Portslade School of Dancing

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures September 2026

Introduction

Safeguarding children and young people is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.

Our pupils' welfare is our paramount concern.

Our school is a community and all those directly connected, staff members, volunteers, parents/carers, families and pupils, have an essential role to play in making it safe and secure.

Our Ethos

We believe that our dancing school should provide a caring, positive, safe, and stimulating environment that promotes our values, as well as our emotional and mental health and well-being.

We recognise the importance of providing an environment within our school that will help dancers feel safe and respected.

We recognise that all adults within the school have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm.

Scope

In line with the law, this policy defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 years.
This policy applies to all members of staff in our school, including all permanent and temporary staff and volunteers.

Roles and Responsibilities

The school's lead person with overall responsibility for child protection and safeguarding is the Designated Safeguarding Lead. We have two Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads to ensure there is appropriate cover for this role at all times.

All staff members and volunteers know how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse, how to respond to pupils who disclose abuse, and what to do if they are concerned about a child or young person.

All staff members and volunteers know what to do if they are concerned about the behaviour of an adult.

Supporting Children and Young People

Our school will support all pupils by:

- Ensuring that all adults in school understand that children and young people must be kept safe;
- Supporting the development of children and young people in ways that will foster security, confidence, and independence;
- Encouraging the development of self-esteem;
- Ensuring all staff understand their responsibility for safeguarding and know what to do if they have a concern for a child or young person's well-being;
- Ensuring all staff understand their responsibility for safeguarding and know what to do if they have a concern about the behaviour of an adult;
- Ensuring that all staff understand additional safeguarding issues related to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and how to address them.

Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedure

Front Door for Families will be notified as soon as there is a significant concern.

We will ensure all parents and carers are aware of the responsibilities of staff members to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and act in their best interests. We will do this by publishing the policy and procedures on our website.

Record Keeping

We will ensure that any records are confidential and are solely for the purposes of information sharing where this is necessary.

Safer Workforce, Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers, and Managing Low-Level Concerns About Staff and Volunteers

We will prevent people who pose risks to children from working in our school by ensuring that all individuals working in any capacity at our school have been subjected to safeguarding checks.

Staff Induction, Training, and Development

All members of staff and volunteers will undertake safeguarding training proportionate to their roles and responsibilities. We will ensure that staff understand the difference between a safeguarding or well-being concern and a child/young person in immediate danger or at risk of significant harm.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will provide relevant briefings to volunteers on: any changes to child protection legislation and procedures; relevant learning from local and national Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews; local service provision; and local safeguarding concerns.

Confidentiality, Consent, and Information Sharing

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.

All staff members must be aware that they cannot promise a child/young person to keep secrets that might compromise their safety or well-being.

All staff members have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

All our staff members and volunteers who come into contact with children/young people will be given appropriate training to understand the purpose of information sharing in order to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

We will ensure that staff members are confident about what they can and should do under the law, including how to obtain consent to share information and when information can be shared without consent.

Whistleblowing and Complaints

We recognise that children and young people cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff members fail to do so.

We will ensure that all staff members are aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. Should staff not feel able to raise concerns they can call the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on 0800 028 0285.

Site Security

Any individual who is not known or identifiable will be challenged for clarification and reassurance. Any adults without appropriate checks in place will be accompanied at all times by a member of staff.

The school will not accept the behaviour of any individual, parent/carer or otherwise, that threatens school security or leads others, child or adult, to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse the person access to the school site.

What Action to Take if You Have Concerns About a Child

Discuss concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or, in their absence, with the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, as soon as possible, before the child leaves the class. It is important that the child is not sent home without taking the right protective action.

If you are concerned that the child is at risk of significant harm:

- Contact Front Door for Families immediately.
- If you believe that the child is in immediate danger, or you suspect a crime has been committed, you must also contact the police immediately.

If you believe the child is not at risk of significant harm, but the child or their family may need support:

- Discuss your concerns with the parents/carers (and child if appropriate).
- Discuss your concerns with senior colleagues in another agency, if necessary.

Dealing with a Disclosure Made by a Child: Advice for All Members of Staff

If a child discloses that they have been abused in some way, the member of staff or volunteer should follow this guidance:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Only ask questions when necessary to clarify, and do not ask leading questions.
- Accept what is being said.
- Allow the child to talk freely; do not put words in the child's mouth.
- Reassure the child that what has happened is not their fault.
- Do not make promises that you may not be able to keep.
- Do not promise confidentiality; it may be necessary to refer the child to Children's Social Care.
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell.
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator.
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.

