



Child Protection Policy

Centre Stage Performing Arts believes that:

- The welfare of children is vital.
- 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 have a responsibility to report concerns to the principal or other identified staff.

The dance school 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. The dance school will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in dance through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines. A child is defined as under 18 The Children Act 1989.

Policy Aims

The aim of the Centre Stage Performing Arts Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

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

Promoting Good Practice

Centre Stage Performing Arts 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.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with dancers (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child).

- 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 IDTA. 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.
- 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.
- 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 not acceptable You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games• 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.
- 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.

Recruitment and selecting staff

Centre Stage Performing Arts 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 staff should complete an application form. This will elect information about an applicant's past and a self disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau (DBS CHECK).
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo)

Responding to suspicions or allegations

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in the Dance Studio 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. The dance school will assure all staff that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague/volunteer 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.
- A child protection investigation.
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation.

Suspected abuse

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the principal 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.
- 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.

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's parents.
- 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 appropriate members of the action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken (whom, when etc)