

Louise Benson

SCHOOL ★ OF ★ DANCE

Louise Benson School of Dance Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Policy approved: 12 August 2026

Effective from: 1 September 2026

Next review: August 2027, or sooner if legislation, guidance or circumstances change

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Louise Ling, Principal

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1. Purpose of this policy

Louise Benson School of Dance is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child and young person who attends our classes, rehearsals, workshops, examinations, performances, competitions and other activities.

For the purposes of this policy, a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

This policy applies to all teachers, employees, assistants, volunteers, work-experience students, visiting practitioners, contractors and anyone acting on behalf of Louise Benson School of Dance.

All adults working with children at Louise Benson School of Dance have a responsibility to recognise concerns, respond appropriately and report them promptly. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether abuse has taken place.

2. Our safeguarding commitment

Louise Benson School of Dance believes that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Every child has the right to feel safe, be heard and be protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination.
- All children must be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, family circumstances, background or level of ability.
- Some children may be more vulnerable because of disability, additional needs, communication difficulties, discrimination, previous experiences or circumstances at home or within the wider community.
- Children's wishes and feelings should be listened to and taken seriously.
- Safeguarding concerns, allegations and disclosures must always be responded to promptly and appropriately.
- No concern is too small to share, and safeguarding concerns must never be dismissed as gossip, banter or someone else's responsibility.
- The reputation of the school or any individual must never be placed before the safety and welfare of a child.

We aim to create an environment in which children feel secure, valued and able to speak to a trusted adult if something is worrying them.

3. Legal framework and guidance

This policy has been developed with reference to relevant legislation and guidance, including:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#)
- Local procedures published by the [Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership](#)

Where applicable, we will also follow the safeguarding requirements of performance licences, local authorities, examination boards, venues and relevant dance organisations.

4. Safeguarding responsibilities

The Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- promoting a positive safeguarding culture throughout the school;
- ensuring this policy is implemented and reviewed;
- making sure staff and volunteers understand their safeguarding responsibilities;
- receiving and recording safeguarding concerns;
- deciding, where appropriate, whether concerns should be referred to Children's Social Care, the police or another agency;
- consulting the Local Authority Designated Officer when an allegation concerns an adult who works or volunteers with children;
- ensuring safeguarding records are accurate, confidential and stored securely;
- arranging appropriate safeguarding training and updates; and
- ensuring safer recruitment procedures are followed.

All staff and volunteers must:

- read and follow this policy;
- remain alert to signs that a child may need help or protection;
- listen to children and take their concerns seriously;
- report concerns immediately;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- complete required safeguarding training; and
- cooperate with Children's Social Care, the police and other safeguarding agencies when required.

If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable and a child may be at risk, staff must contact Kent Children's Social Care or the police directly. A referral must never be delayed because a particular member of staff is unavailable.

5. Recognising safeguarding concerns

Abuse and harm can happen at home, within the wider community, online or within an organisation. It may be carried out by an adult or another child.

Safeguarding concerns may include:

- physical abuse;
- emotional abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- neglect;
- domestic abuse;

- bullying, including online bullying;
- child-on-child abuse;
- sexual harassment or harmful sexual behaviour;
- grooming or online abuse;
- child sexual or criminal exploitation;
- trafficking or modern slavery;
- county lines activity;
- radicalisation or extremism;
- discriminatory abuse;
- forced marriage, so-called honour-based abuse or female genital mutilation;
- self-harm, eating difficulties or serious concerns about a child's mental health; and
- any behaviour or situation that places a child at risk of harm.

A child may communicate concerns through their words, behaviour, appearance, injuries, emotional responses or changes in attendance or engagement. Disabled children and children with communication needs must be given suitable opportunities and support to express themselves.

Staff do not need proof before reporting a concern.

6. Responding to a disclosure

If a child says that they have been harmed, abused or made to feel unsafe, the adult receiving the disclosure must:

- remain calm and listen carefully;
- take the child seriously;
- reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking;
- make clear that what happened is not the child's fault;
- allow the child to speak in their own words;
- ask only limited, open questions where clarification is essential;
- explain that the information must be shared with someone who can help;
- avoid promising secrecy or complete confidentiality;
- avoid confronting the person alleged to be responsible;
- report the disclosure immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead; and
- make a written record as soon as possible.