Discussing Concerns with the Family and the Child: Advice for the Designated Safeguarding Lead

In general, you should always discuss any concerns the school may have with the child's parents/carers. They need to know that you are worried about their child. However, you should not discuss your concerns if you believe that this would place the child at greater risk or lead to loss of evidence for a police investigation.

It is important to consider the child's wishes and feelings, if age appropriate, as part of planning what action to take in relation to concerns about their welfare.

When talking to children, you should take account of their age, understanding, and preferred language, which may not be English. It is also important to consider how a disabled child may need support in communicating.

How you talk to a child will also depend on the substance and seriousness of the concerns. You may need to seek advice from Front Door for Families or the police to ensure that neither the safety of the child nor any subsequent investigation is jeopardised.

If concerns have arisen as a result of information given by a child, it is important to reassure the child but not to promise confidentiality.

It is expected that you discuss your concerns with the parents/carers before making a referral to Front Door for Families, unless you consider that this would place the child at increased risk of significant harm.

Parents/carers will ultimately be made aware of which organisation made the referral.

Front Door for Families Responses to Concerns About a Child

Once Children's Social Work Services has accepted our referral as needing a social-care-led response, a senior social work practitioner and their manager will evaluate the concerns to identify the sources and levels of risk, and to agree what protective action may be necessary.

The evaluation of concerns and risks involve deciding whether:

- The child needs immediate protection and urgent action is necessary;
- The child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm and enquiries need to be made under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989;
- The child is in need and should be assessed under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

We will cooperate with Children's Social Work Services and the police in any emergency action they take using their legal powers for immediate protection of the child.

We will share information about the child and their family for Section 47 enquiries and family assessments undertaken by Children's Social Work Services.

Information Sharing and Consent

It is essential that people working with children can confidently share information as part of their day-to-day work. This is necessary not only to safeguard and protect children from harm but also to work together in order to support families to improve outcomes for all.

The Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulation are not a barrier to sharing information. They are there to ensure that personal information is managed in a sensible way and that a balance is struck between a person's privacy and public protection.

We should be sharing any concerns we have with parents/carers at an early stage, unless this would put a child at greater risk or compromise an investigation. Parents/carers need to know what our responsibilities are for safeguarding and protecting children and that this involves sharing information about them with other professionals.

It is important to be clear about the purpose of sharing confidential information and only share as much as you need to achieve your purpose.

It is also important to try to get consent from parents/carers (or the child, if they have sufficient understanding) to share information, if possible. However, you do not need consent if you have serious concerns about a child's safety and well-being.

Consent is not necessary in cases where Children's Social Work Services are making child protection enquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989. Information needs to be shared with Children's Social Work Services; staff members must make sure to record what information has been shared.

Consent is necessary for:

- Children's Social Work Services investigations or assessments of concerns under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Children's Social Care will assume that we have obtained consent from the parents to share information unless we make them aware that there is a specific issue about consent. This must be discussed with the social worker requesting information.
- Early Help Assessments are undertaken with the agreement of the child and their parents/carers.

If you are in any doubt about the need to seek consent, get advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Record Keeping

Records should be factual, accurate, relevant, up to date, and auditable. Where opinions are included, this must be made clear. Where people are referred to, they should be identified clearly by role. Records should support monitoring, risk assessment, and planning for children, and enable informed and timely decisions about appropriate action to take.

Records should include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern;
- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved;
- A note of any actions taken;
- A note of any discussions and decisions made, with reasons for those decisions;
- The outcome of actions.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that records are maintained appropriately for children with safeguarding concerns.

Safer Recruitment

All staff members, including volunteers, who have contact with children, young people, and families will have appropriate pre-employment checks.

Managing Allegations of Abuse Made Against School Staff or Volunteers

It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a person who works with children and young people in any role, including those who work in a voluntary capacity, are dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

We do this to:

- Ensure that allegations are dealt with quickly and in a fair manner;
- Prevent unsuitable people from working with children and young people;
- Promote safe practice and challenge poor/unsafe practice;

- Contribute to effective partnership working.

This procedure is applicable where it is believed that an individual may have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved toward a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

There are a number of sources from which a complaint or an allegation might arise. Some examples include directly from a child, a parent/carer, or other adult; the police or local authority children's social care; a member of the public; and concerns generated through a professional relationship—for example, another dance teacher raises a concern disclosed anonymously or disclosed online.

