



# **Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy**

(Last revised: August 2024)

# **Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults**

At Dance Visions, DV Gymnastics and DV Kids & Teens Dance - to be referred to as the Dance Visions for this document, we are committed to providing a safe environment for students of all ages as they participate in the activities and classes we provide. We aim to promote a culture and environment which is safe and welcoming for all and recognise our responsibilities under the Children's Act 2004 and the Education Act 2002.

For the purposes of this policy:

A **child** is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years (Children's Act 1989 and 2004). 'Children' therefore refers to children and young people throughout.

A **vulnerable adult** is defined as a person aged 18 years or over who may need community care services by reason of disability, age or illness; or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against harm or exploitation.

All staff and volunteers at Dance Visions are committed to a practice which promotes the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and protects them from harm. We share an objective to help keep children and vulnerable adults safe through the following means:

- Providing a safe environment to learn in.
- Creating an environment which encourages development of positive self-esteem regardless of ethnicity, language, religion, culture, disability or home life.
- Identifying and responding to children and vulnerable adults in need of support and/or protection.
- Fostering a learning environment in which every student feels valued and able to articulate their wishes and feelings in an atmosphere of acceptance and trust.
- Working within the guidelines of the Kent Safeguarding Children Board and the Council of Dance Education and Training.
- Contacting Social Services to seek advice or make a report for any situation which affects a student's ~~wel~~being.
- Adopting a four-stage mechanism of awareness, prevention, reporting and response as set out below.

## **Awareness**

We will ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the potential risks facing children and vulnerable adults.

We will provide staff and volunteers with the knowledge and mechanisms necessary for recognising potential issues and reporting concerns.

## **Prevention**

Ensuring, through awareness and a good code of practice, that we are minimising the risks facing children and vulnerable adults.

Following the procedures for safe recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers as set out in this document.

## **Reporting**

Ensuring that all staff and others involved in our work are clear of what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the welfare and safety of children and vulnerable adults.

## **Responding**

Ensuring action is taken to support and protect children and vulnerable adults where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

## **Responsibilities:**

All members of staff have a day-to-day responsibility for adhering to the guidelines as set out in this policy. The members of staff responsible for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults at Dance Visions is the Manager for each service area Dance Visions Adults Beki Saunders, DV Gymnastics Zara Walton and DV Kids & Teens Dance Jasmine Reeve and they are the Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO) for their company sections

This person will:

- Ensure their knowledge of current Safeguarding policies is continually kept up to date and update this document accordingly.
- Train staff in procedures and any changes made.
- Advise all staff and volunteers on best practice in respect to this policy.
- Train new staff on their duties for safeguarding and child protection.
- Keep records of incidents and reports, together with any other relevant information.
- Report incidents to the Statutory Authorities where appropriate and ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, under confidential cover.
- Ensure that individual case records are maintained of any complaint, injury or action taken by the organisation and that these are stored appropriately and confidentially.

## **Safe Recruitment**

As part of our ongoing commitment to ensuring the safety of all our students we follow the following guidelines for safer recruitment:

- Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check (Previously CRB check) must be completed for all staff.
- All staff take part in a face-to-face interview.
- All staff will be required to supply proof of identity and will be asked to bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications relevant to the position.
- The DSO will, on an ongoing basis ensure that she carries out regular spot checks in all classes delivered by Dance Visions to ensure that the code of conduct is being adhered to.

## **Staff code of conduct in working with children and vulnerable adults and use of social media**

### **Staff and volunteers should always:**

- Behave professionally.
- Listen to their students.
- Treat everyone with respect.
- Communicate at an appropriate level.
- Be aware of and read all Dance Visions policies and procedures annually.
- Report any suspicions in accordance with our guidelines.
- Be aware, approachable, and understanding.
- Ensure their activities start and end on time.

### **In addition, they will:**

- Take all reasonable steps to protect children from hazards.
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent abuse of children within the organisation.
- Report any incident or suspicion of abuse to the DSO who will take further action, regardless of whether the abuse is suspected to have taken place inside or outside of Dance Visions.
- Ensure that they are adequately insured to protect against claims of negligence, this will be through their own personal insurance if acting as a self-employed contractor.
- Promote, demonstrate, and incorporate, the values of fair play, trust and good ethics throughout their activities.
- Participate in ongoing training and supervision to ensure they are adequately supported in their duties and responsibilities.
- Make sure that their behaviour on social media remains in keeping with our code of conduct. Any comments or posts that may be obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or hateful will be addressed.

