



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

The WDC has adopted the following Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy to ensure that every child in our dance industry is safe and protected from harm. All staff, instructors, organizers and adjudicators have a responsibility to ensure that children have a safe environment to dance in. We all have a responsibility to ensure any allegations of abuse are reported to the appropriate authorities. Where children are at a significant risk, everyone has a duty of care to take immediate action.

For the purpose of this policy a child is defined as a person under 18 years of age, but the policy remains in place for all young people over 18 years. The term 'vulnerable adult' refers to a person aged 18 years or over who is, or may be in need of, community care or health care services by reasons of mental or other disability or illness and who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited.

Policy Statement

Every WDC member has a duty to safeguard from harm all children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in dance related activities. All children and young people have the right to protection. The WDC understands that some children and vulnerable adults, including those with specific learning differences and disabilities, may be particularly vulnerable to abuse. Every WDC member organization and affiliated parties must accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure the safety and protection of these groups through adherence to these safeguarding guidelines.

The WDC Child Protection and Safeguarding policy also includes preventing students, staff, instructors, organizers and adjudicators from being drawn into radicalization or extremism and that any concerns should be referred to the Safeguarding Officers in the same way as all other safeguarding concerns.

WDC core principles are:

- The welfare of the child is paramount;
- All participants in any dance activities, without exception, have the right to be safe and be protected from abuse;
- All adults have a responsibility to safeguard and protect children.

Policy Goals

The goal of the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy is to promote good practice by:

- Establishing and maintaining an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.

- Ensuring children know that there are adults in schools whom they can approach if they are worried or have concerns.
- Employing safer recruitment procedures when checking the suitability of all staff, instructors, adjudicators and volunteers who work with children.
- Ensure all suspicions and allegations of abuse are taken seriously and are responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Ensure that confidential and accurate recording of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.

Please note: We recognize that most dance studio owners, competition organizers, adjudicators, instructors and staff are not specifically trained or qualified to deal with situations of abuse or have the power to decide if abuse has occurred. However, appropriate action will be taken to notify the relevant authorities to any suspected or actual cases of abuse.

The term “staff” applies to full time staff, freelance tutors and artists, support staff, teaching assistants, guest teachers and choreographers, and volunteers.

The WDC Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone affiliated with our organization. Failure to comply will be addressed immediately and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organization.

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

It is not the responsibility of anyone working at any dance schools or competition events, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

The WDC members will assure all studio owners, competition organizers, adjudicators, instructors and staff that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concerns that anyone is, or may be, abusing a child.

Action if a Child Discloses Information

When a child or young person makes a disclosure, this will be recorded and given to the Safeguarding Officer who will determine the appropriate course of action. The documentation will be stored securely and remain confidential. Any concerns about a child or young person will be recorded regardless of whether or not it will be ultimately passed on to the statutory authorities.

If a child or young person talks about possible abuse, the member of staff **should:**

- Respond in a calm manner.
- Remember that the child is likely to be frightened or anxious.
- Tell the child that he or she was right to tell someone and is not to blame.
- Listen carefully and take what the child says seriously. Allow the child to speak freely.
- Recognize the inherent difficulties interpreting what is said by young children.
- Ask no more questions than are necessary to ensure they are clear enough about what has happened to pass the child’s concerns on. The child may also be asked to recount their story to social services or the police. However, the child must not be prevented from recalling events.
- Reassure the child but do not promise confidentiality. It should be explained that the

- child will have to speak to someone else who can help.
- Make a full written record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible.
- Remember that young or disabled children may not be able to express themselves verbally. Communication differences may mean that it is hard for them to complain or be understood. Sometimes abuse of disabled children has gone unrecognized because behavioral clues were interpreted as part of their disability.
- Explain what will happen next and who has to be told.
- **Do find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that anything the child tells you may need to be shared with others.**

Remember that if a child makes a disclosure to you:

- Do not panic
- Never make promises or agree to keep secrets for any student who is disclosing information
- Do not allow your shock or distaste to show
- Never probe for more information than is offered
- Do not ask the child to write down his / her account
- Never take photographs of marks / bruises
- Do not attempt to examine the child or remove any of their clothing
- Do not speculate or make assumptions about what has happened
- Do not make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Never approach the alleged abuser

If a child makes a disclosure please ensure a detailed record of what has been said is made. Please follow the guidelines below on what information you must try to collect. **Remember that all records need to be factual, objective, dated and timed.**

- The young person's name, age and date of birth
- Please try to obtain the following from the young person: The parent / carer name, address, phone number and email address
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times and other relevant information
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioral changes
- Details of witnesses to the incidents
- The young person's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred if applicable. Record the information using the child's own words.
- Have the parents been contacted? If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details
- If the young person was not the person who reported the incident, has he / she been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details

This information should then be forwarded as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Officer. However, if there is a risk of immediate harm to a child the police should be informed.

