

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE GROUPS POLICY

Swindon Dance is committed to the welfare and safety of children and vulnerable groups that the organisation works with. Swindon Dance aims to offer a safe, happy and secure environment to enjoy, participate and learn about dance.

This Policy outlines the principles and procedures which should be followed by all staff (full or part time), of Swindon Dance. It is the responsibility of all managers at Swindon Dance to ensure that these procedures are available to and understood by all staff for whom they have responsibility for.

All staff includes; Trustees and teachers who work for the Organisation whether on a permanent, temporary or freelance contract, or working as volunteers.

### Legal context

The word 'child' refers to anyone under the age of 18, as defined by the Children Act 1989 as well as vulnerable adults. A vulnerable adult is a person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves.

The Principles outlined in this policy apply equally to children and vulnerable adults.

### Principles

When working with children and vulnerable groups Swindon Dance will adhere to the following principles:

- The welfare and safety of each child/vulnerable adult is paramount;
- The rights, wishes and feelings of each child/vulnerable adult will be respected, listened to and acted upon;
- The relationship between Swindon Dance staff, teachers and the children/vulnerable adults they work with are based on mutual trust and respect;
- All children/vulnerable adults whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation will receive equal protection from all types of harm or abuse, in-line with Swindon Dance's Equal Opportunities Policy;
- All staff will take responsibility to keep children/vulnerable adults safe;
- Any suspicions or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to immediately and appropriately by the Organisation and its staff.

### Safeguarding Procedures

Swindon Dance will ensure that:

- All parents/carers and children/vulnerable adults are made aware of the procedures and responsible staff to contact in any case of suspected abuse;
- The Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Groups policy will be available from reception;
- A photograph of the child/vulnerable adult Protection Lead will be displayed in reception and around the building along with details of how they can be contacted;
- All staff (as laid out at the beginning of this policy) will undergo Child Protection Level 1 Awareness Training every three years and receive regular updates;

- Key members of staff will undergo Child Protection Level 2 and 3 training i.e. members of the Education and Development team, the YDA Programme Manager and company directors;
- Child protection training is required to be updated every 3 years;
- Board of trustees HR sub-group will be responsible for the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

## **Bullying**

Bullying is not acceptable whether adult to adult, adult to child, or child to child. Examples of bullying may include:

- Belittling a person publicly;
- Physical actions such as hitting and kicking;
- Name calling, humiliation, ignoring;
- Racial insults and gestures;
- Sexual comments and suggestions;
- Unwanted physical contact.

If a child/vulnerable adult tells you that they are being bullied they must be taken seriously. Similarly the bully needs to be supported, as there may be underlying causes that have led to them bullying. Any incident of bullying will be discussed with the victim's and bully's parents/carers. Discussion with the Swindon Dance team may take place as a result of investigation.

All incidences of bullying must be report to a senior member of staff.

## **Allegations**

An allegation is defined as when a member of staff (including volunteers) is alleged to have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child/vulnerable adult;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child/vulnerable adult;
- behaved towards a child/vulnerable adult or children/vulnerable adults in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children/vulnerable adults.

All allegations must be reported to immediately to the Swindon Dance Allegations Lead.

## **Recognising and raising concerns about Child/Vulnerable Adult Abuse:**

It is not for staff to take individual responsibility for deciding whether or not abuse is or has actually taken place. However, there is a responsibility to protect children/vulnerable adults in order that appropriate agencies (i.e. Social Services) can then make inquiries and take the necessary action.

In being vigilant of child/vulnerable adult protection, it is crucial that all employees with responsibility for children/vulnerable adults are aware of the steps used to recognise signs of abuse. It is also important to remember that Social Services are available in an advisory capacity if you are unsure of what to do.

There should always be a commitment to work in partnership with the parents/carers where there are concerns about their children/vulnerable adults. Therefore, in most situations it would be important to talk to parents/carers to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child/vulnerable adult seems withdrawn, he/she may have experienced a family bereavement.

There are circumstances in which a child/vulnerable person may be at greater risk if such concerns were shared (i.e. where a parent/carer may be responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the

*Updated July 2019*

situation appropriately). In these situations, or where concerns still exist, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the manager/duty officer as soon as possible so that the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Groups Procedure can be put into action and referred to Social Services if appropriate.

If you have any anxieties it is essential that you follow Swindon Dance's procedures and report them to the Lead or Deputy Child/vulnerable person Lead at Swindon Dance. This applies regardless of whether your concern relates to the behaviour of another employee, or the possibility that a child/vulnerable person might be a victim of abuse at home or elsewhere.

