

The British Dance Council's Safeguarding Policy

Reviewed 24/3/2023

Our Mission:

Our aims are to encourage, promote and develop all aspects of dance in a professional and competitive way by working in partnership with our corporate members. Our objective is to create an awareness of the joy of dance and to stimulate the wider public's interest in talent.

The Council are committed to ensuring a safe environment for children, young people and at risk adults, and we believe that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of everyone, through our commitment to understanding best practice and working towards a protective ethos.

To this end, we have developed policies which define safe practice in our role as regulators and administrators of Ballroom, Latin American and Freestyle dancing. These policies relate to children under the age of 18 years and those deemed to be adults at risk of any age. We require; our Directors, employees, corporate members and those who conduct roles under a licence issued by the Council, to take responsibility for children who are in their care under 18yrs of age at all times.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential to achieving good outcomes.

The purpose of our safeguarding policies:

- To provide protection for the children and young people who participate in dance competitions (or other British Dance Council licensed activity), including the children who are not competitors but are also present.
- To ensure our corporate members and independent promoters have policies in place detailing how they should respond in the event they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of harm.
- To articulate to our corporate members how to engage in supporting a safe event.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Adopting safeguarding guidelines ensuring our corporate members and anyone licensed by the Council, know what safeguarding practice is, and feel confident of implementing it.
- Ensuring our corporate members recruit staff and volunteers responsibly, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Sharing information about safeguarding and providing appropriate training to our own staff and volunteers.
- On a 'need to know' basis sharing relevant information about concerns with agencies, and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Providing effective management for our own staff and volunteers through supervision and support.

Keeping safeguarding up to date and relevant.

- We will work with safeguarding experts and advisers (such as 'Safer Dance') to ensure our policies and procedures are practical, positive and relevant to our community.
- The Council will review our policies each year (or more often in light of any changes in legislation or guidance).
- Our policies have been developed in accordance with the principles established by The Protection of Children Act 1999, the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, the Childcare Act 2006, The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, The Police Act 1997, The Human Rights Act 1998, The Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000, The General Data Protection Regulation 2018, and in line with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018 and 'Working Together – Safer Working Practice 2022'
- Our policies apply to our licensed competition organisers, their paid staff, adjudicators, volunteers or anyone working on behalf of event organisers in an official capacity, or anyone participating in the event itself.
- Our policies also apply to any other person licensed by the British Dance Council who are working with children and young people including vulnerable adults.

On receipt of a safeguarding concern, the British Dance Council reserve the right to take appropriate action against its own directors, event organisers, competitors, teachers, adjudicators, photographers or corporate members. This could include suspending or revoking a licence once the full facts have been established, or there is an ongoing investigation which merits doing so.

Safeguarding policies and standard operating procedures.

As part of our commitment to safeguarding, the British Dance Council will only issue a licence to event promoters and others when we are satisfied they have policies and standard operating procedures in place for licensed events. We will hold a nationally recognised Body of Persons Approval (BOPA), the conditions of which must be adhered to at all times as part of the granting of a licence.

Promoters will need a safeguarding policy in place which will specifically cover the following areas: (Note; these policies will also apply to events which are directly organised by the British Dance Council or any other person not registered as a promoter operating under licence issued by the Council).

1. Managing allegations or reports and recording of concerns.
2. Safer recruitment.
3. Photography and digital media recording.
4. Changing areas
5. Bullying.
6. Whistleblowing
7. A 'Code of Behaviour' for those employed in an official capacity at events or those who are unpaid volunteers. This will also apply to licensed competitors.

1. Managing allegations and recording of concerns.

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential and anyone dealing with a safeguarding concern will only disclose information about a child to others on a 'need to know' basis. However, we also recognise our responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children, and no one should promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being.

Anyone receiving a disclosure of abuse from a child or young person, or noticing signs or symptoms of possible abuse will seek advice from an appropriate person, such as the DSL, as soon as possible who will advise on a further course of action.

A promoter, or anyone acting on behalf of a promoter, will make notes as soon as possible (within the hour, if possible) writing down exactly what was said, using the child's own words as far as possible. All notes will be timed, dated and signed, with name printed alongside the signature. Concerns will be recorded using the safeguarding children recording system template available to the DSL.

Notification (verbal or written) about abuse of a child may be received from another child, event personnel, volunteer, parent/carer/legal guardian, teachers or third person. The alleged perpetrator may be an adult or child and regardless of whether they are at an event or not, procedures must be followed. If the alleged perpetrator is a child in attendance at an event, that child's own safeguarding needs must also be considered.

