



Children and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

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All child protection concerns should be acted upon immediately. If you are concerned that a child might be at risk or is actually suffering abuse, you should tell the designated child protection officer.

Your designated officer is: **Deborah Hoskins**
Telephone number: **07772284827**

POLICY STATEMENT

Safeguarding children is the responsibility of everyone. Deborah Hoskins Dance recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within the legal framework of the Children Act 2004 and the Education Act 2002.

We are aware that many children and young people are the victims of different kinds of abuse and that they can be subjected to social factors that have an adverse impact upon their lives – including domestic violence, substance misuse, bullying, child prostitution and ritualistic abuse. We aim to create a safe environment within which children and young people can thrive and adults can work with the security of clear guidance.

Under the terms of the Children Act 2004 anyone under the age of 19 is considered to be a child/young person.

Everyone at our organisation shares an objective to help keep children, young people and vulnerable adults safe by:

- Providing a safe environment to learn in
- Identifying and responding to children, young people and vulnerable adults in need or support and / or protection
- Supporting children's development in ways which will foster a sense of self esteem and independence
- Fostering a learning environment in which every pupil feels valued and able to articulate their wishes and feelings in their preferred method of communication in an atmosphere of acceptance and trust.

These guidelines are for the use of all paid staff, volunteers and visitors. We will make them available to the parents and carers of the children and young people to whom we offer a service. Through them, we will endeavour to ensure that:

- Children and young people are listened to, valued and respected
- Staff are aware of the need to be alert to the signs of abuse and know what to do with their concerns
- All paid and unpaid staff are subject to rigorous recruitment procedures
- All paid and unpaid staff are given appropriate support and training
- All paid and unpaid staff hold a current DBS check.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

These guidelines apply to:

- A situation involving children and young people up to age 18, whether or not accompanied by adults. We also recognise that vulnerable people of any age will benefit from similar safeguards. Wherever guidelines refer to children, this broader meaning applies
- All staff, contractors, freelance staff, volunteers and consultants working within our organisation or on our premises. In the case of contractors and consultants it is incumbent upon the Principal, Manager or other Designated Safety Officers to ensure that they are made aware of these guidelines

GENERAL DUTIES FOR ALL STAFF

In regard to the safety and welfare of children and similarly vulnerable people all staff are required to:

- Undergo an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau/ Disclosure and Barring Service Disclosure
- Take all reasonable steps to protect children from hazards
- Strictly observe the code of behaviour in this document
- Take appropriate action if an accident occurs
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent abuse of children in contact with anyone within the organisation
- Report any incident or suspicion of abuse

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ALL STAFF

- Safety of participants and staff is of prime consideration at all times
- All accidents involving anyone should be recorded in the organisation's accident book immediately or as soon as practicably possible
- Staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with building/facility safety issues, such as, fire procedures, location of emergency exits, location of emergency telephones and first aid equipment
- Staff are responsible for reporting suspected cases of child abuse to the named responsible person and/or agencies
- Appropriate staff should have access to any parent consent/emergency consent forms for all children taking part in any activities [this information should be confidential]
- Staff should ensure that their activities start and end on time
- Staff are expected to promote, demonstrate and incorporate the values of fair play, trust and ethics throughout their activities
- Staff should ensure that they are adequately insured, to protect against claims of negligence, through their organisation or their own personal insurance if acting as a self employed agent

ADMISSION PROCEDURES

A register of names, addresses, next of kin and contact addresses and telephone numbers for emergencies will be kept.

Parents or carers, and where appropriate older children, will be given a copy of a written statement which specifies the action which will be taken in the event of a child becoming ill or being injured and which indicates that any information which suggests that a child has been abused will be passed on to the Social Services Department and/or the police.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR ALL STAFF

People working at our organisation must always observe the following requirements where children, young people or similarly vulnerable people are concerned.