All concerns should be referred to the British Ballet Organization (BBO) head office.

Where there are concerns about significant harm or immediate harm and the incident has occurred outside of working hours, the appropriate area emergency duty team/front door social care team or the police should be informed immediately.

In all cases, the information shared and those it has been shared with should be recorded.

Keep a clear and comprehensive record of any allegations made including:

- Events leading to the allegation or concern;
- Circumstances and context of the allegation;
- Details of any actions taken;
- Details of any decisions reached;
- Final outcome.

Where the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), and/or police feel it is appropriate, the membership of the individual who has been accused will be temporarily suspended pending further exploration/investigation. Suspension is a neutral, non-accusatory act and will be made on the advice of the LADO/police.

Suspension will be made where:

- There is cause to suspect a child/children is/are at risk of significant harm;
- The allegation warrants investigation by the police;
- There are other circumstances relating to the particular case that warrant suspension.

Parents/carers and children should be supported to understand the process.

The BBO will seek advice from the LADO/police about how much information should be disclosed to the referred person. The referred individual should be treated fairly and honestly, and helped to understand the concerns expressed and processes involved, be provided with support throughout the investigative process, and be advised to seek appropriate support. They should be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation and the implications for any BBO process and be given a named point of contact in the organisation—usually the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If an allegation or concern arises about a BBO member outside of their work with children and this may present a risk of harm to children for whom the member of staff is responsible, the general principles outlined in these procedures will still apply.

Following completed social care and police processes, a decision must be made by the BBO as to whether the individual should retain their BBO membership status.

Where the decision is made by the LADO that no further action should be taken, or the allegation is considered by the relevant authorities to be false, malicious, or unfounded, the suspension ban can be lifted. The individual should receive confirmation of this from the BBO and the LADO in writing, with the LADO providing the rationale for this decision.

Where the allegation is investigated and the individual is prosecuted and convicted, the allegation is substantiated and the BBO membership should be terminated.

In certain circumstances, an individual may not be prosecuted or convicted. However, the BBO still reserves the right to terminate membership. For example, if an allegation is unsubstantiated

but there is a significant possibility of risk of significant harm, the BBO will be advised by the police and the local authority on this matter and will act in the best interest of the children, young people, and families involved, and the wider membership and its reputation.

If an allegation is made against a member and that member voluntarily terminates their membership, this does not mean the allegation should not be raised. Information must still be shared with the LADO.

Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity whilst an allegation is being investigated or considered. Information should be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to protect children, facilitate enquiries, and manage disciplinary processes.

Disciplinary or Suitability Process and Investigations

The LADO and the case manager will discuss whether disciplinary action is appropriate in all cases where:

- It is clear at the outset, or decided by a strategy discussion, that a police investigation or Section 47 enquiry is not necessary;
- The police or the Crown Prosecution Service informs that the criminal investigation and subsequent trial are complete, or that an investigation is to be closed without charge, or prosecution is discontinued.

The discussion will consider any potential misconduct or gross misconduct by the staff member, and take into account:

- The information provided by the police and Children's Services;
- The result of any investigation or trial;
- The different standards of proof in disciplinary and criminal proceedings;
- The staff member's full disciplinary record, including any low-level concerns.

In the case of volunteer workers, the LADO and the case manager will work with the providing agency in deciding whether to continue using the person's services, whether they can provide future work with children, and whether to report them for barring considerations.

Record Keeping

The case manager will keep a clear and comprehensive summary of the case record and provide a copy to the accused staff member. A copy of the record should also be given to the LADO. The record will include details of how the allegation was investigated and resolved and the decisions reached. It will be completed in collaboration with the LADO.

Details of allegations that are found to be malicious will be removed from personnel records. In the case of all other allegations, the summary will be placed in the staff member's personnel file and kept until the person reaches retirement age or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation, if that is longer.

Informing the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The LADO will discuss with the case manager whether the school will refer the staff member to the DBS if the allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed or the school ceases to use the person's services, or the person resigns or ceases to provide their services.

It is a legal requirement for schools to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or is likely to harm, or poses a risk of harm to a child; or if there is reason to believe that they have committed one of a number of listed offences (as set out in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 [Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions] Regulations 2009), and have been removed from working in paid or unpaid regulated activity or would have been removed had they not left.

All staff members and volunteers are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our dancers.