If a child discloses directly to a member of the promoters personnel, they will listen carefully to what is said and ask only open questions such as 'tell me what happened.' They will not ask closed questions or ask a child to repeat the disclosure to another staff member, and they will not begin an investigation. They will report immediately to the DSL and complete a hand-written record as soon after the disclosure as possible, using the child's words as far as possible and using body maps to record any observed injuries.

When a safeguarding concern involves the behaviour of someone working or looking after children on the premises, whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere, appropriate action will be taken in line with guidance received from the DSL.

It is usually good practice to discuss reported concerns with the parents/carer first. However, this is to be avoided if it is believed that any of the following apply:

- Discussion with parents may put the child/an adult at greater risk of harm.
- Evidence may indicate sexual abuse (e.g. a clear disclosure)
- Evidence may indicate that a crime has been committed (e.g. an injury)
- Evidence of Aggravating Factors (domestic abuse, substance misuse or parental mental ill health – the toxic trio)

In these circumstances the DSL will advise the promoter what information should be shared with the parents/carers, if any, at this stage.

2. Safer Recruitment Procedures

Adjudicators, scrutineers, photographers or those who will likely come into unsupervised contact with children are subject to enhanced DBS checks and have been made aware of their safeguarding obligations as set out by the organisers safeguarding policy statement and accompanying policies. Personnel should be listed in the event programme and further details can be found on the promoters website and social media pages where appropriate. Event organisers personnel will be identifiable by their ID badges (volunteers/helpers can be identified by an official event badge). Recruitment for events is by personal testimonial by an existing appointed member of the organisation team. Additional persons (such as adjudicators etc) employed are subject to enhanced DBS checks and/or references.

In circumstances that parents/guardians/carers are not personally attending with their children, organisers policies require them to be satisfied that children will be accompanied to the event and adequately supervised by responsible adults acting on their behalf. If a parent is not able to attend with their child they must pass their adult supervising responsibility to a suitable carer in their absence.

3. Photography and Digital Media Recordings

Performance Areas: Photography and digital recording by any means is strictly prohibited in the performance areas for the protection of children. Only the appointed professional photographers who have the prerequisite enhanced DBS check documentation are permitted to photograph or film competitors where consent has been provided.

Public Spaces: Photography by competitors/friends/family/teachers is permitted subject to mutual consent* and agreement of distribution. Public spaces include the outside space, and foyer. Public spaces DO NOT INCLUDE CHANGING ROOMS, CORRIDORS OR ANY BACKSTAGE AREAS.

*Mutual consent: the type of consent that should be sought is a private matter between the individuals concerned; whether this be verbal or written. However, we consider verbal consent by mutual agreement to be satisfactory and would not intervene in matters that arise unless distributed images contained a 'looked after child' which has previously been disclosed to us and the carers/principals have notified the organisers on entry. In this case a suitable person would intervene and act on behalf of the looked after child's responsible adults acting on their behalf and request deletion from devices and anywhere that the images have been distributed i.e.; social media and proof of deletion of any images containing said child.

4. Changing rooms at events licensed by the Council

Changing rooms are single gender communal areas, event organisers will need to provide the following segregated changing facilities; male, female, adult, and family (one in one out). This is in line with current safeguarding guidelines so as to not discriminate against parents/legal

guardians/carers/teachers of differing genders to that of the child they are responsible for during an event.

Parents/legal guardians/carers/teachers/principals are duly notified that there will be parents and nominated responsible adults present across all changing room facilities who have not been enhanced DBS checked for work with children. Parents/legal guardians/carers/teachers accept responsibility for the safeguarding of children for whom they are responsible. Parents/legal guardians/carers/teachers should be vigilant for the safety and welfare of children in their care at all times.

Parents/legal guardians/carers/teachers accept that at times event organisers or others nominated by them, may be present in the changing rooms to promote good safeguarding practice.

Mobile phones, camera phones, digital recording and photography are STRICTLY PROHIBITED in the changing room areas. Failure to act in accordance with the organisers statutory policies will initially result in a request to comply. However further infringement or lack of cooperation may result in adults and children being asked to leave an event.

No children/young people or adult competitors are permitted to use public areas for the purpose of changing throughout an event whether their legal guardian allows this or not. Any competitor of any age found to be doing so will be approached by event staff and asked to go to the appropriate official changing area.