The written record should include the date, time, location, people present, what was observed and the child's exact words wherever possible. Personal opinions and assumptions must be kept separate from factual information.

Staff must not investigate the disclosure, repeatedly question the child or ask the child to provide a written statement.

7. Reporting concerns about a child

A concern must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible on the same day.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider the information, consult local safeguarding procedures and make an appropriate referral where necessary.

If a child is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical assistance, call **999**.

Concerns about a child can be reported to Kent Children's Social Care:

- **Telephone:** 03000 41 11 11
- **Out of hours:** 03000 41 91 91
- **Email:** social.services@kent.gov.uk
- **Online:** [Kent Integrated Children's Services Portal](#)

Parents and carers will normally be informed about concerns and referrals unless doing so could place the child or another person at greater risk, interfere with an investigation or be contrary to advice from Children's Social Care or the police.

Anyone who believes that a referral has not been dealt with appropriately must follow up and escalate the concern. Safeguarding remains the responsibility of the person raising the concern until they are satisfied that appropriate action has been taken.

8. Concerns or allegations about staff and volunteers

Any concern about the conduct of a teacher, employee, volunteer, assistant, visiting practitioner or other adult working with children must be reported immediately to the Principal.

This includes concerns that an adult may have:

- harmed or possibly harmed a child;
- committed a criminal offence against or relating to a child;
- behaved towards a child in a way that suggests they may pose a risk of harm; or
- behaved in a way that suggests they may not be suitable to work with children, including relevant behaviour outside LBSD.

The Principal will take immediate steps to protect any child involved and will contact the Kent Local Authority Designated Officer service within one working day when the allegation may meet the safeguarding harm threshold.

The matter must not be investigated internally before advice has been obtained from the LADO, Children's Social Care or the police.

If the concern or allegation relates to the Principal, Louise Ling, it must be reported directly to the Kent LADO service through the [Kent Integrated Children's Services Portal](#) or to Kent Children's Social Care.

Concerns that do not appear to meet the allegation threshold must still be reported. This includes behaviour that is inconsistent with this policy or the expected professional standards, even if it appears minor. Such concerns will be recorded and reviewed so that patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Where the legal conditions are met, Louise Benson School of Dance will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service. Referrals to professional bodies, examination boards or other organisations will also be made where appropriate.

9. Safer recruitment and training

Louise Benson School of Dance will take reasonable steps to ensure that adults working with children are suitable for their roles.

Depending on the role, safer recruitment procedures may include:

- a clear description of the role and safeguarding responsibilities;
- an application and interview or suitability discussion;
- identity and right-to-work checks;
- checking relevant qualifications and experience;
- obtaining and checking references;
- appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service checks, including barred-list information where the role is eligible and this is legally required;
- overseas checks where appropriate;
- safeguarding induction and training; and
- ongoing supervision and review.

A DBS certificate is an important part of safer recruitment but is not, by itself, evidence that a person is suitable to work with children.

Staff, volunteers and assistants will receive safeguarding information appropriate to their role. Safeguarding knowledge will be refreshed regularly and whenever important guidance or procedures change.

Anyone under 18 assisting in classes remains a child for safeguarding purposes. Young helpers must be appropriately supervised, must not be left in sole charge of pupils and must not be treated as an adult member of staff.

Where performances require licensed chaperones, Louise Benson School of Dance will comply with the conditions set by the relevant local authority and child performance licence.

10. Expected standards of behaviour

Adults working with children must:

- treat every child fairly and with respect;
- prioritise children's welfare above achievement, examination results, competition success or performance outcomes;
- provide constructive, age-appropriate feedback;
- work in open and observable environments wherever possible;
- maintain clear and appropriate professional boundaries;
- challenge bullying, discrimination and inappropriate language;
- use appropriate language and tone;
- recognise each child's physical ability, emotional needs and stage of development;
- allow access to water, rest, toilets and necessary medical support;
- avoid favouritism or conduct that could be perceived as grooming; and
- report any situation that may place themselves or a child at risk.

