

**Safeguarding children**

At Spotlights Dance Centre we recognise that the welfare of children is of paramount importance. We have a responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of all children and young people we work with and have an explicit duty to do so under the Children Act 1989 and 2004 and the Education Act 2002.

A ‘child’ is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age is living independently, in further education, or working does not change his/ her entitlement to services or protection as a child.

 At Spotlights Dance Centre we believe that all children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs and that no child, or group of children should be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access the services and support to meet their needs.

**Overview of responsibilities:**

**All staff and volunteers must report all concerns to the designated safeguarding lead at the nearest available opportunity.**

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers at Spotlights Dance Centre to take steps to protect children, to keep them safe from hazards and to take appropriate action in the event of an accident.

 It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to take reasonable steps to protect children and young people from harm and abuse while in contact with our organisation and our staff and to report any incident of or suspicion of abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) or in their absence to the appropriate statutory authority.

All staff working at Spotlights Dance Centre who have contact with children and young people are required to hold a valid, clear DBS check.

**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people means:**

Protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of a child’s health or development, ensuring that children are growing up with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to ensure that children have the best life chances.

At Spotlights Dance Centre we will do this by:

* Identifying and responding to concerns about a child or young person
* Providing a safe and happy dance environment
* Supporting development through dance in a way that fosters a sense of belonging / sense of self/ sense of community/ sense of independence
* Supporting young people to communicate freely with us, supporting their communication methods, providing time and space to talk
* Fostering an environment of trust and building appropriate professional relationships

**Consent and information sharing:**

Issues of consent are essential to effective safeguarding practice. Additional consent must be sought for any activity that is out of the usual parameters of our work. Basic consents for day to day activities will be sought through enrolment process and appropriate organisational guidance shall be provided to ensure those consenting have clear and transparent information on what they are consenting to.

Significant harm is no exception to this. Before making a referral to Children’s Social Care parents or carers must be informed that you are doing so, including the reasons why and must be asked for consent to do this. It should be noted however that in cases where parents, carers or children do not agree to information being shared you are still able to refer to Children’s Social Care without consent but it is important to explain clearly to social care why consent cannot be established and to make a record of this.

Instances where you may not wish to seek consent are where:

* Discussion with parents/ carers could place the child or other members of their family at increased risk
* The child is in immediate danger (e.g. requires medical attention)
* Having the discussion with parents may put you or another member of staff at risk.

It is often necessary to share information to provide support and prevent impairment or to protect a child from harm. Decisions to share will be appropriate, necessary and proportionate. You must record your decision and the reasons for it, whether or not you choose to share information. If you decide to share you should record what you shared and who you shared with.

**Child protection:**

Is part of safeguarding children and promoting welfare. It refers to activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or likely to suffer **significant harm**.

This is about abuse and maltreatment of a child. Someone may abuse or neglect a child 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 by others (for example over the internet.) They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child/ children. Abuse may be physical, emotional, sexual, neglectful or multiple types of abuse.

All staff and volunteers should be able to recognise, and know how to act upon evidence that a child’s health or development is being impaired or that the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. All concern about harm must be recorded and shared with the Designated Safeguarding person.

No professional should assume that another will pass on information about the safety of a child. If a professional has concerns about a child’s welfare and believe they are or are likely to suffer significant harm they have a responsibility to inform Children’s social care.

**Seeking medical attention:**

If a child has a physical injury, and there are concerns of abuse, medical attention should be sought immediately. Any safeguarding concerns should be shared with ambulance or hospital staff and then must be reported to children’s social care.

**Nothing should be allowed to delay urgent medical treatment.**

**Protection of children:**

At Spotlights Dance Centre we will make every effort to protect children from harm when they are visiting our setting/ attending our classes. We will do this through

Appropriate recruitment and selection procedures

* Provision of safeguarding training for all staff and volunteers
* Ensuring all staff and volunteers hold clear current DBS checks
* We will take all reasonable steps to ensure health safety and welfare for all those who access our organisation
* We will take all practicable steps to ensure that no one working with us or for us would put a child in a situation of unreasonable risk to their health and safety.
* We will not harm or abuse children within our care and will take all reasonable steps to ensure no one working with us or around us within the community could harm or abuse a child in our care.
* We will ensure good reporting to children’s social care where ever we suspect harm and will foster an environment of good communication, transparency and trust.

Safeguarding Training completed by Sonia Cable May 2021