent/carer and there may also be signs that injuries are being untreated, or at least a delay in seeking treatment.

Sexual abuse

Types of sexual abuse

Sexual abuse may take place either in person or online or offline. It may be perpetrated by family or non-family members, males or females, older adults or by other young people.

- Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, which may or may not involve violence
- Penetrative acts
- Non-penetrative acts (kissing, masturbation, rubbing or inappropriate touching)
- Sexual photography or forced use of pornography or witnessing of sexual acts
- Non-contact (looking at or producing pornography or sexual images, watching sexual activities, grooming in preparation for abuse)

Possible indicators of sexual abuse

- Bruising, particularly to the thighs, buttocks and upper arms and marks on the neck
- Bleeding, pain or itching in the genital area
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Sudden change in behaviour or school performance
- Displays of affection that are sexual or not age-appropriate
- Use of sexually explicit language that is not age-appropriate
- Alluding to having a secret that cannot be revealed
- Bedwetting or incontinence
- Reluctance to undress around others (e.g. for PE lessons)
- Infections, unexplained genital discharge, or sexually transmitted diseases
- Unexplained gifts or money
- Self-harming
- Poor concentration, withdrawal, sleep disturbance
- Reluctance to be alone with a particular person

Psychological or emotional abuse

Types of emotional abuse

Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of abuse or neglect, though it may also appear alone. It is the persistent mistreatment of a child that has a severe and negative impact on their emotional development. Emotional abuse may also be perpetrated by other young people through serious bullying and cyber-bullying.

- Overprotection – preventing someone accessing educational and social opportunities and seeing friends

- Intimidation, coercion, harassment, use of threats, humiliation, bullying, swearing or verbal abuse
- Conveying feeling of worthlessness, inadequacy or that a child is unloved
- Threats of harm or abandonment
- Placing inappropriate expectations on children
- Witnessing or hearing the abuse or ill-treatment of others (including domestic violence)

Possible indicators of emotional abuse

- Concerning interactions between parents or carers and the child (e.g. overly critical or lack of affection)
- Lack of self-confidence or self-esteem
- Sudden speech disorders
- Self-harm or eating disorders
- Lack of empathy shown to others (including cruelty to animals)
- Drug, alcohol or other substance misuse
- Change of appetite, weight loss/gain
- Signs of distress: tearfulness, anger

Neglect

Types of neglect

Neglect is found to be a factor in 60 per cent of child deaths that are investigated through Serious Case Reviews. However, even though it is often suspected by those who work with children, it is under-reported. Neglect is a persistent failure to meet basic needs (physical or emotional) and it leads to serious harm to the health or development of a child.

- Failing to provide adequate shelter, clothing or food
- Failing to protect a child from harm or danger
- Failing to ensure that a child is supervised appropriately
- Failing to access medical care or treatment for a child when it is needed.

Possible indicators of neglect

- Excessive hunger
- Inadequate or insufficient clothing
- Poor personal or dental hygiene
- Untreated medical issues
- Changes in weight or being excessively under or overweight
- Low self-esteem, attachment issues, depression or self-harm
- Poor relationships with peers
- Self-soothing behaviours that may not be age-appropriate (e.g. rocking, hair-twisting, thumb-sucking)
- Changes to school performance or attendance

Think: Disguised compliance

For Dance schools working with children and families, staff will likely have established relationships with parents or carers and experience of working with them. A parent's or carer's behaviour can make it difficult for school staff to recognise abuse or neglect at an early enough stage or delay reporting it.

Disguised compliance involves care-givers presenting an appearance of being co-operative and supportive in order to avoid scrutiny, suspicion or concern. These behaviours may include:

Section 3 - Responsibilities of Dance Direction

At the outset of any production Dance Direction will:

- undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process;
- identify at the outset the person with designated responsibility for child protection;
- engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting (if necessary, in consultation with the local authority);
- ensure that children are supervised at all times;
- know how to get in touch with the local authority social care services, in case it needs to report a concern.

Section 4 - Named Person(s) for Child Protection and Safeguarding

Dance Direction has an appointed individual who is responsible for dealing with any child protection and safeguarding concerns. In their absence, a deputy will always be available for workers/members to consult with.

