

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Introduction

Louise Benson School of Dance believes that:

- The welfare of children 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 will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All staff (paid/voluntary) working in dance has a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate person

Policy Statement

Louise Benson School of Dance has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in dance from harm. All children have a right to protection and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. Louise Benson School of Dance will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in dance through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by Louise Benson School of Dance.

A child is defined as under 18 The Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004

Policy Aims

The aim of the Louise Benson School of Dance Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice by:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Louise Benson School of Dance.
- Allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues

Louise Benson School of Dance will encourage the following:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoid private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment i.e. no secrets)
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.



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- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with dancers (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them)
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Making dance fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the ISTD. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people should always be consulted and their agreement gained. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- Keeping up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance in dance
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible (e.g. for the responsibility of their children in the changing rooms). If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents/teachers/coaches/officials work in pairs and are CRB checked or have a chaperone licence.
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away, a male and female member of staff should always accompany them. (NB however, same gender abuse can also occur)
- Ensuring that at festivals/residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognising the developments/ needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given
- Requesting written parental consent if dance centre officials are required to transport young people in their cars

Practice to be avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge of Louise Benson School of Dance or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to collect a child at the end of a session

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- Avoid taking children to your home where they will be alone with you.



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Practice never to be sanctioned

The following should never be sanctioned. You should never

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Share a room with a child
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves
- Invite or allow children to stay at your home unsupervised

Guidelines for use of photographic filming at dance events

There is evidence that some people have used dance events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled dancers in vulnerable positions. Therefore, photographing and videoing of pupils is only allowed if all parents have consented through Louise Benson School of Dance.

Louise Benson School of Dance recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. When undertaking pre selection checks the following should be included:

- All volunteers/staff will be DBS checked and be a registered chaperone for shows.

Responding to suspicions or allegations

It is not the responsibility of anyone working at Louise Benson School of Dance in a paid or unpaid capacity to take responsibility or 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.

- Louise Benson School of Dance will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is or may be abusing a child.

When there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation

- A criminal investigation



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- A child protection investigation
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily

Suspected abuse

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the principals who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying in dance

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns. Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone on authority and create an open environment
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully/ies separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else
- Keep records of what is said (what happened by whom, when etc)
- Report any concerns to the Principal, Louise Benson

Action towards bullies

- Talk with the bully /ies explain the situation and try to get the bully / ies to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim/s
- Inform the bully/ies parents
- Insist on the return of borrowed items and that the bully/ies compensate the victim
- Provide support for the teacher of the victim
- Impose sanctions as necessary
- Encourage and support the bully/ies to change behaviour
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress
- Inform all Louise Benson School of Dance members of action taken
- Keep a written record of action taken

Reviewed September 2023

By Louise Ling - Principal of Louise Benson School of Dance

