

# SAFEGUARDING POLICY



## THE HEIGHTS BALLET AND THEATRE SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING POLICY

### Introduction

The purpose of the safeguarding policy is to ensure that every child that attends our dance school is safe and protected from harm. All staff have a responsibility to ensure that children have a safe environment to dance in. All staff have a responsibility to ensure that any allegations of abuse are reported to the appropriate authorities. The Heights works with the SSCB when required to report safeguarding incidences. Where children are at a significant risk, staff have a duty of care to take immediate action.

The Heights possesses public liability insurance for the protection of staff and students, and all staff possess an Enhanced DBS.

### Safeguarding Policy

The Heights, and its volunteers, are committed to ensuring safe environments for children and young people and believe that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to recommend best practice which protects them.

This policy applies to our paid staff (freelance), volunteers, students, or anyone working on behalf of The Heights.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers, and other agencies is essential in promoting young peoples' welfare

The purpose of the policy:

- To provide protection for the children and young people who participate in our classes, show productions, exams, and other activities
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of harm

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to them, and respecting them
- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and safe working practice for staff and volunteers
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents, and children appropriately
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, and training

The dance school principal will review this policy annually, or sooner in light of any changes in legislation or guidance. All changes will be communicated to our members with immediate effect.

All the teachers are DBS checked and fully insured. Teachers carry out First Aid Training and Safeguarding/Child Protection Training.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Person with overall responsibility for Safeguarding – The Heights’ Principal, Caroline Ambery-Holloway:-

The Safeguarding Lead will ensure the safeguarding policy is reviewed annually, that all staff have completed the appropriate level of safeguarding training for their role, and is the key point of contact for all staff concerning any safeguarding issues/concerns they may have.

Responsibilities of all members of staff:-

- All members of staff will complete the training requested by the Safeguarding Lead, and become familiar with safeguarding indicators.
- If, following a conversation about safeguarding concerns with the principal, a decision is made to report such concerns, key contact information can be found in the main cupboard.
- However, where a child is in immediate need, to protect the child, the police should be called on 999.

All adults (staff and volunteers) who come into contact with our pupils have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. We recognise our duty to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of our pupils are competent, confident, and safe to do so.

We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made. Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children. We will take all possible steps to safeguard our pupils and to ensure that the adults in our organisation are safe to work with our children. All adults who come into contact with children will be made aware of the steps that will be taken if an allegation is made. We will seek appropriate advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours of a concern or allegation being made.

## Procedures for Handling Disclosures

A child may decide to disclose information that may indicate they are suffering from abuse or neglect. A child chooses to speak to an adult because they feel that they will listen and that they can trust them. The adult needs to listen to what the child has to say, and be very careful not to 'lead' the child or influence in any way what they say.

It is important that the adult remembers to:

- Stay calm
- Listen and be supportive
- Not ask any leading questions, interrogate the child, or put ideas in the child's head, or jump to conclusions
- Not stop or interrupt a child who is recalling significant events
- Never promise the child confidentiality – it must be explained that information will need be to be passed on to help keep them safe
- Avoid criticising the alleged perpetrator
- Tell the child what must be done next (the safeguarding process must be followed)
- Record what was said immediately as close to what was said as possible. Also record what was happening immediately before the child disclosed. Be sure to sign and date the record in ink.
- Contact the designated person immediately
- Seek support

We are clear that the Local Authority and Police must lead any investigation in to any allegation regarding safeguarding.

If we have a concern about a child or children we will telephone the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub on 0114 273 4855 immediately (if the child is in immediate danger, 999 will be called for a police response). We will be put through to a Social Worker who will take all of the relevant details. We will make sure we are prepared with full details of the child and family, plus what our concerns are, details of any support we have provided to the child/family and what we would like to happen. We will ensure we gain consent from the parent/carer unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm or undermine a criminal investigation. If we have not sought consent from the parent/carer we will inform the social worker of this and the reason for this.

The social worker will agree a way forward with us and keep us informed. They will send us a written record of our conversation and an update on the outcome, in writing, within 3 working days of the completed referral. We will not investigate and will be led by the Local Authority and/or the Police.

We will make careful records of all conversations, in ink, including the dates and times of who we spoke to, the information shared and the action agreed. We do not need to send a written referral.