Adults must never:

- engage in sexually suggestive, provocative or inappropriate conversation or behaviour;
- make sexualised, humiliating or body-shaming comments;
- use physical punishment, intimidation or exercise as punishment;
- force a child into a stretch, position or movement beyond their safe and comfortable range;
- reduce a child to tears as a means of control;
- engage in rough play or inappropriate physical games;
- allow concerning or abusive language to go unchallenged;
- share inappropriate images, messages or online content with a child;
- form an intimate or sexual relationship with a pupil under 18;
- invite a child to their home or stay alone at a child's home without an authorised and properly assessed arrangement;
- share sleeping accommodation with a child;
- give alcohol, nicotine products, illegal substances or age-restricted items to a child;
- ignore, conceal or discourage a safeguarding concern; or
- ask a child to keep a relationship, message, meeting or incident secret.

11. Physical contact and dance instruction

Dance and acrobatic teaching may sometimes require appropriate physical contact to demonstrate alignment, correct placement, support a movement or prevent injury.

Any physical support must:

- have a clear teaching or safety purpose;
- be appropriate to the child's age, ability and needs;
- take place openly and, wherever possible, within view of others;
- be explained to the child before contact is made;
- take account of the child's verbal and non-verbal response;
- stop if the child appears uncomfortable or asks for it to stop; and
- follow the safe teaching guidance of the relevant dance or acrobatic organisation.

Children should be encouraged to communicate if they do not wish to be touched or physically supported. Their wishes must be respected unless immediate action is necessary to prevent injury.

Parents and carers may discuss any concerns about physical support with the teacher or Principal.

12. One-to-one teaching, changing rooms and personal care

One-to-one teaching should take place in a room or area that is open, observable or accessible to others. Parents or carers should be informed of planned one-to-one tuition. Where possible, staff should avoid being alone with a child in a completely private or locked space.

Children's privacy and dignity must be respected in changing and toilet areas. Mobile phones, cameras and recording devices must not be used in changing rooms or toilets. Adults should not change in the same space as children. Supervision must be proportionate to the children's ages and needs and should, where practicable, involve more than one appropriate adult.

Staff must not perform personal or intimate tasks that a child can complete independently. If a child requires additional assistance because of age, disability or medical need, arrangements should be agreed in advance with the child and parent or carer wherever possible.

13. Photography, filming and online safety

Photographs or recordings of pupils may only be taken and used for LBSD purposes where the appropriate parental consent has been obtained.

Consent choices will be recorded and can be changed by a parent or carer for future use.

Louise Benson School of Dance will:

- only use images that are appropriate and respectful;
- avoid publishing unnecessary personal information with a child's image;
- never take or permit photographs in changing rooms or toilets;
- ensure only authorised people take official photographs or recordings;
- store and share images responsibly; and
- remove images from LBSD-controlled platforms where consent is withdrawn and it is reasonably possible to do so.

Parents, carers and audience members may only photograph or film at classes, rehearsals, examinations, shows or events when LBSD has expressly confirmed that this is permitted. Images containing other children must not be published publicly without the permission of their parents or carers.

Staff must not use personal social media accounts to form private relationships with pupils. Communication with children should normally take place through their parent or carer or through an approved LBSD account or group.

Private one-to-one messaging between staff and children should be avoided. Any necessary direct communication with an older pupil must be professional, related to LBSD activity and, wherever possible, copied to or visible to their parent, carer or another appropriate adult.

14. Attendance, collection and transport

Registers will be taken for classes and activities. Relevant emergency contact and medical information must be available to the adults responsible for the session.

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring children arrive safely and are collected promptly.

A child will only be released to their parent, carer or another person authorised to collect them. LBSD must be informed in advance if collection arrangements change.