- **Physical Contact** - when physical contact is necessary (first-aid administration, dance teaching, practical guidance in lessons, for example), ask permission to touch the child. Remember, touch must be for the child's benefit.
- **Corporal punishment** is prohibited. Staff & Teachers should adhere to the centre's positive reinforcement principals.
- Document uncomfortable situations that may be misinterpreted (e.g. letters of 'adoration' from pupil to teacher, inappropriate conversations, social media) inform CPO/Principal.
- Under no circumstances should a teacher disclose personal information to their students or take personal information about their students. This includes telephone numbers, addresses, email addresses, and social networking sites. Teachers must not accept invitations from students to join their social networking site. Contact with students outside of class without prior arrangement through Deborah Hoskins Dance is strictly prohibited and could result in termination of your employment without further notice.

People working at our organisation must always observe the following requirements where children, young people or similarly vulnerable people are concerned.

Do's and Don'ts for Working with Children

DO:

- Behave professionally
- Listen to children
- Treat everyone with respect
- Communicate at an appropriate level
- Be aware of policy and procedures
- Report any suspicions within our guidelines
- Be aware, approachable and understanding

DO NOT:

- Harm a child or frighten a child
- Touch inappropriately
- Use inappropriate language
- Threaten, shout or be aggressive
- Force a child to do something they do not want to do
- Mistreat, demean, ignore, or make fun of
- Show favouritism to any one individual or groups of individuals
- Let a child expose him/herself to danger
- Make racist, sexist or any other remark which upset or humiliate
- Take photos of children without permission

Do's and Don'ts for Working with Vulnerable Adults**DO:**

- Be respectful, responsible and professional
- Act in an appropriate manner
- Listen and communicate
- Use common sense; be caring, attentive and aware
- Be sympathetic to their needs
- Be aware of your responsibility
- Be aware of policy and procedures as outlined in this document

DO NOT:

- Treat vulnerable adults as children
- Engage in inappropriate behaviour
- Be aggressive or physically restrain
- Do anything of a personal nature they can do for themselves
- Place yourself in a vulnerable position

Deborah Hoskins Dance has a strict duty never to subject any child to any form of harm or abuse. Failure to adhere to these procedures will be treated as gross misconduct.

PHOTOGRAPHING CHILDREN

Photographs of children will only be used if written consent has been obtained from a parent or guardian. General group photographs may be used if no individual can be identified by reason of any attached data. Permission should be obtained firstly to take the photograph and secondly for permission from the parent if the photograph is to be reproduced.

WHAT TO DO IF AN ACCIDENT HAPPENS

Depending on your judgment of the situation, go to the scene immediately if possible and/or summon First Aid assistance and/or contact the emergency services. With children it can be hard to assess whether they have been injured or the extent of the seriousness of an injury. If you have any doubt about this, you should err on the side of

caution and contact the emergency services. Even if a child is accompanied and you think an accident is not being treated seriously enough, get medical assistance on your own initiative if necessary. All accidents should be reported in the Health and Safety manual.

FIRST AID

Unless there is good reason, First Aid should not be administered without the permission of the child's parent or accompanying adult. A child cannot give consent. If the parent is not at the premises, obtain their phone number and try and make contact. However, if a child is alone and seriously injured or unconscious, the situation will need to be dealt with immediately. If at all possible, treatment should only be given by a trained First Aider.

Provided this does not in itself put the child at risk, always try to administer First Aid with another adult present. Always tell the child exactly what you are doing and why. Unless it is irrelevant, ask the child if they use medication (e.g. for asthma, diabetes, and epilepsy) or have any allergies. Some children have allergic reactions to stings. For minor injuries, you may not offer any medication, including antiseptics or pills of any kind. If you have any doubts about helping someone to use their own medication, phone **National Health Service Direct on 0845 4647** or the emergency services.

Any treatment should be as little as necessary without threatening the child's wellbeing. If a child comes to you for comfort because of a minor accident or fright, it is acceptable with the Code of Behaviour to hold their hand or put your arm around them. Just ensure:

- you know about any injury and do nothing to make it worse
- physical contact is what the child wants, and the kind of contact between you is appropriate to their age and stage of development
- you do your best to stay in sight of other adults

If a child needs a doctor or hospital, call the emergency services.

