



Maria Anderson School of Dance Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Statement of Intent

The Maria Anderson School of Dance and Drama is committed to ensuring all children have the same protection regardless of gender, ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. Maria Anderson School of Dance and Drama fully understands the contribution it must make to protect children and promote a safeguarding culture. The aim of the policy is to safeguard and promote children's welfare, safety and health by fostering an honest, open, caring, proactive and supportive environment whilst working in partnership with children / young people, their parents, guardians and carers and all agencies involved with or associated to The Maria Anderson School of Dance and Drama. Maria Anderson School of Dance and Drama is committed to ensuring all teachers and helpers are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns. This policy applies to all that attend and are involved with the dance school and has been drawn up in line with the relevant law and guidance which seeks to protect children and young people.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Lisa Shepherd

The Safeguarding Lead must endeavour to put in place appropriate and suitable arrangements to keep children and young people safe whilst accessing the facilities / classes at the studio. The Safeguarding Lead should ensure that all teachers and helpers have an understanding of their responsibilities with regards to safeguarding children and young people and be satisfied that they are able to recognise forms of abuse and the processes of how to report concerns. The Safeguarding Lead has a clear understanding of their role in how to manage and act upon concerns raised in accordance with the child protection policy.

The Dance School Environment

We seek to create a safe environment by ensuring children and young people feel valued, are listened to and respected. Maria Anderson School of Dance adopt the legislation and guidance that specifically addresses the needs of young performers (The Children and Young Peoples Act 1933). Every effort is made to ensure the environment is safe for all members including ensuring rigorous risk assessments are carried out daily. All members, their teachers, parents and carers, must exercise sensible and appropriate discipline whilst on the premises and any accidents must be reported to the Health and Safety officer (Beverly Hague). Smoking and vaping is prohibited in all areas of the building at all times.

Safer Recruitment

All studio personnel have been appointed through safer recruitment procedures, following relevant legislation and guidance (Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Protection of Freedom Act 2012, Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 2013, Part V of Police Act 1997, the Equality Act 2010 and the Working Together to Safeguard Children). We will take all reasonable steps to prevent unsuitable people from joining through a rigorous application and reference request procedure. All suitable teachers and helpers receive a full induction and adequate safeguarding training.

Access to the Policy

All teachers, helpers, parents, guardians and carers will be provided with a copy of this Policy which is available through our website. It is the responsibility of parents, carers or guardians to ensure that they understand the policies and procedures of the studio.

Objectives of this Policy and Function of The Maria Anderson School of Dance

The purpose of the policy is to provide protection for the children and young people who access the dance studio facilities and outline the procedures to ensure all teachers and helpers understand how to provide a safe environment for all children and young people, and how to respond in the event of a safeguarding concern. The Maria Anderson School of Dance and Drama offers a friendly, safe environment for young people who wish to express themselves creatively through dance, singing and acting as well as having opportunities to be involved with outside performances and examinations carried out by regulated dance societies (ISTD - Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing, RAD - Royal Academy of Dance, LAMDA - London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art).

Who Does This Policy Apply To

This policy applies to all members, teachers, helpers, parents, guardians, carers and all those who access the studio under the age of 18. If vulnerable adults or anyone with special educational needs will be attending classes at the studio, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Lisa Shepherd) needs to be made aware of this before commencement so that suitable adjustments can be made if needed.

Studio Responsibilities

The Maria School of Dance & Drama fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection. Our policy applies to all staff and volunteers working with us. There are five main elements to our policy:

- Ensuring we practice safer recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers who work with children.
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep themselves safe and know who to come to if they want to disclose.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Supporting children who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

We recognise that because of the day-to-day contact with children, staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The Maria School of Dance & Drama will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Ensure staff and helpers have access to safeguarding training.

Our Commitment

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The Maria School of Dance & Drama may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When with us their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. We will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of our teaching.
- Our ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives children a sense of being valued.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as social services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, education welfare service and educational psychology service.
- Ensuring that, where a pupil on the child protection register leaves, their information is transferred to the appropriate services immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

Procedures

We will follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education and Skills to:

- Ensure we have a designated senior person for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) knows the name of the designated senior person responsible for child protection and their role.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated senior person responsible for child protection.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters.
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no immediate need to refer the matter immediately and share these with the designated teacher responsible for child protection.
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.

