

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 (for example:

- 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.

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 insofar 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.

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 within Ballet Boost need to be alert to the potential abuse of children.

Ballet Boost 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.

Psychological abuse is more common in adults but can still apply to children and may impair their development into a healthy adult. Psychological abuse signs and symptoms may start small at first as the abuser "tests the waters" to see what the other person will accept but, before long, the psychological abuse builds into something that can be frightening and threatening.

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.

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. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape) 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.

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.

3. **Consulting about your concern(s)**

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 people designated as responsible for child protection within Ballet Boost (see Appendix). However, if any of these people are implicated in the concerns, you should discuss your concerns directly with Children's Services (see Appendix).

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 not the same as 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.

If your concerns lead you to discover that the child is in immediate danger then call 999.

4. **What to do if a child discloses abuse to you**

- **Listen carefully to the child:** avoid expressing your own views on the matter. A reaction of shock or disbelief could cause the child to "shut down", retract or stop talking. Do not take notes at this time, as you need to give the child your full attention.
- **Let them know that they've done the right thing:** reassurance can make a big impact to the child who may have been keeping the abuse secret.
- **Tell them it's not their fault:** abuse is never the child's fault and they need to know this.

- **Say you will take them seriously:** a child could keep abuse secret as they fear that they won't be believed. They've told you because they want help and trust you'll be the person who will listen to and support them.
- **Do not talk to the alleged abuser:** confronting the alleged abuser about what the child has told you could make the situation a lot worse for the child.
- **Explain what you will do next:** if the child can understand it, explain to them that you need to report the abuse to someone who will be able to help.
- **Do not delay reporting the abuse:** the sooner the abuse is reported after the child discloses the better. Report as soon as possible so details are fresh in your mind and action can be taken quickly.
- **Note all discussions:** write down what has been said to you (in the child's own words), keeping the information as accurate as you remember. Also record who you have spoken to and what was discussed when you have reported the alleged abuse. **Do not** destroy these notes as they may be needed at some point in the future.

5. Making a referral

A referral involves giving Children's Services or the Police information about concerns/a disclosure 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 child, you should make a telephone referral to Children's Services.

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

If you believe that the child is in immediate danger then call 999.

You should be prepared to provide:

- Your name, telephone number, position (also request the same details from 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 it
- An opinion on whether the child may need urgent action to make them safe
- Your view of what appears to be the needs of the child and family
- Whether the consent of a parent with parental responsibility has been given to the referral being made

Once you have made a telephone referral, please send your written notes to Children’s Services (within 48 hours) and then accurately record the action agreed or that no further action is to be taken and the reason(s) for this decision.

Confidentiality

Ballet Boost should ensure that any records made in relation to a referral are kept confidential 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 Children’s Services.

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Adopted on	June 2019	By (full name)	Emma Northmore
By (signature)		Next review date	June 2020

Appendix

Designated Safeguarding Officers:

Name	Contact Number	On-site at
Emma Northmore	07958 725862	Pineapple Dance Studios Sadler's Well Rambert School
Roberta McClelland	07894 546619	DanSci Dance Studio MAC Belfast
Monique Jose (Deputy)		Hull

Children's Services Departments:

School	Children's Services	Council	Number
Rambert School	Richmond Upon Thames	Richmond upon Thames	020 8547 5008
Pineapple Dance Studios	King's Cross and Holborn	Camden	020 7974 7024
Anlaby Studios	Early Help and Safeguarding Hub	Hull	01482 448879
DanSci Dance Studio	Devon Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub	Devon	0345 155 1071
The MAC	Belfast Gateway Team	Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	028 9050 7000
Sadler's Well	Islington CSCT	Islington	020 7527 7400