### **They must not:**

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

### **Outside of Dance Visions, staff should not:**

- Offer lifts to a Dance Visions student under any circumstance. Where there are exceptions to this rule, such as an emergency where not giving a lift may place a student at risk, the circumstance should be recorded and reported to the Managers and the student's parents.
- Have any electronic communication with Dance Visions students or parents.
  - This includes giving out their own mobile number or asking for a student/parent's mobile.
  - Any telephone communication not through the Dance Visions landline (01233 516098).
  - Being 'friends' with or following students or parents on social networking sites. The exception to this is that staff may email parents/students using the official Dance Visions email accounts ONLY, the general one being ([info@dancevisions.co.uk](mailto:info@dancevisions.co.uk) and then the related ones to specific service sections with these being Gymnastics, Kids and Teens Dance, Adults Dance and Fitness) as these emails are always monitored.
  - Students/parents can be contacted/mentioned on social networking sites through the official Dance Visions accounts and platforms ONLY.
- Engage in extracurricular services such as any other dance teaching for our customers, babysitting, etc.
- Staff are discouraged from socialising with students and parents.

### **Disciplinary action against staff members:**

Our staff have a strict duty to never subject any child or vulnerable adult to any form of harm or abuse. Failure to adhere to the guidelines in this policy will be treated as gross misconduct and may result in the withdrawal of any further work effective immediately. Dance Visions Managers will report to the DDC within one month anyone who is dismissed from our employment or resigns in circumstances that would have resulted in dismissal, for reasons of child protection concern, as required by law. We apply the same approach to any contracted teaching staff.

### **Staff Training**

All employed and/or contracted staff will undergo Dance Visions induction by reading all our policies and having annual meetings to ensure they fully understand their responsibilities regarding Safeguarding and Child Protection issues. This includes:

- Their duties and expected behaviour about children and vulnerable adults.
- How to recognise the indicators of abuse.
- Understanding the different types of abuse: Physical, Emotional, Sexual and Neglect.
- Understanding the local authority guidelines within which Dance Visions works.
- Understanding how to react to, report and record suspicions of abuse.

## **Listening to and recording information:**

**All Dance Visions employed and/or contracted staff are fully aware and informed on how to respond to a child's disclosure of abuse, to include:**

- Showing acceptance of what the student is saying.
- Keeping calm and offering comfort but refraining from making promises to the student.
- Not asking leading questions or making suggestions.
- Explaining that you cannot keep it a secret and will have to share this information to help.
- Ensuring the child's immediate safety.
- Immediately recording the information that was given in writing in an objective manner, using the exact language used by the child where possible (i.e. not translated into 'proper terms'), and recording any observed injuries/bruises on a Body Map. The record should be signed and dated.
- Immediately passing on this record to the DSO for further action.
- All records will be kept centrally and securely by the DSO and shared on a 'need to know' basis only.

**The DSO will then take the following action within 24 hours:**

- Assess any urgent medical needs of the student and consider whether the student has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm.
- Check whether the student is currently subject to a Child Protection Plan or has previously been subject to a plan.
- Check whether any previous concerns have been raised by staff.
- Seek advice from the Kent Safeguarding Children Board or other relevant governing body.
- Contact the police/social services if advised to do so, follow up any verbal reports in writing.
- If an allegation is made about a member of staff, consider suspension of that person whilst investigations are made.

## **Self-Harm & Eating Disorders:**

**If a member of staff suspects a student is self-harming or has an eating disorder, the following process will take place:**

- Staff member will inform DSO immediately, detailing their concerns/suspicions.
- DSO will make an initial written record of what the staff member has told them.
- The parent will always be the first port of call in these situations, unless in extreme cases where there are additional issues to consider such as abuse, and the Kent Safeguarding Children Board advises the parent should not be contacted.
- In these cases, the normal action would be taken as with any other abuse case.

- In all other cases, the DSO will phone/meet with the parent to discuss their concerns.
- In most cases, if the parent is already aware of the situation, Dance Visions will agree to take no further action if they believe that the case is being dealt with sufficiently by the family and other professional organisations, such as the student's school. Examples of what we consider to be being dealt with sufficiently would include the parent/school arranging counselling for the student. In these situations, we would encourage the parent/student to come to us if they require any further help or support in the future.
- If the parent is not aware and the school has not taken action, Dance Visions will work with the parent and external bodies to ensure the correct plan is put in place to protect and help the student.

### **Informing parents:**

Dance Visions is committed to building trusting and supportive relationships between the students, parents, and staff. Parents are normally the first point of contact if we have a suspicion of abuse, and they will be contacted at the same time as the report is made. The only exception to this is where the guidance of the Kent Safeguarding Children Board does not allow this, which will usually be the case if the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases, the investigating officers will inform parents.