**If you are concerned a child/vulnerable adult may be being abused but they have not disclosed any information to you, contact the Nominated Child Protection Lead or Deputy at Swindon Dance. If the situation is an emergency and they are not available, please contact the following:**

Children Services Referral Team	01793 466903
Emergency Duty Service	01793 436699
Police Child Abuse Investigation Team	101
Police Domestic Abuse Investigation	101

**For procedures on what to do if a child/vulnerable adult discloses abuse to you or makes an allegation of abuse against a particular individual, please see sheets provided.**

## **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

There are a number of specific things which should be considered, addressed and procedures to follow when working with children/vulnerable people:

- **Changing rooms**

Children/vulnerable adults should use the changing rooms provided when getting changed – younger children and vulnerable adults who require assistance may be accompanied by an adult, parent/carer of the same sex, no other adults should be present.

- **Photography/media**

Written permission is required for photographs and film footage to be taken of children/vulnerable adults. In the case of media, news items, these are allowed to be filmed / photographed only if consent has been given in advance. Names should not appear under photographs in newspaper articles.

At performances and similar events - film and photography can only be taken by Swindon Dance staff and only for training purposes or publicity. Written permission must be obtained from parents/carers with reasons outlining how the images will be used.

- **Toilets**

Adults should not be alone in the toilet with a child/vulnerable adult. Should a member of staff be required to accompany a child/vulnerable adult to the toilet they should not undertake assistance of an intimate nature nor enter the toilet cubicle with the child/vulnerable adult, if a child/vulnerable adult requires a member of staff to remain outside the toilet door i.e. if unable to look the door, they should take the child/vulnerable adult to use the disabled toilet in reception and stand outside the toilet door.

- **Shows/costumes**

There should always be more than one adult present in backstage group changing rooms during shows. One adult should always be a Swindon Dance staff member. No adult should be left alone with a group of children/vulnerable adults and only adults with a chaperone license will be allowed to supervise back stage. All children/vulnerable adults should be able to dress/undress themselves any child/vulnerable adult needing to undress will have access to a private cubical/area or toilet to do so.

If a child/vulnerable adult needs assistance this should be given in full sight of another adult. Adults should only ever do what a child/vulnerable adult cannot do for themselves and always avoid contact with chest and genital area.

- **Collection of children**

All children/vulnerable adults are required to sign in and out for their dance sessions. When being dropped off and picked up for their session(s) children under the age of 10 will require a named parent/carer to collect them.

- **In Loco parentis (in place of a parent)**

Staff, artists and teachers should never act “in loco parentis” for children/vulnerable adults. For events and courses over three hours written permission is requested by Swindon Dance to act “in loco parentis” with regard to medical treatment.

- **Being on your own with a child**

- At all times avoid being on your own with a child/vulnerable adult – if unavoidable, make sure you are within sight and/or hearing of others. If it is necessary to speak to a child/vulnerable adult individually, it is necessary to ensure that another adult is with you.

If you find yourself in a situation where you are the only adult in the room, make sure that the door is open and that someone else can see and/or hear what is happening.

- **Do not have any unnecessary physical contact with children/vulnerable people.**  
Dance is a physical activity and as such physical contact with children/vulnerable adults is inevitable. There are some basic guidelines about touching children/vulnerable adults which you should always follow when teaching:
  - Always check with the person first and inform them of what you are going to do. If they are uncomfortable with this then do not continue;
  - Ensure clear verbal instructions and demonstrate what you mean a certain movement or physical contact to be like;
  - Encourage the group to say what they think is acceptable;
  - Be consistent and respectful;
  - Be aware of your intention within an activity at all times;
  - Ask if there are any individuals who would prefer not to be touched.
- **Keep your relationship on a professional level**  
The law states that a person is a child until they are eighteen, all relationships must be kept on a professional level with clear personal and professional boundaries.  
  
Do not arrange to meet a student, child/vulnerable adult outside the work environment or have contact with them via social media.
- **Report any suspicions or allegations of abuse or bullying**  
See section on 'Recognising and raising concerns about Child Abuse'

### Working in schools or off-sight

There are a number of specific things to think about and procedure to follow when working with children/vulnerable adult on education projects including school:

- Follow any relevant procedures required by schools or community groups.
- Make sure you arrive early enough to deal with any procedures before setting up for your workshop i.e. signing in and out, wearing an ID badge.
- Wear your Swindon Dance T-shirt.
- When in schools, make sure you use the staff toilets not the children's.
- When working in schools it is essential that there is a teacher present at all times as they have knowledge of the pupils and site and are required to take responsibility for the behaviour of the group. If a teacher is not present you should not begin your workshop until they are. If a teacher leaves the room during a session you should carry on working rather than leave the group unsupervised, however if there are two or more artists present one of you should find the head teacher, or suitable responsible staff as soon as possible to inform him/her of the problem. You should also let Swindon Dance know afterwards.

- Where possible and practical another adult should be present during project work with children/vulnerable adults outside formal education.
- Individual projects will be risk assessed.