5. Anti bullying.

The organisers of an event will do all they can to prevent children, young people and vulnerable adults being subjected to any form of bullying whether that be physical, emotional or cyber bullying. We recognise that bullying causes real distress and affects a person's health and development and:

- In some instances, bullying can cause significant harm.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Everyone has a role to play in preventing all forms of bullying (including online) and putting a stop to bullying.

We will seek to prevent bullying by;

- Developing a code of behaviour that sets out how everyone involved in our organisation, or licensed by us, is expected to behave, in face-to-face contact and online, and within and outside of our activities.
- Where an allegation of bullying is made, a thorough investigation will commence in line with our safeguarding policies.

6. Whistleblowing

Our aim is to establish an internal procedure that will enable all adults in the workplace environment to raise a serious concerns about any aspect of practice in confidence without fear of reprisal. This will ensure that any organised event continues to work within best practice guidelines to safeguard children and young people. Concerns may be in relation to the actions/behaviours of other official personnel or volunteers, or about something that is perceived as:

- Unlawful.
- Failing to comply with the settings policies and procedures.
- Improper conduct.

Official organised event personnel should raise concerns with the DSL, the organisers or Chair of Adjudicators when appropriate and should include:

- Reference to the fact that it is a whistleblowing disclosure, the background and history of the disclosure.

- Names, address and relevant locations (where possible).
- The reason why they are concerned about the situation.

The action taken will depend upon the nature of the concern. Some concerns may be resolved by an agreed action or an explanation regarding the concern, without the need for a further investigation. The appropriate person/s will investigate the concern thoroughly, ensuring that a written response is provided within 28 days.

Event organisers will do their best to protect the identity of the whistle blower. However, if the concern raised needs to be investigated by an external agency the organisers cannot guarantee their anonymity.

7. The behaviour code for event staff, volunteers, adjudicators or others employed in an official capacity at events licensed by the British Dance Council.

This behaviour code outlines the conduct that the British Dance Council expect from event organisers, volunteers, our own Directors and others operating under a licence granted by the Council. This includes anyone who is undertaking duties for licensed organisations, whether paid or unpaid.

The behaviour code is there to help us protect children and young people from abuse. It has been informed by the views of children and young people.

Event organisers are responsible for making sure everyone taking part in their activities has seen, understood and agreed to follow the code of behaviour, and that they understand the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.

Responsibility of staff and volunteers and those conducting a paid role including; adjudicators, scrutineers, photographers and others.

You are responsible for:

- Prioritising the welfare of children and young people.
- Providing a safe environment for children and young people.
- Having good awareness of issues to do with safeguarding and child protection and taking action when appropriate.
- Following our principles, policies and procedures. Including our policies and procedures for safeguarding and child protection, whistleblowing and online safety.
- Staying within the law at all times.
- Modelling good behaviour for children and young people to follow.
- Challenging all inappropriate behaviour and reporting any breaches of the behaviour code to the event organiser or appropriate person.
- Reporting all concerns about abusive behaviour, in line with our safeguarding and child protection policy.
- This includes inappropriate behaviour displayed by an adult or child and directed at anybody of any age.

Respecting children and young people.

You should:

- Listen to and respect children at all times.
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy as far as possible.

Diversity and inclusion

You should:

- Treat children and young people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination.
- Understand that children and young people are individuals with individual needs.

- Respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems, and appreciate that all participants bring something valuable and different to the events.
- Challenge discrimination and prejudice
- Encourage young people and adults to speak out about attitudes or behaviour that makes them uncomfortable.

Appropriate relationships.

You should:

- Promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect
- Avoid showing favouritism.
- Be patient with others and exercise caution if you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people.
- Ensure your contact with children and young people is appropriate and relevant to the nature of the activity you are involved in.
- Ensure that whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people.
- If a situation arises where you are alone with a child or young person, ensure that you are within sight or can be heard by other adults.
- If a child specifically asks for or needs some individual time with you, ensure other staff or volunteers know where you and the child are.
- Only provide personal care in an emergency and make sure there is more than one adult present if possible unless it has been agreed that the provision of personal care is part of your role and you have been trained to do this safely.

Inappropriate Behaviour.

When working with children and young people, you must not:

- Allow concerns or allegations to go unreported.
- Take unnecessary risks.
- Smoke, consume alcohol or use illegal substances.
- Develop inappropriate relationships with children and young people.
- Make inappropriate promises to children and young people.
- Engage in behaviour that is in any way abusive including having any form of sexual contact with a child or young person.
- Let children and young people have your personal contact details (mobile number, email or postal address) or have contact with them via a personal social media account.
- Act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive.
- Patronise or belittle children and young people.
- Make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and young people.