

## **Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy 2023/2024**

### **The Core Dance Company**

15 Abbey Street, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 9AA

This document sets out the Child Protection Policy and Guidance for The Core Dance Company which will be followed by all members of the group, including staff, volunteers and customers.

To promote best safeguarding practice during lessons, shows and rehearsals, we commit to:

- *ensuring that EVERY teacher and helper (over 16 years old) has a valid DBS Certificate, undertaken and checked by us;*
- *ensuring that children are signed into the studio for all classes/workshops and in/out of the building for rehearsals/shows. The same will take place for shows and performances at alternative venues.*
- *provide the appropriate number of qualified chaperones during shows & Enhances DBS Checked Volunteers.*

The Core Dance Company knows that being a child/young person (under 18) makes them vulnerable. The purpose of this Policy is to make sure that the actions of any adult in the context of the work carried out by us is transparent and to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children/young people.

If any parent or young person/child has any concerns about the conduct of any member of staff, this should be raised in the first instance with Jessica Vaughan (Designated Safeguarding Officer (**DSO**)).

The DSO should then advise and continue with the procedure below. If the DSO is not contactable, then the member of staff should follow the procedure below.

This Policy is written in accordance with The Children's Act 2004 and "Working Together to Safeguard Children" guidance 2015.

#### **Principles upon which the Child Protection Policy is based.**

- *The welfare of a child or young person will always be paramount.*
- *The welfare of families will be promoted.*
- *The rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their families will be respected and listened to.*
- *Those people in positions of responsibility within The Core Dance Company will work in accordance with the interests of children and young people and follow the Policy outlined below.*
- *Any breach of the child protection policy by a member of staff will result in suspension and if needed immediate dismissal, if DSO breaches then the local authority should be contacted.*
- *Those people in positions of responsibility within The Core Dance Company will ensure that the same opportunities are available to everyone and that all differences between individuals will be treated with respect.*

## Child Protection Policy

### 1. Immediate Action to Ensure Safety

Immediate action may be necessary at any stage of involvement with children and families. In all cases, it is vital to take whatever action is needed to safeguard the child/ren (i.e.:

- *if emergency medical attention is required, this can be secured by calling an ambulance (dial 999) or taking a child to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department; and/or*
- *if a child is in immediate danger, the Police should be contacted (dial 999), as they alone have the power to remove a child immediately if protection is necessary, via a Police Protection Order.*

### 2. Recognition of Abuse or Neglect

Abuse or neglect of a child is caused by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or more rarely by a stranger.

**Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when someone fabricates the symptoms of illness or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent, emotional ill treatment of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only as far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic materials or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or guardian failing to provide adequate food, shelter, and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Individuals at The Core Dance Company need to be alert to the potential abuse of children.

The Core Dance Company should know how to recognise and act upon indicators of abuse or potential abuse involving children. There is an expected responsibility for all members of staff to respond to any suspected or actual abuse of a child, in accordance with these procedures.

It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parents/guardians about any concerns.

However, you must not discuss your concerns with parents/guardians in the following circumstances:

- *where sexual abuse is suspected;*
- *where organised or multiple abuse is suspected;*
- *where fictitious illness by proxy (also known as Munchausen Syndrome by proxy) is suspected; and/or*
- *where contacting parents/guardians would place a child, yourself, or others at immediate risk.*

### **What to do if children talk to you about abuse or neglect**

It is recognised that a child may seek you out to share information about abuse or neglect or talk spontaneously (individually or in groups) when you are present. In these situations, you must:

- *listen carefully to the child - DO NOT directly question the child;*
- *give the child time and attention;*
- *allow the child to give a spontaneous account - do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events;*
- *make an accurate record of the information you have been given, taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child's physical appearance as well as what was said. Do not throw this away, as it may later be needed as evidence;*
- *use the child's own words where possible;*
- *explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared;*
- *reassure the child that: you are glad they have told you; they have not done anything wrong and what you are going to do next.*
- *explain that you will need to get help to keep the child safe.*
- *do NOT ask the child to repeat his or her account of events to anyone.*

### **3. Consulting about your concern**

The purpose of consultation is to discuss your concerns in relation to a child and decide what action is necessary.

You may become concerned about a child who has not spoken to you, because of your observations of, or information about that child.

It is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused or respond to a child wanting to talk to you. This practice can help clarify vague concerns and result in appropriate action.

If you are concerned about a child, you must share your concerns. Initially, you should talk to one of the designated officers at The Core Dance Company, Jessica vaughan.

If the DSO person is implicated in the concerns, you should discuss your concerns directly with Children's Services, 0116 305 5320.

You should consult externally with Children's Services in the following circumstances:

- *when you remain unsure after internal consultation as to whether child protection concerns exist;*
- *when there is a disagreement as to whether child protection concerns exist;*
- *when you are unable to consult promptly (or at all) with your designated internal contact for child protection; and/or*
- *when the concerns relate to any member of the organising committee.*

Consultation is different from making a referral but should enable a decision to be made as to whether a referral to Children's Services or the Police should progress.

#### *4. Making a referral*

A referral involves giving Children's Services or the Police information about concerns relating to an individual or family, in order that enquiries can be undertaken by the appropriate agency, followed by any necessary action.

In certain cases, the level of concern will lead straight to a referral, without external consultation being necessary.

Parents/guardians should be informed if a referral is being made, except in the circumstances outlined above.

However, inability to inform parents for any reason should not prevent a referral being made. It would then become a joint decision with Children's Services about how and when the parents should be approached and by whom.

**If your concern is about abuse or risk of abuse from someone not known to the child or child's family, you should make a telephone referral directly to the Police and consult with the parents.**

If your concern is about abuse or risk of abuse from a family member or someone known to the children, you should make a telephone referral to Children's Services.

#### **Information required**

Be prepared to give as much of the following information as possible. In emergency situations, all this information may not be available. Unavailability of some information should not stop you making a referral.

You should be prepared to provide:

- *Your name, telephone number, position and request the same of the person to whom you are speaking.*
- *The full name, address, and telephone number of the family.*
- *The date of birth of the child and any siblings.*
- *Gender, ethnicity, first language and any special needs.*
- *Names, dates of birth and relationship of household members and any significant others.*
- *The names of professionals known to be involved with the child/family (e.g. GP, Health Visitor, School).*
- *The nature of the concern and the foundation for them.*
- *An opinion on whether the child may need urgent action to make them safe.*
- *Your view of the needs of the child and family.*
- *Whether the consent of a parent with parental responsibility has been given to the referral being made.*

***Action to be taken following the referral:***

- *Ensure that you keep an accurate record of your concern(s) made at the time.*
- *Put your concerns in writing to Children's Services following the referral (within 48 hours).*
- *Accurately record the action agreed or that no further action is to be taken and the reasons for this decision.*

**5. Confidentiality**

The Core Dance Company should ensure that any records made in relation to a referral are kept confidentially and in a secure place.

Information in relation to child protection concerns should be shared on a "need to know" basis. However, the sharing of information is vital to child protection and, therefore, the issue of confidentiality is secondary to a child's need for protection. If in doubt, discuss with child services.

**If you concern is regarding a member of staff, please contact the Local Authority Designated Officer directly (0116 305 414). CFS-LADO@leics.gov.uk**