If a parent or carer is late:

- the child will remain supervised in a safe place;
- reasonable attempts will be made to contact the parent, carer and emergency contacts;
- two adults should remain where practicable; and
- Children's Social Care or the police may be contacted if no authorised adult can be reached or there is concern for the child's welfare.

A child will not be left alone or taken to a staff member's home.

Parents and carers are normally responsible for transporting children. Staff should not transport a child alone unless this has been agreed in advance with the parent or carer and

suitable safeguarding, driving, insurance and seatbelt arrangements are in place. Any unavoidable emergency arrangement must be reported and recorded.

15. Performances, competitions, trips and events

For performances, competitions, workshops, trips and other activities away from regular classes, LBSD will make appropriate arrangements for:

- risk assessment;
- registration and supervision;
- emergency and medical information;
- parental consent;
- collection and transport;
- changing areas;
- photography and filming;
- licensed chaperones where required; and
- responding to missing children, illness, injury or safeguarding concerns.

Adults must not enter children's changing or sleeping areas unnecessarily. LBSD does not permit an adult to share a bedroom with a child who is not their own child.

16. First aid, medication and injuries

Appropriate first-aid arrangements will be made for classes and events.

Any significant injury or incident will be recorded and reported to the parent or carer.

Emergency services will be contacted where necessary.

Medication will only be administered where appropriate arrangements and written parental information have been provided, except where immediate emergency action is required to protect a child.

Safeguarding concerns arising from an injury, explanation or pattern of injuries must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, even if first aid has already been provided.

17. Child-on-child abuse and bullying

Louise Benson School of Dance recognises that children can harm other children. This may include bullying, discriminatory behaviour, physical abuse, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, coercion, online abuse or abuse within friendships or relationships.

Reports will never be dismissed as banter, part of growing up or typical behaviour between children.

LBSD will:

- listen to and support the child who has been harmed;
- take immediate steps to maintain safety;
- speak to the children involved separately;
- record the concern;
- consider the needs and welfare of every child involved;
- inform parents or carers where appropriate and safe;
- apply suitable behavioural consequences and support;
- avoid forcing a child to confront or mediate with someone who has harmed them; and
- refer to Children's Social Care or the police where necessary.

Any child displaying harmful behaviour will be held appropriately accountable while also being offered support to understand and change that behaviour.

18. Confidentiality, information sharing and records

Safeguarding information will only be shared with people who need it in order to protect or support a child.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where a child may be at risk. Data-protection law does not prevent necessary and proportionate information sharing for safeguarding purposes.

Safeguarding records will:

- be factual, clear and dated;
- distinguish fact from opinion;

- include decisions, actions and reasons;
- be stored securely and separately from general pupil information where appropriate;
- only be accessed by authorised people; and
- be retained in accordance with applicable safeguarding and data-retention guidance.

Information may be shared without consent where seeking consent would place a child or another person at risk, cause an unreasonable delay or interfere with a police or safeguarding investigation.

19. Whistleblowing and escalation

All staff and volunteers have a duty to raise concerns about unsafe practice or a failure to follow safeguarding procedures.

Anyone who believes that a concern is being ignored, concealed or handled inappropriately should contact Kent Children's Social Care, the Kent LADO service, the police or the NSPCC directly.

Anyone raising a genuine concern in good faith will be supported. No person will be treated unfairly for reporting a safeguarding concern or cooperating with an investigation.

20. Useful safeguarding contacts

Immediate danger: 999

Police non-emergency: 101

Kent Children's Social Care:

03000 41 11 11

Out of hours: 03000 41 91 91

social.services@kent.gov.uk

[Report a concern through the Kent portal](#)

Kent LADO Education Safeguarding Advisory Service:

[Information and professional referral route](#)

NSPCC Helpline:

0808 800 5000

help@nspcc.org.uk

[NSPCC Helpline](#)

Childline:

0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

21. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner following:

- a safeguarding incident or concern;
- a change in legislation or official guidance;
- a change in LBSD activities or staffing; or
- learning from local or national safeguarding practice.

All staff and volunteers will be informed of material changes.

Signed: Louise Ling

Role: Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead

Date: 12 August 2026