## PROCEDURE #1

**The following procedures should be followed if a child/vulnerable adult discloses abuse (as a victim) to a member of staff, associate artist or freelance worker at Swindon Dance**

- Make it clear as early in the conversation as possible that you cannot 'keep it a secret'. Do **not** promise confidentiality to a child/vulnerable adult who discloses abuse. If you can see the disclosure coming, you need to make the child/vulnerable adult aware of its consequences. If the disclosure comes out of the blue, you need to make it clear following the disclosure that you cannot keep the information confidential.
- The child/vulnerable adult needs to feel as safe as possible and to know that the disclosure will only be discussed with those involved in its investigation;
- Listen to what the child/vulnerable adult says. Allow the child/vulnerable person to talk as much or as little as they want;
- Do not question the child/vulnerable adult except to clarify what they have said;
- Make clear notes either during or immediately after the conversation with dates, events and actions and sign and date all the records;
- Inform the designated Lead Child Protection Officer or Deputy Lead Child Protection Officer at Swindon Dance as soon as possible. These are:
  - **Lead Child Protection Officer – Cathy Downes**
  - **Deputy Lead Child Protection Officer – Viv Slayford**

If neither are in the building, reception staff will confirm which of them is 'on call' and their contact details.

In the case of an emergency where you are unable to contact either Child Protection Officer (Lead or Deputy) then contact you're Line Manager and/or Swindon Children's Services and inform Swindon Dance's Lead Child Protection Officer as soon as possible.

- **Children Services Referral Team:**  
01793 466903 Mon – Thurs 8.30am – 4.30pm and Fridays 8.30am – 4.00pm
- **Emergency Duty Service:**  
01793 436699 out of office hours
- **Police:**  
101 NON-emergency number

Do not discuss the incident with any third parties outside of the child/vulnerable adult protection contacts detailed above. If you feel that you need support yourself about the experience, please speak to the Lead Child Protection Officer.

If a parent or another adult discloses that a child/vulnerable adult has been abused or is being abused you should follow the same procedures as above and clarify what action, if any, has been / is being taken.

## PROCEDURE #2

The following procedure should be followed if someone (child, vulnerable adult, parent, carer, another adult) makes an allegation of abuse against a member of staff or you suspect a member of staff may be involved in abuse

- Make it clear to the individual making the allegation as early in the conversation as possible that you cannot keep the information confidential that it will be shared with those, internally and externally, involved in its investigation. Make it clear that you will be reporting the allegation to the Swindon Dance Child Protection Lead on an urgent basis;
- Listen to the information given - do not question except to clarify what is said;
- Make clear notes either during or immediately after the conversation with dates, events and actions and sign and date all the records;
- Inform the designated Lead Child Protection Officer or Deputy Lead Child Protection Officer at Swindon Dance immediately. These are:
  - **Lead Allegations Officer – Viv Slayford**
  - **Deputy Allegations Protection Officer – Cathy Downes**

If neither are in the building, Reception will confirm which of them is 'on call' and their contact details.

In the case of an emergency where you are unable to contact either Child Protection Officer (Lead or Deputy) then contact you're Line Manager and/or Swindon Children's Services and inform Swindon Dance's Lead Child Protection Officer as soon as possible.

If the allegation concerns the Lead Child Protection Officer, you should contact the Deputy Officer. If the allegation concerns the Deputy Child Protection Officer, you should contact the Lead Officer. If this is not possible, you should contact the Swindon LADO or if they are not available, the Emergency Duty Service on the number below.

- **Swindon LADO:**  
**01793 466849 / 466958**
- **Emergency Duty Service:**  
01793 436699 out of office hours

Do not discuss the incident with any third parties outside of the child protection contacts detailed above. If you feel that you need support yourself about the experience, please speak to the Lead Child Protection Officer.

Designated member of the Board of Trustees responsible for the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures is **Rob Jandy (Chair of Board of Trustees)**.

# CHILD/VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION ALLEGATIONS REPORT FORM

**Allegation report #** \_\_\_\_\_ :

Date allegation made:	
Allegation made by:	
Allegation made against:	
How allegation was made: verbal/written	

**Allegation details:**

i.e. any written evidence (letter email) attached.

**Check-list of procedures:**

No	Procedure carried out	Yes	No
1	Was the allegation recorded and sent to the Allegations against staff officer for Swindon Dance?		
2	Was the allegation reviewed for level of allegation – concern / complaint / criminal		
3	What level was the allegation: -		
	Concern		
	Complaint		
	Criminal		
4	Was confidentiality / need to know basis invoked		
5	Was a meeting of parties concerned carried out		
6	Were individual meetings with parties concerned carried out		
7	Was there an agreed outcome reached		
8	Have you detailed below actions taken and any outcomes reached		

**Actions taken:**

Date	Action	Outcome

**Furth notes if required:**