



M i n i s t r y O f D a n c e

## Child Protection Policy

For up to date information, please visit [www.ministryofdance.co.uk](http://www.ministryofdance.co.uk)

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### Ministry of Dance believes that:

- The welfare of children 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.
- All staff (paid/voluntary) working in dance have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

### Policy Statement

Ministry of Dance 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. Ministry of Dance will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in dance through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by Ministry of Dance.

A child is defined as under 18 according to The Children Act 1989.

### Policy Aims

The aim of the Ministry of Dance Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

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

## Promoting good practice

Ministry of Dance will encourage the following:

- Always working in an open environment where possible (e.g. avoid private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment i.e. no secrets).
- Treating all young people 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 or to share a room with them).
- 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 ISTD. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. 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/officials work in pairs.
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away, a male and female member of staff should always accompany them. (NB however, same gender abuse can also occur).
- Ensuring that at festivals/residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- 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 - avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- 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 to be avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the Dance School or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to collect a child at the end of a session.

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Avoid taking children to your home where they will be alone with you.

## **Practice never to be sanctioned**

The following should never be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- 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, even in fun.
- 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 that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children to stay at your home unsupervised.

## **Guidelines for use of photographic filming at dance events**

There is evidence that some people have used dance events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled dancers in vulnerable positions. Therefore, photographing and videoing of pupils will not be allowed where any parent makes a specific objection to this at any event run by Ministry of Dance.

Videoring as a training aid: there is no intention to prevent teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, dancers and their parents/carers should be aware that this is part of the coaching programme and care should be taken in the storage of such films.

## **Recruitment and selecting staff and volunteers**

Ministry of Dance 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 volunteers/staff should complete an application form. This will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self disclosure about any criminal record
- The applicant should also provide an appropriate, up to date CRB check.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo)

## **Responding to suspicions or allegations**

It is not the responsibility of anyone working within Ministry of Dance 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.

Ministry of Dance will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague 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, but not necessarily.

## **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 or someone in authority. 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.
- Insist on the return of borrowed items and that the bully/ies compensate the victim.
- 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 Ministry of Dance members of action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.

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