ALL STAFF must be aware of the procedures regarding child abuse. If any pupil makes a disclosure to a member of staff they should:

- Listen – Reassure them they were right to tell you.
- Never promise that you can keep it confidential.
- Never prompt the child with leading questions.
- Make notes, these need to be detailed and include dates, times etc (it may be used as evidence).
- Inform the DSL as soon as possible.
- Explain you must tell someone else who can help them

The Child Protection Officer will then:

- Follow procedures to investigate, liaising with teachers where necessary to gather information.
- Meet with the child.
- Seek advice.

This may then lead to a formal referral to Social Services and a call home or meeting with the parents. Therefore, it is important that we communicate well, but remember confidentiality.

What is Safeguarding and Child Protection?

Safeguarding refers to the process of protecting children to provide safe and effective care. This includes all procedures designed to prevent harm to a child.

Child Protection is part of the safeguarding process; protecting individual children identified as **suffering** or **likely to suffer** significant harm.

Types of abuse and neglect

It is imperative that everyone has an understanding of what constitutes abuse and neglect against children to ensure that instances in which children are subject to unsafe circumstances, at risk of harm, or potentially already facing harm can be identified and handled appropriately and effectively. We endeavor to create a culture whereby staff always exercise professional curiosity in order to identify abuse and neglect as early as possible.

All staff and helpers are expected to be aware that abuse, exploitation, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be given a specific label and multiple issues often overlap one another.

The Maria Anderson School of Dance has a responsibility to respond to all safeguarding concerns.

Physical Abuse

Is a form of abuse which may involve actions such as hitting, shaking, throwing, burning, drowning, suffocating and poisoning, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse can also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Sexual Abuse

Is defined as a form of abuse which involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

This may involve physical assault, such as penetrative assault and touching, or non-penetrative actions, such as kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. It may also include non-contact activities, such as grooming, showing a child, sexual images or encouraging them to behave in inappropriate ways.

Sexual abuse can take place online, and can be committed by other children. The sexual abuse of a child can be committed by both adults and children of any gender.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs which is likely to result in the impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve:

- A parent failing to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter, and includes exclusion from home or abandonment.
- Failing to protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger.
- Failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- Failing to secure adequate supervision, including through the use of inappropriate caregivers.
- Neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

LGBTQ+ Members

We recognise that members who are LGBTQ+, or are perceived to be LGBTQ+, are more likely to be targeted by their peers, e.g. for discriminatory bullying, and may face increased risk of abuse. We aim to provide a safe space for members to speak out or share their concerns, reducing the additional barriers LGBTQ+ members face. We have a zero-tolerance policy towards members using homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language, regardless of whether or not the language is being directed at another individual.

Emotional Abuse

Is defined as a form of abuse which involves the emotional maltreatment of a child to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

This may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate, and may include not giving them the opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or making fun of how they communicate.

It can also involve age-inappropriate expectations, e.g. interactions beyond a child's developmental capability, overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing them from taking part in normal social interactions. It may involve any form of bullying, causing the child to feel frightened, or exploiting or corrupting them.

Child on Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse is when one child or young person causes harm to another. This can be at school/college, online or in other social situations. Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying.
- "Teenage relationship abuse" – abuse in intimate personal relationships between children.
- Physical abuse.
- Sexual abuse, including online sexual abuse.
- Initiation and "hazing" type violence – harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group, e.g. as part of a ritual, including abuse and elements to the ritual that take place online.

BAME Backgrounds

The studio holds a zero-tolerance policy towards the use of racist language, regardless of whether the language is being directed at another individual. We are all responsible for challenging such behaviour and helping foster a culture that any abuse towards members from BAME backgrounds is unacceptable. It should be known that BAME girls, BAME pupils with SEND, or BAME LGBTQ+, or perceived LGBTQ+, pupils are likely to face increased abuse due to the intersection of these identities.

Further Information

Further information with regards to signs of abuse can be found at:

www.nspcc.org.uk

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