The named persons for Child Protection and Safeguarding within Dance Direction are: Debby Tomlinson/Pippa Losh

Work telephone number: 07856599215
Mobile number: 07856599215
Emergency contact no: 07775502450

Deputy person for child protection/safeguarding
Name of contact person: Meryl Moreth
Work telephone number: 07944246778
Mobile number: 07944246778
Emergency contact no: 07775502450

The role and responsibilities of the named person(s) are:
> To ensure that all staff are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they are concerned that a child/young person may be subject to abuse or neglect.

> Ensure that any concerns about a child/young person are acted on, clearly recorded,
referred on where necessary and, followed up to ensure the issues are addressed.

> The Named Person(s) will record any reported incidents in relation to a child/young person. These will be kept in a secure place

Section 5 – Stages to follow if you are worried about a child

The following section provides clear guidelines for workers/members to follow if they have concerns about a child or young person.

Suspicion of abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of *Dance Direction*, please make this known to the person with responsibility for child protection.
- If you suspect that the person with responsibility for child protection and safeguarding is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the local authority designated officer (LADO)
- Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed as well as your response, in case there is follow-up in which you are involved.
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of Dance Direction, chaperone, venue staff etc., action will be taken to ensure the individual does not have further contact with the child until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms, filming location, TV Studio, etc. and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production.

Disclosure of abuse

If a child confides to 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 person with responsibility for child protection. Make it clear to the child that you will need to share this

information with others. Make it clear 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 are going to do next.
- Speak immediately to the person with responsibility for child protection. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually Children's Social care or the Police.
- 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 the information to. Make sure you sign and date your record.

Who to tell and what to tell them?

- If you have concerns about the wellbeing of a child in your care you have a duty to report it to Dance Direction's welfare officer who will contact the child employment manager. If you are unable to contact them you should contact Surrey County Council Children's Services.
- The telephone number is shown on the 'useful contacts' page at the back of this booklet'.
- Where you make such a referral, please advise the child employment office at the earliest opportunity. We can offer you the appropriate support and advice where required. Response to your referral Child protection investigation

Recording of information

- In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, the details of an allegation or reported incident will be recorded, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a statutory child protection agency.
- An accurate note shall be made of the date and time of the incident or disclosure, the parties involved, what was said or done and by whom, any action taken to investigate the matter, any further action taken e.g. suspension of an individual, where relevant the reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, and the name of the persons reporting and to whom it was reported.
- The record will be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation.

Section 6 – Creating a Safe Organisation

Photographs and images of children

- There are risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on web sites and in other publications such as

theatre programmes. Photographs can be used as a means of identifying children when they are accompanied with personal information, for example, "this is X who goes to such-and-such a school and who likes playing football". This information can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to start to 'groom' that child for abuse. Secondly the content of the photo can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. There is evidence of this adapted material finding its way on to child pornography sites.

- Organisations need to develop a policy in relation to the use of images of children and young people on their web sites, programmes and other material. Dance Direction will need to assess the potential risks to the child when making decisions about the type of images they wish to use and the way they are used. Organisations should ensure that parents support the policy. Use of names of individuals in a photograph should be limited and it is sensible to avoid use of any additional information that might help locate the child. Using only images of children in suitable dress may reduce the risk of inappropriate use. Parental permission to use an image of a young person must be sought in advance.

If parents or other members of the audience are intending to photograph or video an event they should be made aware of Dance Direction's policy. The use of cameras or mobile phones with camera or filming capability in dressing rooms and other inappropriate environments should be expressly forbidden.

E-Safety

- Most of our children will use mobile phones and computers. They are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. However, we know that some men, women and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings.
- Dance Direction's e-safety policy explains how we try to keep children safe by not communicating with children via their phone, but with their parents.
- Cyber-bullying by children, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying.

Parents

- Dance Direction believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and Dance Direction. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of Dance Direction and to share responsibility for the care of children.
- All parents will be given a copy of Dance Direction's Safeguarding Policy and procedures.
- All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange a collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. Dance Direction has a responsibility to ensure suitable arrangements are in place to take children home.