Full details on this process can be found at

<https://www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org/scsp/safeguarding-information-and-resources/referring-a-safeguarding-concern-to-childrens-social-care>

## Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (gov.uk)

### What is abuse and neglect?

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

- Physical abuse
  - A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- Emotional abuse
  - The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- Sexual abuse
  - Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
- Neglect
  - The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.
  - Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children**

Defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

### **Child protection**

Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

### **Welfare Policies**

#### ***Reporting Suspected Neglect or Abuse.***

A smaller school with only one or two members of staff will contact an appropriate external agency to report suspected abuse or neglect. Please note: failure to report suspected abuse can itself be considered to be abuse. Concerns regarding a child's welfare can be reported by:

- Parents
- Teachers
- Friends
- The child or young person.

All allegations of neglect or abuse will be taken seriously. If a concern is reported directly by the child or young person we will not seek to disagree, ask probing or leading questions, or do anything else which may discourage them.

We will make it clear that reported concerns cannot be kept confidential but will need to be shared with a nominated member of staff or external organisation. Parents or guardians will also be involved if appropriate. It can be helpful to write down what is being reported to you. Make sure you do not add your own assumptions, opinions or judgements. We recognise that early action is vital. Any concerns will be reported immediately. If the child or young person is in immediate danger of harm, we will contact the police on (999) In all other cases, we will report concerns to the local Protection Team (SCSP).

### ***Appropriate Physical Contact in Dance.***

Physical contact in a dance class is sometimes required to correct the posture or position of a student. Teaching dance is a physical activity and a teacher will sometimes need to make physical contact with a student to show an idea or to correct the student's position. This can include:

- Lifting
- Adjusting arms, legs, rib cage, hips, feet, hands
- Moving one student in relation to another

Where contact is needed, we will remain sensitive to the student's wishes and put their welfare first. In all cases, we will say why and how we will be correcting the student's position before making any contact. We encourage students to report any concerns.

### ***Use of Photographs and Film of Children.***

It is common for teachers, parents and students to take images (in the form of photographs and film) at classes and events. However, there may be times when it is not appropriate for images to be taken. These can include:

- While students are getting changed or are in their designated changing rooms
- Where the image may be shared publicly on social media
- When students are in large groups and permission has not been sought from all those included in the image

We recognise that taking images of students in our care may not always be appropriate and that some children and parents may not want images taken at any time. Therefore, before taking images of a child or young person, we will:

- Make clear to the child and parent where and when the image will be taken
- Clearly identify the person who will be taking the image
- Explain how the image will be used, e.g. whether it will be posted on social media or printed to be displayed at the school
- Seek written/electronic agreement from parents that images can be taken of their child.  
(This is included in our Registration System, Class Manager)

Where we have publicly displayed images at our school or on social media, parents and students may withdraw their permission at any time. In such cases, the images will be removed as soon as is reasonable and without question. We ask that any parent wanting to take photographs or film at our events only do so with our prior permission. Permission will only be granted on the agreement of all present.

### ***Health & Safety Policy.***

We will actively maintain and promote good health and safety procedures and will:

- Maintain safe and healthy work conditions
- Provide adequate control of the health and safety risks at our school

- Be open to comments and suggestions from our employees, students and their parents on matters relating to health and safety
- Provide information, instruction and supervision for employees and students and make them aware of this policy
- Ensure all employees are capable of doing their tasks, hold any required qualifications, and that they receive adequate training
- Record any harm or injuries that occur in an Accident Book and make changes where required to avoid similar incidents in the future
- Regularly review and update this policy

A First Aid box is located in our main cupboard and the kitchen. An Accident Book is located in our main cupboard. In the case of an emergency or serious injury, please contact the emergency services on (999).

### **Our Ethos**

Our organisation will establish and maintain an ethos where our children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, are listened to and are safe. Children will be able to talk freely to any member of staff, volunteer or regular visitor to our organisation if they are worried or concerned about something.

All staff, volunteers and regular visitors will, either through training or induction, know how to recognise a disclosure from a child and will know how to manage this. We will not make promises to any child and we will not keep secrets. Every child will know what the adult will do with whatever they have been told.

Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for our children.

**Last reviewed – January 2024**