Please note: safeguarding and child protection referrals should be made to the local authority where the child ordinarily lives.

Action If You Suspect Abuse Has Taken Place

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by a member of staff should be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Officer.

If the allegation is about poor practice by the Safeguarding Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Designated Board Member for Safeguarding for a particular WDC member organization, who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

Monitoring

The Safeguarding Committee will meet termly to:

- Review any activity relating to safeguarding and address any issues arising.
- Review and plan training undertaken or required by staff, volunteers and governors in relation to safeguarding.
- Review and update safeguarding policies and procedures.

APPENDIX A

Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Guidelines

This document should be read in conjunction with WDC Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Dance schools, competitions, camps and other organized activities work with children, young people and vulnerable adults delivering programs of education and classes. Teachers and other adults working with children and young people have a duty to safeguard them from harm and promote their welfare. Our organization recognizes that all children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in the work of the school have a right to protection and feel safe at all times. For the purpose of this policy a child is defined as a person under 18 and includes young people over 18 who are in full time education.

We ask all studio owners, competition organizers, adjudicators, instructors, staff, visiting tutors and guest choreographers to familiarize themselves with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and comply with the clear guidelines as written below. Please note that failure to follow the school's safeguarding policy may result in formal disciplinary action and termination of employment.

Personal and Professional Conduct

Tutors and guest artists are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. All students, irrespective of culture, disability, gender, age, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be treated fairly and with dignity and mutual respect. We expect all staff to demonstrate tolerance of other faiths and uphold the values of individual liberty. Always ensure that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

Adults should not swear or use sexist, sexual, racist, homophobic, transphobic or discriminatory language at, or in the presence of students. Staff should not demonstrate favoritism towards any one student or group of students.

Adults should be polite and use respectful language in the presence of students. Do not use language to humiliate or undermine a student. Avoid the use of sarcasm or irony which can be misunderstood by a student. We expect students to be similarly respectful and polite to adults.

Adults must take due care when accepting gifts and hospitality from students, parents/guardians or prospective students as acceptance of such gifts can be misunderstood and misinterpreted.

Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities. Adults should not behave in a way that could be subject to misinterpretation, both physically and verbally.

Social Media

It is not appropriate for staff or visiting tutors to have pupils or ex-pupils below the school leaving age of 18 years, as 'friends' on Facebook or any other social media site. Adults should not disclose personal phone numbers, email addresses and contact details to students. Staff Facebook profiles must be set to 'private'. Inflammatory comments about the school, students or

individual members of staff should not be posted on any social media site. No pupil or staff name should be posted in any online social media without prior permission.

Please Note

Adults must only use the changing rooms and toilets for staff or visitors. Adults must not enter toilets or changing rooms designated for student use only.

Adults should not drink alcohol or smoke in front of students. Please refer to specific guidelines regarding the designated smoking area.

As a rule, adults should avoid speaking to, or working with a student alone in a room with the door closed. If an adult needs to, or work with a student in confidence, then it is advisable that this meeting / interaction takes place in an environment visible to others and preferably with the door open. If this is not possible then adults should ensure an appropriate distance is maintained between the adult and student and ideally, notify your line manager before the meeting takes place. Please be aware that an adult should never promise for a disclosure by a student to remain a secret but that all disclosures are immediately reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Adults must not transport a student in their own car nor invite students to their home. Adults should not meet socially with students outside of school. In the case of an emergency where a student may need to be chaperoned home, public transport, or with prior permission, a taxi should be used. In the event of an emergency, the studio owners need to be consulted.

APPENDIX B

Child Protection: Definitions & Indicators of Abuse & Neglect

There are various types of abuse and neglect, and the symptoms of abuse and neglect may vary from child to child. The Child Welfare Information Gateway has a fact sheet that may be of help.

Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect: Signs and Symptoms

Child Abuse and Neglect Definition

Federal legislation provides guidance to states by identifying a minimum set of acts or behaviors that define child abuse and neglect. The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) - PDF (42 U.S.C.A. § 5106g), as amended by the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010, defines child abuse and neglect as, at minimum:

- "Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation"; or
- "An act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm."

This definition of child abuse and neglect refers to parents and other caregivers. A "child" under this definition means a person who is younger than age 18 or who is not an emancipated minor.

Your state or territory may also define child abuse and neglect in their laws.

For more information on child abuse and neglect, visit childwelfare.gov.