### **Appropriate physical contact in Dancetraining:**

Teaching Dance, Gymnastics or Exercise classes is a physical activity and appropriate physical contact between students and their teachers in class is essential to training. Contact within a class situation may include the following:

- Teachers will use their hands, and occasionally a foot or knee, to illustrate a concept or to safely spot or support a student or to adjust parts of a student's body so they can safely execute a move or form.
- Correct posture for dancing often requires adjusting the ribcage and the buttock area simultaneously, it is sometimes necessary to touch the inner thigh.
- In choreographic teaching, teachers demonstrate positions and movements to the students by moving parts of the students' bodies and by moving dancers in relation with each other; this often involves a good deal of contact with students.

Dance Visions understands that such physical contact is a potentially complex area and fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding students and teachers and protecting their welfare. Therefore, the following procedures are in place to protect our students:

- Contact by the teacher is made with particular awareness of the needs of each individual, and for the sole purpose of assisting the student in correct placement.
- All teachers will treat any physical contact with due sensitivity and care.
- Contact will not involve force or the use of any instrument.
- Teachers and students should feel free to report any concerns to the DSO.

Dance Visions staff and student helpers may be required to undertake tasks of a personal nature for our youngest students, for example, assisting with dressing and visits to the toilet. In performing these tasks staff/helpers should be responsive to the child's reactions. In the case of taking a young child to the toilet, the staff member/helper should

always leave the door slightly ajar. Staff/helpers should not undertake tasks of a personal nature for a child that the child can do themselves.

### **Collecting students:**

Children up to Grade 1 age will only be released from a class or session by a teacher if their parent/guardian is waiting for them. Children who do not have a parent ready to collect them will be held back, where a staff member will watch over them until collection by their parent/guardian.

Students in Grade 2 and over will monitor that they are collected by a parent/guardian, unless old enough to walk to the car/home on their own.

Parents should make Dance Visions aware of any family/social circumstances whereby we should be particularly vigilant regarding collection of a student.

**It is the parents' responsibility to ensure students are collected promptly at the end of class.** This is particularly important at the end of the evening. A member of staff will always stay with a student who has not been collected at the end of an evening class, however, **we reserve the right to charge parents for any additional time worked by staff during their wait.** Where a student is not collected and staff are no longer able to care for the student, Dance Visions will call the social services department.

### **Photography/Filming:**

**Parents are asked to give permission to Dance Visions to photograph/film their children. Where permission is given, this will be done under the following conditions:**

- Only cameras belonging to Dance Visions Staff and DBS checked Instructors will be used to photograph/film students and not those owned personally by parents. Any pictures/footage will only be passed on to the relevant Dance Visions marketing staff and published through official Dance Visions channels e.g., Dance Visions website, Facebook page, Marketing material **ONLY** and strictly are not permitted to be published/shared personally by any member of staff.
- Under a teacher's supervision, and where they deem it to be a genuine learning tool, they may film students performing a dance using a student's own mobile phone. This can then be shared as appropriate, based on parents discussing appropriate use of social media with their children. If parents are unwilling for their child to be filmed in these circumstances, they should notify Dance Visions who will ensure this does not happen.
- In private lessons, with the teacher's permission a parent can record their child performing a dance for rehearsal purposes. There should be no other children in the session when this happens and/or the teacher should ensure the parent only captures footage of their own child.
- Where third parties are invited to film/photograph students, e.g., at shows/events, Dance Visions will ensure these professionals have undergone the required DBS checks and follow our safeguarding policies.
- A strict 'no photography' policy will be in place at all Dance Visions shows and events in backstage areas/changing rooms and where necessary in auditoriums and viewing areas. The only exception to this is when there is more than one chaperone in the room, using an official Dance Visions device, with all students in the room fully dressed or in costume.



- Where parents are invited in to watch class, **they will not be permitted to video.** They will be permitted to take photos of their children and should notify us in advance in writing if they wish their child not to be photographed by other parents/carers photographing the class. **They are not permitted to photograph or video the children from an outside viewing area, such as is in the venue The Stour Centre.** The Instructor or Dance Visions Staff members will be the only ones permitted to take video and this must only be shared and published to Dance visions relevant marketing staff and Dance Visions Marketing platforms and is not permitted to be shared on any personal social media or to any persons other than the relevant Dance Visions Marketing staff.
- Any photos or videos taken from any other performances or rehearsals will not be posted online without direct permission from Dance Visions. Identifying information, including names and ages will be removed from any social media or web related platforms unless otherwise approved by parents/guardians.

### **Supporting Documents:**

- a) Reporting concerns flow chart – see below.
- b) Safeguarding Incident Report Form.

# Reporting Protection of children / young people / vulnerable adults

