

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

East Sussex Dance Studios is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people up to the age of 18. We recognise our responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse, and exploitation.

East Sussex Dance Studios acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports, or suspicions of abuse. All staff and volunteers will work together to encourage the development of an ethos which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children, young people, and adults.

East Sussex Dance Studios recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014, the Children Act 1989 and Working Together to Safeguard Children (December 2023).

East Sussex Dance Studios will ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- 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.

East Sussex Dance Studios will ensure that:

- Everyone will be treated with respect and dignity.
- The welfare of each child will always be put first.
- Enthusiastic and constructive criticism will be given to pupils rather than negative criticism.
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned.
- All adult members will provide a positive role model.
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate behaviour.
- It will comply with health & safety legislation.
- It will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children.
- It will undertake relevant professional development and training.
- It will ensure all contact and medical details for every child is up to date and available at the place of teaching or performance.
- All staff will receive dedicated safeguarding training.

East Sussex Dance Studios has a designated Safeguarding lead who is in charge of ensuring that the child protection policy is adhered to. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is **Mrs Jenna Crescenzo**. There is also a Deputy DSL who is **Mrs Carys-Mari Herberg**

In implementing this policy **East Sussex Dance Studios** will:

- Ensure that all workers/members understand their legal and moral responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, abuse, and exploitation.
- Ensure that all workers/members and volunteers understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a child or young person, or a workers conduct towards a child or young person to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will refer any child protection concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (i.e., Police and/or Children's Social Care)
- Children, young people, and parents will be informed of who the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy are and be able to raise any safeguarding concerns & know that these will be taken seriously and acted upon
- Ensure that workers/members will work implemented in a consistent and equitable manner in line with the safer working practice guidance.

This policy will be regularly monitored by **Mrs Jenna Crescenzo** and will be subject to an annual review.

Signed: **Jenna Crescenzo**

Date policy agreed: **15/03/2024**

Date policy to be reviewed: **14/03/2025**

What to do if you think a child could be experiencing abuse and/or neglect

Definition of safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- *protecting children from maltreatment.*
- *preventing impairment of children's health or development.*
- *ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and*
- *taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.*

Child Protection

Child protection: Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

– *Working Together to Safeguard Children (December 2023)*

Recognising the signs & symptoms of abuse:

Abuse comes under the main headings of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. See 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2>

All staff should be given a copy of this document with a copy of your safeguarding policy and sign to say they have read both.

Suspicion of abuse

You may observe signs or symptoms which may indicate a child is either suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm:

- Children whose behaviour changes – they may become aggressive, challenging, disruptive, withdrawn, or clingy, or they might have difficulty sleeping or start wetting the bed.
- Children with clothes which are ill-fitting and/or dirty.
- Children with consistently poor hygiene.
- Children who make strong efforts to avoid specific family members or friends, without an obvious reason.
- Children who do not want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities.
- Children who are having problems at school, for example, a sudden lack of concentration and learning or they appear to be tired and hungry.
- Children who talk about being left home alone, with inappropriate carers or with strangers.
- Children who reach developmental milestones, such as learning to speak or walk, late, with no medical reason.

- Children who are regularly missing from school or education.
- Children who are reluctant to go home after school.
- Children with poor school attendance and punctuality, or who are consistently late being picked up.
- Parents who are dismissive and non-responsive to practitioners' concerns.
- Parents who collect their children from school when drunk, or under the influence of drugs.
- Children who drink alcohol regularly from an early age.
- Children who are concerned for younger siblings without explaining why.
- Children who talk about running away; and
- Children who shy away from being touched or flinch at sudden movements.

– *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (March 2015)*

Physical Abuse:

Physical abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, or suffocating a child.

Physical abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol, and mental health or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Babies and disabled children also have a higher risk of suffering physical abuse.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Physical abuse can also occur outside of the family environment.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of physical abuse:

- Children with frequent injuries.
- Children with unexplained or unusual fractures or broken bones; and
- Children with unexplained:
 - bruises or cuts.
 - burns or scalds; or
 - bite marks.

In the performance sector, physical abuse could also include adult's coercion into or conspiring with children and young people's excessive physical exercise and training and/or deprivation of sufficient rest and sustenance.

Parents and other adults should also be alert to self-abuse including cutting and eating disorders.

Emotional Abuse:

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Although the effects of emotional abuse might take a long time to be recognisable, practitioners will be in a position to observe it, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

Emotional abuse may involve serious bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games, or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong.
- Parents or carers who withdraw their attention from their child, giving the child the 'cold shoulder.'
- Parents or carers blaming their problems on their child; and
- Parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example, by name-calling or making negative comparisons. In the performance sector this will also include trainers and mentors in loco parentis.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child. You should be aware that many children and young people who are victims of sexual abuse do not recognise themselves as such. A child may not understand what is happening and may not even understand that it is wrong. Sexual abuse can have a long-term impact on mental health.

Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Adult males do not solely perpetrate Sexual abuse. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual abuse:

- Children who display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age.
- Children who use sexual language or have sexual knowledge that you wouldn't expect them to have.
- Children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games; and
- Children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections, or underage pregnancy.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power, or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection, or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online. A considerable number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and/or education at some point.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual exploitation:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions.
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation.
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends.
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant.
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being.
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol.
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- Children who regularly miss school or education or don't take part in education.

Sexual exploitation includes adults coercing or being compliant with children dressing, interacting, and behaving in an over sexualised, age-inappropriate manner.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual exploitation:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or possessions

Neglect

Neglect is a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision, or shelter. It is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development.

Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse. It is important that practitioners remain alert and do not miss opportunities to take timely action.³ However, while you may be concerned about a child, neglect is not always straightforward to identify.

Neglect may occur if a parent becomes physically or mentally unable to care for a child. A parent may also have an addiction to alcohol or drugs, which could impair their ability to keep a child safe or result in them prioritising buying drugs, or alcohol, over food, clothing, or warmth for the child. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal drug or alcohol abuse.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of neglect:

- Children who are living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe.
- Children who are left hungry or dirty.
- Children who are left without adequate clothing, e.g., not having a winter coat.
- Children who are living in dangerous conditions, i.e., around drugs, alcohol, or violence.
- Children who are often angry, aggressive, or self-harm.
- Children who fail to receive basic health care; and
- Parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured.

– Definitions taken from *“What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (March 2015)”*

Disclosure

Disclosure of abuse

If a child confides in you that abuse has taken place:

- Remain calm and in control, but do not delay in taking action.
- Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Don't promise to keep it a secret. Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Make it clear to the child that you will need to share the information with others and that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help.
- Reassure the child that they 'did the right thing' in telling someone.
- Tell the child what you will do next.
- Speak immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (the person with responsibility for child protection). It is that person's responsibility to consult with the relevant authorities, usually Children's Social Care or the Police
- Never investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where a child makes a disclosure.
- As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was said, using the child's own words. Note the date, time, any names that were involved or mentioned, and to whom you gave information. Make sure you sign and date your record.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead would discuss concerns with a parent/carer if this were thought not to place the child at further risk. When the disclosure is about something a parent/carer has done, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should always seek advice from Children's Social Care First. (See Appendix 1)

Other safeguarding issues can include:

- Forced marriage/honour-based violence/ female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Gangs and youth violence

- Gender based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Mental health
- Private fostering
- Radicalisation/extremism
- Sexting/grooming and other E safety issues
- Teenage relationship abuse
- Trafficking

For more information use following link to Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

If You have any concerns that a child may be experiencing or at risk of harm or neglect, please contact the relevant Children's services (where the child lives)

East Sussex Single Point of Advice (SPoA): (Mon-Thurs 8.30am-5pm and Fri 8.30am-4.30pm)

Phone: 01323 464222 – Email: m0-19.SPOA@eastsussex.gov.uk

East Sussex Emergency Duty Service (East Sussex Children's Services) (EDS): (Out of Hours - from 5pm to 8.30am Mon-Fri, after 4.30pm on Fridays and during the weekends and bank holidays)

Phones (Out of hours): 01273 335905 or 01273 335906

Photographs and images of children

- There are risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on web sites and in other publications such as theatre programmes. Photographs can be used as a means of identifying children when they are accompanied with personal information, for example 'this is X who goes to such-and-such a school who likes playing football.' This information can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to start to 'groom' that child for abuse. Secondly the content of the photo can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. There is evidence of this adapted material finding its way onto child pornography sites.
- Organisations need to develop a policy in relation to the use of images of children and young people on their websites, programmes, and other material. The organisation will need to assess potential risks to the child when making decisions about the type of images they wish to use and the way they are used. Organisations should ensure that parents support the policy. Use of names of individuals in a photograph should be limited and it is sensible to avoid use of any additional information that might help locate the child. Using only images of children in suitable dress may reduce the risk of inappropriate use. Parental permission to use an image of a young person must be sought in advance.

If parents or other members of the audience are intending to photograph or video an event, they should be made aware of the organisation's policy. The use of cameras or mobile phones and camera or filming capability in dressing rooms and other inappropriate environments should be expressly forbidden.

If the organisation permits the use of personal photograph taking, parents/carers must be advised that this is for personal use only and photos of other children must not be put on social media without the permission of the child's parent(s).

E-Safety

- Most of our children will use mobile phones and computers. They are a source of fun, entertainment, and education. However, we know that some men, women, and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and e-mails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face to face meetings.

