



## **British Dance Council Safeguarding Children Policy**

### **Putting People First – Creating Safe, Supportive Dance Environments**

Please read this document along side the British Dance Council Safeguarding Adults policy

#### **1. Our Commitment to Safeguarding**

At the British Dance Council, the safety, wellbeing, and dignity of every child and young person is at the heart of everything we do. We are fully committed to creating a positive, inclusive, and supportive environment where all children feel safe, valued, and able to thrive.

We recognise our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in accordance with UK legislation, including the Children Act 1989 and 2004 and the Education Act 2002.

For the purposes of this policy, a *child* is defined as anyone under the age of 18. This applies regardless of a young person's level of independence, education, or employment status.

We believe:

- Every child has the right to feel safe and protected from harm
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- All children should be treated equally, with respect and fairness
- A person-centred approach is essential in all safeguarding practice

#### **2. Equality, Inclusion and Respect**

We are committed to ensuring that all children—regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, or beliefs—have equal access to protection, support, and opportunity.

No child or group of children will be treated less favourably. We actively promote an environment of respect, kindness, and inclusion across all our activities.

### **3. Safeguarding Organisation**

The British Dance Council appoints a **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** who provides guidance, oversight, and support on all safeguarding matters.

The DSL:

- Acts as the organisational central point of contact for safeguarding concerns
- Liaises with awarding organisations and event organisers as needed
- Advises the President and Vice President on safeguarding matters
- Maintains accurate records of concerns and actions
- Liaises with statutory agencies such as children's social care and the police
- Supports staff, volunteers, and partners in best practice

Final safeguarding decisions are made by the President, Vice President and Board of Directors, informed by the DSL's work.

### **4. Shared Responsibility**

Safeguarding is a collective responsibility. Everyone working with or on behalf of the British Dance Council—including staff, volunteers, contractors, and event personnel—must:

- Act in the best interests of children at all times
- Take all reasonable steps to keep children safe
- Be alert to signs of harm or abuse
- Report any concerns promptly
- Understand their role in safeguarding

All individuals must be able to demonstrate how to raise concerns with appropriate authorities, including children's social care and the police.

Failure to follow safeguarding procedures will be treated extremely seriously. No one working for or on behalf of the British Dance Council must ever harm a child in any way. Harming a child will be considered gross misconduct.

### **5. Safer Practice and Standards**

We are committed to maintaining high safeguarding standards by:

- Ensuring appropriate safeguarding training for all relevant individuals
- Requiring valid DBS/ PVG or Access NI checks (or international equivalents where applicable)
- Implementing robust recruitment and selection procedures
- Promoting the importance of effective risk assessments and safety planning at all events
- Promoting safeguarding actions for events
- Promoting clear and respectful communication
- Ensuring our environment is one built on trust, respect, and professionalism

We encourage open communication and ensure that everyone feels heard, supported, and respected.

## **6. Creating Safe Dance Environments**

We strive to provide safe, welcoming, and enjoyable dance environments by:

- Prioritising children's physical and emotional wellbeing
- Supporting development through our support of enjoyable and well-structured events
- Following all health, safety, safeguarding, and equality policies
- Promoting a culture of transparency and trust

## **7. Recognising and Responding to Concerns**

Safeguarding concerns must always be taken seriously.

All individuals must:

- Record concerns clearly and accurately
- Report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the earliest opportunity
- Never assume someone else will act

If a child is at immediate risk of harm, contact emergency services without delay.

Where necessary, concerns will be shared with children's social care or the police to ensure appropriate action is taken.

## **8. Consent and Information Sharing**

We are committed to handling information sensitively, transparently, and responsibly.

- Parents and carers will usually be informed before information is shared
- Consent will be sought wherever appropriate
- However, if a child is at risk of significant harm, information may be shared without consent

Decisions to share information will always be:

- Necessary
- Proportionate
- Recorded clearly

The safety of the child will always be the primary consideration.

## **9. Child Protection**

Child protection is a vital part of safeguarding and focuses on protecting children who are at risk of significant harm.

Abuse may occur:

- Within families
- In community or institutional settings
- Online or in person
- By adults or other children

All those working with or on behalf of the British Dance Council must be able to recognise potential signs of abuse and respond appropriately.

It is not the role of staff or volunteers to investigate concerns, but to report them promptly and accurately. Information should be shared immediately with children's social care, in that local authority area, or with the police. Nothing should delay the sharing of information about harm to a child.

## **10. Responding to Disclosures**

If a child shares a concern:

- Listen carefully and calmly
- Allow them to speak freely
- Avoid leading questions
- Reassure them they have done the right thing
- Never promise to keep secrets
- Write down the information and report it promptly

A safe, supportive and compassionate response is essential.

## **11. Seeking Medical Attention**

If a child is injured and there are safeguarding concerns:

- Seek medical attention immediately
- Share relevant information with medical professionals
- Do not delay urgent treatment

Safeguarding concerns must still be reported following medical care.

## **12. Managing Allegations**

Any concerns or allegations about individuals working with children must be taken seriously and reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or the President or Vice President in the absence of the DSL.

This includes situations where an individual:

- May have harmed a child

- May pose a risk to children
- May have behaved inappropriately

Appropriate external authorities will be informed where required.

No individual involved should attempt to investigate or question children directly. Please see our managing allegations policy for further information.

### **13. International Safeguarding**

We recognise our responsibility to safeguard children globally.

All those representing the British Dance Council internationally must:

- Follow local safeguarding laws
- Uphold the BDC's safeguarding standards
- Promote safe and respectful practice

Members worldwide are expected to maintain high standards of child protection, including appropriate training and background checks.

### **14. Ongoing Commitment**

We are dedicated to continuous improvement in safeguarding practice by:

- Providing guidance and training opportunities
- Promoting awareness across our community
- Reviewing this policy in light of any new learning
- Encouraging a culture of openness and learning and development

### **15. Understanding Abuse (Summary)**

Abuse can take many forms, including:

- **Physical abuse** – causing physical harm
- **Emotional abuse** – persistent emotional harm or mistreatment
- **Sexual abuse** – involving a child in any type of sexual activity
- **Neglect** – failing to meet a child's basic needs

Recognising concerns early and responding appropriately helps protect children and support their wellbeing. Further details can be found in Appendix 1

### **16. Final Statement**

The British Dance Council is committed to safeguarding children through compassion, professionalism, and shared responsibility. By working together, we create environments where every child feels safe, respected, and empowered to enjoy and succeed in dance

## Appendix 1:

### **Definitions of abuse:**

#### **Physical abuse:**

A form of abuse that 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 a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately causes illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse:** The persistent emotional maltreatment 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, unloved inadequate, or valued in so far as they meet the needs of another person only, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as the over protection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (or cyber bullying), causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse:** Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing rubbing, touching outside of clothing. They may also include noncontact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Neglect:** The persistent failure to meet a child's physical and/ or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home and abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers); ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include an unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.