It is nearly always best to stay with them and wait for the ambulance. You should only take the risk of bringing in the child yourself if the emergency services ask you to do so because of exceptional circumstances.

CHILD ABUSE GUIDELINES

The NSPCC has a written document which outlines the requirements for professionals reporting child abuse in the United Kingdom.

To read this information, please follow the link below:

www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/questions/reporting_child_abuse_wda74908.html

RECOGNISING SIGNS OF ABUSE

It can often be difficult to recognise abuse. The signs listed in these guidelines are only indicators and many can have reasonable explanations. Children may behave strangely or seem unhappy for many reasons, as they move through the stages of childhood or their families experience changes. It is nevertheless important to know what could indicate that abuse is taking place and to be alert to the need to consult further.

Someone can abuse a child by actively inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse can take place within a family, in an institutional or community setting, by telephone or on the internet. Abuse can be carried out by someone known to a child or by a complete stranger.

If you are worried about a child it is important that you keep a written record of any physical or behavioural signs and symptoms. In this way you can monitor whether or not a pattern emerges and provide evidence to any investigation if required.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning and suffocating. It can also result when a parent or carer deliberately causes the ill health of a child in order to seek attention. This is called fabricated illness or Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy. Symptoms that indicate physical abuse include:

- Bruising in or around the mouth, on the back, buttocks or rectal area
- Finger mark bruising or grasp marks on the limbs or chest of a small child
- Bites
- Burn and scald marks e.g. small round burns that could be caused by a cigarette
- Fractures to arms, legs or ribs in a small child
- Large numbers of scars of different sizes or ages

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse happens when a child's need for love, security, praise and recognition is not met. It usually co-exists with other forms of abuse. Emotionally abusive behaviour occurs if a parent, carer or authority figure is consistently hostile, rejecting, threatening or undermining. It can also result when children are prevented from social contact with others, or if developmentally inappropriate expectations are imposed upon them. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of someone else. Symptoms that indicate emotional abuse include:

- Excessively clingy or attention-seeking behaviour
- Very low self-esteem or excessive self-criticism
- Excessively withdrawn behaviour or fearfulness; a 'frozen watchfulness'
- Despondency
- Lack of appropriate boundaries with strangers; too eager to please
- Eating disorders

NEGLECT

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing damage to their health and development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failing to protect a child from harm or danger, or failing to access appropriate medical care and treatment when necessary. It can exist in isolation or in combination with other forms of abuse. Symptoms of physical and emotional neglect can include:

- Inadequate supervision; being left alone for long periods of time
- Lack of stimulation, social contact or education
- Inadequate nutrition, leading to ill-health
- Constant hunger; stealing or gorging food
- Failure to seek or to follow medical advice such that a child's life or development is endangered
- Inappropriate clothing for conditions

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may include physical contact, both penetrative and non-penetrative; or involve no contact, such as watching sexual activities or looking at pornographic material. Encouraging children to act in sexually inappropriate ways is also abusive. Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, any sexual activity – contact or non-contact – with a child under the age of 13, is a crime. Symptoms of sexual abuse include:

- Allegations or disclosure
- Genital soreness, injuries or discomfort
- Sexually transmitted diseases; urinary infections
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters; inappropriately sexualised play, words or drawing
- A child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Repeated sleep disturbances through nightmares and/or wetting

Older children and young people may additionally exhibit:

- Depression
- Drug and/or alcohol abuse
- Eating disorders; obsessive behaviours
- Self-harming; suicide attempts
- School/peer/relationship problems

Some members of our communities hold beliefs that may be common within particular cultures but which are against the law in England. Deborah Hoskins Dance does not condone practices that are illegal or harmful to children. Examples of particular practices are:

Forced Marriages

No faith supports the idea of forcing someone to marry without their consent. This should not be confused with arranged marriages between consenting adults.

Underage Marriages

In England, a young person cannot legally marry or have a sexual relationship until they are 16 years old or more.

