**AVIAN DANCE SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**Introduction**

Avian Dance School acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and policy requirements.

The policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all children:

* have a positive and enjoyable experience of dance and exercise within Avian Dance School in a safe and child centred environment
* are protected from abuse whilst participating in our classes or outside of the activity.

Avian dance School acknowledges that some children, including those with special educational needs and disabled children can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

**Policy Consultation & Review**

This policy is available on our website. We also inform parents and guardians about this policy when their children join Avian Dance School as well as referring them to the website.

We recognise the expertise our staff and volunteers build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis and we therefore invite them to contribute to and shape this policy and associated safeguarding arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and was last agreed in January 2021.

Designated Safeguarding Officer: Harriet Wigger

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**1. PURPOSE & AIMS**

1.1
The purpose of the Avian Dance School safeguarding policy is to ensure every child who is a member is safe and protected from harm. This means we will always work to:

* Protect children and young people from maltreatment;
* Prevent impairment of our children’s and young people’s health or development;
* Ensure that children and young people grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of

safe and effective care.

As part of our safeguarding policy we will:

* promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
* ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is

provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of

abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people

* ensure we have a designated Safeguarding Officer
* ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided

to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern

* create and maintain an anti-bullying environment, ensuring policy and procedure is used to deal with

this effectively

* develop and implement effective e-safety guidance and related procedures
* ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained

and securely stored as well as sharing safeguarding good practise with children, their families,

professional members and volunteers via online resources, information sheets and discussion.

* use our safeguarding policy and procedures to share concerns with relevant agencies who may need to know for the benefit of the child, ensuring to include children, young people, parents,

families and carers appropriately

* ensure that everyone abides by the photography and videoing policy, and procedures are followed if

this is neglected

* prevent the employment / deployment of unsuitable individuals
* ensure robust safeguarding systems and procedures are in operation.

Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed robustly and may result in dismissal / exclusion from Avian Dance School.

1.2
This policy will give clear direction to staff, volunteers and parents about expected behaviour and our legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

1.3
We fully recognise the contribution we can make to protect children from harm and supporting and promoting the welfare of all children. The elements of our policy are prevention, protection and support.

1.4
This policy applies to all children, staff, parents, volunteers and visitors to events.

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**2. ETHOS**

2.1
The child’s welfare is of paramount importance. We will establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, are listened to and are safe. Children will be able to talk freely to any professional member or volunteer if they are worried or concerned about something.

2.2
Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. We recognise that teachers and volunteers play a particularly important role as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children to prevent concerns from escalating. **All teachers and volunteers are advised to maintain an attitude of ‘*it could happen here*’ where safeguarding is concerned.** When concerned about the welfare of a child, Avian Dance Sch members must always act in the **best interests** of the child.

2.3
All staff, volunteers and regular visitors will, through training and induction, know how
to recognise indicators of concern, how to respond to a disclosure from a child and how to record and report this information. We will not make promises to any child and we will not keep secrets. Every child will know what the adult will have to do with any information they have chosen to disclose.

2.4
At all times we will work in partnership and endeavour to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers and colleagues from other agencies.

2.5 Supporting children

* we’ll let children know who will listen to and support them
* we’ll create an “open door” ethos where children feel confident to talk to an adult about bullying behaviour or any other issue that affects them
* potential barriers to talking (including those associated with a child’s disability or impairment) will be acknowledged and addressed at the outset to enable children to speak out
* we’ll make sure children are aware of helpline numbers
* anyone who reports an incident of bullying will be listened to carefully and reports will be taken seriously
* any reported experience of bullying behavior will be investigated and will involve listening carefully to all those involved
* children experiencing bullying behavior will be supported and helped to uphold their right to play and live in a safe environment
* those who display bullying behaviour will be supported and encouraged to develop better relationships
* we’ll make sure that sanctions are proportionate and fair

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**3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

3.1
It is the responsibility of *every* member, volunteer, parent and regular visitor to ensure that they carry out the requirements of this policy and, at all times, work in a way that will safeguard and promote the welfare of all of children. This includes the responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

**4. TRAINING & INDUCTION**

4.1
When a member of staff or student and parent join Avian Dance School, they must be informed of safeguarding procedures and directed to this policy by the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

4.2
Every new member of staff or volunteer will receive safeguarding training. This programme will include information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child, how to record and the processes for referral to the clubs Safeguarding Lead.

4.3
The Designated Safeguarding Officer must undertake safeguarding training annually to keep up with any developments relevant to their role and be fully informed of GDPR regulations to avoid any breaches.

4.4 We actively encourage all of our staff and volunteers to keep up to date with the most recent local and national safeguarding advice and guidance.

