

LAURA MCCABE DANCE ACADEMY

LAURA MCCABE L.I.D.T.A./ F.I.D.T.A.

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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

'Laura McCabe Dance Academy' recognises its duty of care under the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004 and the Working Together To Safeguard Children 2023.

The dance school principal, named Laura McCabe, recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. The principal is committed to practice, which protects children from harm. All members of the dance school accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues, which could cause children harm.

The dance school believes that:

- The welfare of the children is paramount
- All children, whatever age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All members and employees of the dance school should be clear on how to respond appropriately

The principal of the dance school, named Laura McCabe, will ensure that:

- The school acts within the Children (Performance and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014 and Children (performance activities) Wales Regulations 2015
- An ethos is established and maintained where children feel welcome and familiar with their environments (toilets, dance hall etc) and emergency arrangements (fire exits, first aid, etc)
- All children are informed who the appropriate person or people are to speak to if they have any questions, problems or concerns
- All chaperones, volunteers, etc work in an open environment
- The needs to the individual child are recognised eg when a child may be tired and need a break
- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity
- The welfare of each child will always be put first

- A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers the children to share in the decision-making process
- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned
- All adult members associated with the dance school provide a positive role model for dealing with other people
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour
- Health and safety legislations are kept up to date
- It will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children
- Relevant development and training are undertaken
- A register of every child involved within the dance school is kept, contact names and numbers are close at hand in case of emergencies.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the dance schools Health and Safety Policy.

The dance school has a dedicated Safeguarding lead /Child Protection Officer, named Laura McCabe, who is in charge of ensuring that the child protection policy and procedures are adhered to.

This policy will be regularly monitored and will be subject to annual review.

This policy was written on 30th December 2024.

Signed XXX... ..

Date reviewed..... 16/06/25

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Responsibilities of the Dance School

At the outset of any production involving children the dance school will:

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process
- Identify at the outset the person with designated responsibility for safeguarding
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children including appropriate vetting (if necessary in consultation with the local education authority)
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority Children's services, social care, in case it needs to report a concern.

Parents

- The dance school believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and the dance school principal, named Laura McCabe. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the dance school and to share responsibility for the care of children.
- All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of the dance school principal to take children home.

Unsupervised Contact

- The dance school will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.
- If it is predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, he or she may be required to obtain a DBS check.

Physical Contact

- All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.
- Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity.
- Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

Managing Sensitive Information

- The dance school has procedures for the taking and photographs or images of children.
- Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes.
- The dance school's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.

- The dance school will ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of its members, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such as DBS checks.

Suspicion of Abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of the dance school, please make this known to the person with responsibility for child protection. If you suspect that the person with responsibility for safeguarding is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to a senior member or directly to Children's Services, Social Care.
- Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed as well as your response, in case there is a follow-up in which you are involved.
- If a serious allegation is made against the dance school principal, chaperone, venue staff etc., that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms etc. and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production.

Definitions of Abuse and Neglect

A child is abused or neglected when somebody inflicts harm, or fails to act to prevent harm. A child or young person up to the age of 18 years can suffer abuse or neglect and require protection.

- Physical Abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.
- Sexual Abuse forcing or enticing a child/young person to take part in sexual activities, where or not they are aware of what is happening, may involve: physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts; non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities; or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

Emotional Abuse - the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause
- severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional and behavioural development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age and developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on the child. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, for example,

witnessing domestic abuse within the home or being bullied, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Disclosure of Abuse

If a child confides in you that abuse has taken place:

- Remain calm and in control but do not delay in taking action.
- Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Don't promise to keep it a secret. Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the person with responsibility for child protection. Make it clear to the child that you will need to share this information with others. Make it clear that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help.
- Reassure the child the "they did the right thing" in telling someone. Tell this child what you are going to do next.
- Speak immediately to the person with responsibility for child protection. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually social services or the police.
- As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was said, using the child's own words. Note the date, time, any names that were involved or mentioned, and who you gave the information to. Make sure you sign and date your record.

Recording

- In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, the details of an allegation or reported incident will be recorded, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a statutory child protection agency.
- An accurate note shall be made of the date and time of the incident or disclosure, the parties involved, what was said or done and by whom, any action taken to investigate the matter, any further action taken e.g. suspension of an individual, where relevant the reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, and the name of the persons reporting and to whom it was reported.
- The record will be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation.

Rights and Confidentiality

- If a complaint is made against a member of the dance school he or she will be made aware of his rights under the society's disciplinary procedures.
- No matter how you may feel about the accusation, both the alleged abuser and the child who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998. Remember also that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released.

Chaperones

- DBS checked Chaperones will be appointed by the dance school principal, named Laura McCabe, for the care of children during the production process. By law the chaperone should exercise the care, which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give to a child. The maximum number of children in the chaperone's care shall not exceed 12.
- Chaperones will be made aware of the society's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Chaperones will not usually have unsupervised access to children in their care. If unsupervised access is unavoidable, or if this is a requirement of the local authority, a DBS check will be sought.
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the producer. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily the chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue.
- If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the producer and not allow the child to continue.
- Under the Dangerous Performances Act no child of compulsory school age is permitted to do anything, which may endanger life or limb. This could include working on wires or heavy lifting. Chaperones should tell the producer to cease using children in this way, and should contact the local authority.
- During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children and signing them in.
- Children will be kept together at all times except when using separate dressing rooms.
- Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times.
- Children are not to leave the theatre unsupervised unless in the company of their parents.
- Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.
- Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures in the venue, and will ensure that children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger.
- Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by the dance school principal, named Laura McCabe.
- Chaperones should have written arrangements for children after performances. If someone different is to collect the child, a telephone call should be made to the parent to confirm the arrangements.
- Children should be signed out using a register when leaving.
- If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child or make arrangements to take them home.

- In criminal law the Crown or other prosecuting authority has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Accidents

- To avoid accident, chaperones and children will be advised of 'house rules' regarding health and safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds. Children will be advised of the clothing and footwear appropriate to the work being undertaken.
- If a child is injured while in the care of the dance school, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded on an accident form. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for child protection.
- If a child joins the production with an obvious physical injury a record of this will be made. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for safeguarding. This record can be useful if a formal allegation is made later, and will also be a record that the child did not sustain the injury while participating in the production.

DBS Check

- If the dance school believes it is in its best interests to obtain a DBS check for chaperones or other personnel it will inform the individual of the necessary procedures and the level of disclosure required. A Standard disclosure will apply for anyone with supervised access to children. An Enhanced disclosure will be required for anyone with unsupervised access.
- The dance school will ensure that information contained in the disclosure is not misused.