Unsupervised Contact

- Dance Direction will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.
- If possible there will always be two adults in the room when working with children.
- If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimise risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area or in a designated room with a door open.
- If it is predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, he or she may be required to obtain a criminal record disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service
- All children will be chaperoned at all times

Gifts made to the children

- Gifts of any sort, including sweets and chocolates given to the children must be made via the chaperone and with consent of the parents
- Chaperones will be mindful of any allergies/food intolerances in the group before accepting gifts for the children
- Favouritism of any child(ren) is not appropriate
- All gifts should be made to all the children rather than any specific child(ren)

Physical Contact

- All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.
- Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity.
- Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

Managing sensitive information

- Dance Direction has a policy and procedures for the taking, using and storage of photographs or images of children.
- Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes.
- Dance Direction's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.
- Dance Direction will ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of its members, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such as criminal record disclosures.

Rights & Confidentiality

- If a complaint is made against a member of Dance Direction he or she will be made aware of his rights under Dance Direction's disciplinary procedures.
- No matter how you may feel about the accusation, both the alleged abuser and the child who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998. Remember also that any

possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released.

Accidents

- To avoid accidents, chaperones and children will be advised of "house rules" regarding health and safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds. Children will be advised of the clothing and footwear appropriate to the work that will be undertaken.
- If a child is injured while in the care of Dance Direction, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in Dance Direction's accident book. This record will be countersigned by the person with responsibility for child protection.
- If a child joins the production with an obvious physical injury a record of this will be made in the accident book. This record will be countersigned by the person with responsibility for child protection. This record can be useful if a formal allegation is made later, and will also be a record that the child did not sustain the injury while participating in the production.

Chaperones

- Chaperones registered with their local authority, will be appointed by Dance Direction for the care of children during the production process. The chaperone is acting in loco-parentis and should exercise the care which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give to a child. The maximum number of children in the chaperone's care shall not exceed 12.
- Potential chaperones will be required to obtain a chaperone registration from their local authority and to supply this registration to Dance Direction once the local authority has approved them as a chaperone.
- Chaperones will be made aware of Dance Direction's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- Chaperones may have unsupervised access to children in their care consequently a criminal record disclosure will be sought as a requirement of the local authority, before the grant approval for the chaperone
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the producer. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily the chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue.
- If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the producer and not allow the child to continue.
- Under the Dangerous Performances Act no child of compulsory school age is permitted to do anything which may endanger life or limb. This could include working on wires or heavy lifting. Chaperones should tell the producer to stop involving children in dangerous performances, and should contact the local authority.
- During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the stage door and signing them into the building.
- Children will be kept together at all times except when using separate dressing rooms.
- Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times.

- Children are not to leave the place of performance unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents.
- Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
- Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms.
- Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures in the venue, and will ensure that children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger.
- Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by Dance Direction.
- Chaperones should examine accident books each day. If an accident has occurred, the producer is not allowed to use that child until a medically qualified opinion has been obtained (not just the word of the parent or child).
- Chaperones should have written arrangements for children after performances. If someone different is to collect the child, a telephone call should be made to the parent to confirm the arrangements.
- Children should be signed out when leaving and a record made of the person collecting.
- If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child until arrangements have been made to take the child home.

Section 7 – Disseminating/Reviewing policies and Procedures

All organisations should have in place a system for disseminating and reviewing their overall policies and procedures. They should be reviewed annually, signed by Trustees/Governors and/or anyone within Dance Direction that has overall responsibility for the service being provided.

Any changes/amendments need to be clarified and shared with staff and where significant changes appear these must be relayed to parents/carers. Best practice guidelines advise the involvement of parents/carers and young people in developing policies that affect them.

Within this section you need to make it clear that there is a system in place for an annual review of policies and procedures, who will be involved and,how this will be undertaken.

Appendix 1: Useful contacts

Child Employment office
01483 517838

Child Employment Manager
01483 518464
07971 664861

Surrey Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA) - 0300 470 9100

Children's Services emergency duty team (out of hours) - 01483 517898