- All staff/ volunteers must not communicate with children via their phone or on social media. Communication should just be with the parent/carer.
- Staff should not be 'friends' on social media with any pupil.
- Cyber bullying by children via texts and e-mail will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying.
- Mobile phones with cameras should not be permitted in the changing rooms except for emergency communication with the designated members of staff. No photos are to be taken by anyone on any device backstage.

Safer Recruitment

All staff and volunteers must go through a recruitment process which takes into account safeguarding issues as follows:

- A DBS check for the Child Workforce that is enhanced with barring.
- Two references, at least one of which must be a professional reference. If the second reference is personal it must not be from a family member
- The interview process must include questions about safeguarding and sharing the questions the organisations safeguarding policy and expectations.
- Relevant qualifications and experience in order to practice safely.

Parents

- The organisation believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and the organisation. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the organisation and to share responsibility for the care and safeguarding of the children. All parents will be given a copy of the organisation's Child Protection/safeguarding policy and procedures.
- All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after classes, rehearsals, or performances. The organisation has a responsibility to ensure suitable arrangements are in place to take children home.

Unsupervised Contact

- The organisation will ensure that no unauthorised adult has contact with the children.
- If possible, there should be two adults in the room when working with children.
- If unsupervised contact is unavoidable (i.e., only one member of staff presents), steps will be taken to minimise risk. For example, work will be conducted in a public area or in a designated room with the door open.
- All children will be chaperoned at all times by their own parent or a local authority licenced chaperone whilst taking part in performances.

Behaviour

- It is expected that all staff and pupils respect each other.
- If there are incidents of unacceptable verbal or physical behaviour relating to pupils these will be challenged by staff and where appropriate brought to the attention of the parent
- All prejudice incidents will be challenged.
- Sanctions should be applied in agreement with parents where necessary.
- Any incidents of unacceptable verbal or physical behaviour from staff must be brought to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Manager. The relevant disciplinary process will be followed. If this has put a child at risk of significant harm the incident must be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Staff Behaviour

- All staff will abide by the Safer Working Practice guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
- Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity.
- Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

Allegations against staff

Any report of concern about the behaviour of a member of staff or allegation of abuse against a member of staff must immediately be reported to the Proprietor / DSL or who will refer to the appropriate Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), If this is an allegation that a member of staff may have caused harm to a child.

https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies/professional-resources/lado/?utm_source=shorturl-lado&utm_medium=shorturl&utm_content=shorturlreviewjan2020&utm_campaign=webteam

Any concern or allegation against the Proprietor(s) will be reported to the Governing Body.

If you have concerns about a colleague

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a child are undoubtedly placed in a difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of a child is paramount. The school's whistle blowing code enables staff to raise concerns or allegations in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place. (Either insert whistle blowing policy here or cross reference to a separate policy).

Responsibilities of the organisation

When putting on a production:

This section must clearly state the specific responsibilities of the organisation at the outset of any production involving children:

For example:

At the outset of the production *East Sussex Dance Studios* will:

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process.
- Identify at the outset the person who will have designated responsibility for child protection.
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting (if necessary, in consultation with the Local Authority)
- Ensure that the children are supervised by a responsible adult at all times.
- Ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead knows how to contact Children's Social Care if they need to report any concerns. (See Appendix 2)

Links to referenced documents:

1. East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership <https://www.esscp.org.uk/>
2. Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2023 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
3. What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – March 2015 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2>
4. Working Together to Safeguard Children - December 2023 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

Appendix 1

Disclosure

- If a child discloses abuse or what may seem to be abuse.
- Begin by believing the child.
- Remain calm (easier said than done!)
- Do not ask any leading questions, use the following strategy:
 - T – Tell me
 - E – Explain that to me
 - D – Describe that to me
- Make some notes and contact Children's Social Care

Appendix 2

Additional things to remember when chaperoning at performances:

- Where your Id badge at all times Maximum ratio is 1:12
- The names of children you are looking after.
- Parent contact details / who is collecting.
- Parent contact details should be in a place that is accessible to those who may need it - NOT ON A MOBILE PHONE
- Medical needs
- Fire exits.
- First aid procedures
- Separate changing rooms/areas for children over 5
- Separate toilets
- Time in/out breaks and who is collecting.
- Children should have a performance license.
- Parents (not chaperoning) should remain at the stage door.
- No child should perform if they are injured/unwell.

Helpful Hints:

DO:

- Make sure the children you are looking after are comfortable.
- Know who you are working for, the other chaperons and who to report any concerns to
- Escort the children to and from the stage/film set/modelling shoot.
- Complete daily time sheets
- Challenge people/behaviours
- Be alert to possible risks.

DON'T:

- Give your own child preferential treatment if you are also chaperoning other children.
- Let the child perform if unwell.
- Leave the child alone with another adult (unless it is their parent or teacher)
- Take photos of the child/ren
- Use inappropriate language or smoke while on duty.
- Consume or be under the influence of alcohol.
- Wear inappropriate clothing.