**5. PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING CONCERNS**

5.1
Every member of Avian Dance School, including volunteers, working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of ‘*it could happen here’* where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff and volunteers should always act in the interests of the child and have a responsibility to take action as outline in this policy.

5.2
All members are encouraged to report any concerns that they have and not see these as insignificant. On occasions, a referral is justified by a single incident such as an injury or disclosure of abuse. More often however, concerns accumulate over a period of time and are evidenced by building up a picture of harm over time; this is particularly true in cases of emotional abuse and neglect. In these circumstances, it is crucial that adults record and pass on concerns in accordance with this policy immediately to build up a picture and access support for the child at the earliest opportunity. A reliance on memory without accurate and contemporaneous records of concern could lead to a failure to protect.

5.3
It is *not* the responsibility of staff or volunteers to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All staff and volunteers however, have a duty to recognise concerns and pass the information on in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.

5.4
The Designated Safeguarding Officer should be used as a first point of contact for concerns and queries regarding any safeguarding concern in the school. Any staff member or volunteer who receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that a child is at risk of harm must report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer or, if unavailable, to the Principals.

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5.5
All concerns about a child or young person should be reported without delay and recorded in writing using the agreed template (see Appendix 1).

5.6
Following receipt of any information raising concern, the Designated Safeguarding Officer will consider what action to take and seek advice from Local Safeguarding Authorities / Children’s Services. All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made must be fully documented.

5.7
If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made to Children’s Services immediately. Anybody can make a referral in these circumstances.

5.8
Staff / volunteers should always follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy in the first instance. However, they may also share information directly with Children’s Services, or the police if:

* the situation is an emergency;
* they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil’s safety.

5.9
Any staff member / volunteer who does not feel that concerns about a child have been responded to appropriately and in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy should raise their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Officer. If any staff member or volunteer does not feel the situation has been addressed appropriately at this point should contact the Principals.

**6. SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES**

6.1
We recognise that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges. These additional barriers can include:

* + assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child’s

disability without further exploration;

* + children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionally impacted by things like bullying- without

outwardly showing any signs; and

* + communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

6.3
We recognise that a previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff and volunteers should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children, it is important that all agencies work together and prompt action is taken when necessary to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.

6.4
We recognise that our staff / volunteers are well placed to identify concerns and take action to prevent children from becoming victims of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and other forms of so-called ‘honour- based’ violence (HBV) and provide guidance on these issues through our safeguarding training. If staff / volunteers have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBV they should inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer who will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multiagency liaison with police and children’s social care.

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6.5
We recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation and extremism is no different to safeguarding against any other vulnerability in today’s society*. W*e will ensure that:
• Through training, staff members and volunteers have an understanding of what radicalisation and

extremism is and how to respond, using the same safeguarding procedures as described in this document.

6.6
We recognise that children are also vulnerable to physical, sexual and emotional abuse by their peers or siblings. Abuse perpetrated by children can be just as harmful as that perpetrated by an adult, so it is important that all staff members and volunteers to remember the impact on both the victim of the abuse as well as to focus on the support for the child or young person exhibiting the harmful behaviour. Such abuse will always be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult and the same procedures will apply in respect of any child who is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Staff members and volunteers must never tolerate or dismiss concerns relating to peer on peer abuse; it must never be tolerated or passed off as ‘banter’, ‘just having a laugh’ or ‘part of growing up’.

6.7
Safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

* bullying (including cyberbullying);
* physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical

harm;

* sexual violence and sexual harassment;
* sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
* initiation

All staff / volunteers will understand that they should follow our safeguarding procedures for reporting a concern if they are worried about peer on peer abuse.

6.8
We will work with other agencies as required to respond to concerns about sexual violence and harassment.

**7. RECORDS AND INFORMATION SHARING**

7.1
If staff / volunteers are concerned about the welfare or safety of any child they will record their concern on the agreed reporting form (Appendix 1). They should ensure that the form is signed and dated. Any concerns should be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours.

7.2
Any information recorded will be kept in a separate named file, in a secure cabinet. These files will be the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Officer. Child protection information will only be shared within club on the basis of ‘need to know in the child’s interests’ and on the understanding that it remains strictly confidential.

7.3
Child protection information will only be kept in the file and this file will be kept up to date. Records of concern, copies of referrals, invitations to child protection conferences, core groups and reports will be stored here. All our safeguarding files will include; a chronology, contents front cover and will record significant events in the child’s life.

**8. WORKING WITH PARENTS & CARERS**

8.1
Avian Dance School is committed to working in partnership with parents/carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to support them to understand our statutory responsibilities in this area.