Female Circumcision

This is against the law yet we know that for some in our communities it is considered a religious act and a cultural requirement. It is also illegal for someone to arrange for a child to go abroad with the intention of having her circumcised.

Ritualistic Abuse

Some faiths believe that spirits and demons can possess people (including children). What should never be condoned is the use of any physical violence to get rid of the possessing spirit. This is physical abuse and people can be prosecuted even if it was their intention to help the child.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR CONCERNS

In the event that a child makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult or another child or young person, it is important that you:

- Listen to them and/or closely observe their presentation and behaviour
- Let them know that you take what they are saying seriously
- Do not attempt to question or interview them yourself;
- Let them know that you will need to tell someone else in order to help them. **Do not** promise to keep what they tell you secret
- Inform your designated child protection officer as soon as possible
- Make a written record of the incident or events

Sometimes you may just feel concerned about a child but do not know whether to share your concerns or not. In this situation you should always raise your concerns with your designated child protection officer (Deborah Hoskins), who will help you to decide what to do.

The Department of Health web-site www.doh.gov.uk contains a practical guide to the law relating to child protection, particularly The Protection of Children Act 1999. The site also provides a publication entitled: "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused". This publication has been developed to assist practitioners to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It sets out the process for safeguarding children. It is aimed at those who come into contact with children and families in their everyday work.

SAFE RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE

In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of its pupils and ensure that risk of harm is minimised, our organisation employs a safe recruitment and selection policy which complies with national and local guidance. All recruitment procedures involve the following processes.

All successful applicants including teachers, freelance teachers, contractors, volunteers, administrative and ancillary staff, will undertake an Enhanced CRB/ DBS check. Employment records, references and qualifications will be verified for staff positions and references will be taken up for volunteers. All appointments are subject to these checks being satisfactory.

The Person Specification will state the competencies and qualities required by the successful candidate and will state that the interview will explore issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Additionally, for short-listed candidates, any relevant issues relating to the employment breaks or reference queries will be taken up at interview.

The information pack for candidates will include; the application form, job description, the Person Specification and the Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy.

References will be sought before interviews take place. Open references and testimonials provided by applicants will not be accepted. No candidate will be appointed until a verified reference is received and scrutinised. For successful candidates, written references will be sought and verbally verified.

All applicants will undergo a face to face interview where questions pertaining to child protection will be asked.

All candidates will be asked to bring identity proof with them (e.g., a current driving licence or passport, a full birth certificate, plus a document such as a utility bill showing the candidate's current name and address).

All candidates will be asked to bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications relevant to the post.

All appointed staff will undergo an induction process which includes information and written statements of; policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and promoting welfare e.g. child protection, anti-bullying, anti racism, physical intervention / restraint, internet safety and professional conduct.

For volunteers, close attention will be taken to why the applicant would like to work with children and young people and follow up questions will be necessary prior to the appointment being made.

All new employees/volunteers will go through a probation and induction process, including relevant training. Ongoing training and supervision will ensure all employees/volunteers are adequately supported.

ENHANCED CRB/DBS DISCLOSURE

All staff including teachers, freelance teachers, contractors, volunteers, administrative and ancillary staff will undertake an Enhanced DBS disclosure which will be kept up-to-date. It is the Principal's responsibility to view the contents of the Enhanced DBS disclosure and make a decision about whether that staff member should be excluded from working with young people within the organisation.

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

The booklet 'Safe from Harm': Code of Practice for safeguarding the welfare of Children in Voluntary Organisations in England and Wales' is available from the Home Office web-site www.homeoffice.gov.uk

All Social Services Departments have an Area Child Protection Committee, (ACPC). This is the key inter-agency forum for child protection, comprising representatives from all the relevant statutory organisations and representing the voluntary sector.

The NSPCC is a registered charity established to prevent cruelty to children. Help line for concerns about a child's welfare. 0808 800 5000 [24 hours], website www.nspcc.org.uk. Links to specific information about Children and Vulnerable Adult Policy can be found by visiting: www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/questions/answers_wda48954.htm