8.2
When new students join Avian Dance School, parents and carers will be informed that we have a safeguarding policy.

8.3
We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. We ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. We respect parents’ rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless we have permission or it is necessary to do so in order to safeguard a child from harm.

8.4
We will seek to share with parents any concerns we may have about their child *unless* to do so may place a child at increased risk of harm. A lack of parental engagement or agreement regarding the concerns the school has about a child will not prevent the Designated Safeguarding Officer making a referral to Children’s Services in those circumstances where it is appropriate to do so.

8.5
In order to keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them, clubs require parents to provide accurate and up to date information regarding:

* Full names and contact details of all adults with whom the child normally lives;
* Full names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above);
* Emergency contact details (if different from above);
* Full details of any other adult authorised by the parent to collect the child from classes/events (if

different from the above).

The school will retain this information. The school will only share information about children with adults who have parental responsibility for a pupil or where a parent has given permission and the school has been supplied with the adult’s full details in writing.

**9. SAFER RECRUITMENT**

9.1
All staff members (and volunteers who are unsupervised) must have been DBS checked before they work with children.

**10. SAFER WORKING PRACTICE**

10.1
All adults who come into contact with our children have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. There is a legal duty placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of our children are competent, confident and safe to do so.

10.2
If staff members, visitors, volunteers or parent helpers are working with children alone they will, wherever possible, be visible to other members.

**11. MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF MEMBERS & VOLUNTEERS**

11.1
Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment that secures the wellbeing and very best outcomes for the children. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.

11.2
Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children.

11.3
We will take all possible steps to safeguard children and to ensure that the adults in Avian Dance School are safe to work with children.

11.4
If an allegation is made or information is received about any adult who is a member or volunteer within the school that indicates that they may be unsuitable to work with children, the staff member receiving the information should inform the Principals immediately.

**12. SPOTTING AND PHYSICAL SUPPORT**

12.1
An essential part of teaching dance can include spotting and supporting students to help them understand movement, shapes and to develop higher level skills, but also reduces the risk of injury.

12. 2

When a teacher is spotting an student, we expect:

* The teacher to understand where spotting is necessary and to avoid ‘over-handling’
* The teacher must be appropriately trained in the skills they are teaching and understand the possibilities for injury and how to reduce this
* Physical contact should not be invasive of sensitive areas of the body
* When spotting, teachers should seek to have either the parent or another adult/teacher in the room

**13. COVID-19**

13.1
Avian Dance School recognises the importance of following government guidance in regards to the coronavirus pandemic for the continuity of our student’s training and for their safety, as well as their families.

13.2

Avian Dance School ensures we:

* Keep up to date with changes in the guidance across the country
* Ensure our coronavirus rsisk assessment is updated regularly and we have a policy available on our webiste
* Ensure all guidelines are followed diligently

**14. Zoom classes and online safety**

When classes are taken online, Avian Dance School teachers will:

14. 1 Ensure we have a password with every meeting – this will help monitor who is in the class and stop the risk of someone uninvited joining in.

14.2 Mute all students for the majority of the class to ensure background noise and remind parents of the use of language being appropriate.

14.3 Continue our responsibility of safeguarding children using this policy, even through online classes.

14.4 We will not record classes and ask that an adult is present at all times the students are online learning with us

14.5 We will send instructions of how to use the app, how to keep safe in the home and to allow no photography or videograohy of the screen.

14.6 We will ensure our background is clear and professional.

14.7 We will adjust our lessons to ensure minimal risk of injury to the students at home and keep our risk assessments updated regularly.

**APPENDIX 1**

Reporting Suspected Abuse - Confidential Recording Sheet

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Organisation:** | **Name of Person Reporting:** |
|  |  |
| **Name of Child:** | **Age & Date of Birth:**  |
|  |  |
| **Disability:** |
|  |
| **Parent’s/Carer’s name(s):** |
|  |
| **Are you reporting your concerns or reporting someone else’s? Please give details.** |
|  |
| **Brief description of what has prompted the concerns: include date, time, specific incidents.** |
|  |
| **Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?** |
|  |
| **Have you spoken to the child? If so, what was said?** |
|  |
| **Have you spoken to the parent(s)? if so, what was said?** |
|  |
| **Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, please give details?** |
|  |
| **Have you consulted anybody else? Please give details.** |
|  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Person reported to:** | **Date of reporting:** |
|  |  |
| **Signature of person reporting:** | **Today’s Date:** |
|  |  |
| **Action taken:** |
| **Notes:** *inc. Body Map for signs/evidence of physical abuse.***A drawing of a person  Description automatically generated** |

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