

Safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable groups policy

Swindon Dance is committed to the welfare and safety of children, young people, and vulnerable groups that the organisation works with in its building, off-site at events and online. Swindon Dance aims to offer a safe, happy, and secure environment to enjoy, take part and learn about dance.

This Policy outlines the principles and procedures which should be followed by all staff (full, part time or voluntary) 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 a volunteer.

Designated member of the Board of Trustees responsible for ensuring the organisation has an up-to-date Child Protection Policy with clear procedures and safeguarding lead and deputy in place is **Rob Jandy (Chair of Board of Trustees)**.

Legal context

The word 'child' refers to anyone under the age of 18, as defined by the Children Act 2004 as well as young people and 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. A young person refers to anyone under the age of 25.

The principles outlined in this policy apply equally to children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

Principles

When working with 'children' Swindon Dance will adhere to the following principles:

- the welfare and safety of each 'child' is paramount,
- the rights, wishes and feelings of each 'child' will be respected, listened to, and acted upon,
- the relationship between Swindon Dance staff, teachers, and the 'children' they work with are based on mutual trust and respect,
- all 'children' 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, Harassment and Bullying Policy,
- all staff will take responsibility to keep 'children' safe, and
- any suspicions or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to at once and appropriately by the Organisation and its staff.

Safeguarding Procedures

Swindon Dance will ensure that:

- all parents/carers and 'children' are made aware of the procedures and responsible staff to contact in any case of suspected abuse,

- the Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Groups policy will be available from reception and on the Swindon Dance website in the 'about us' section,
- all staff (as laid out at the beginning of this policy) will undergo safeguarding awareness training every three years and receive regular updates,
- key members of staff will undergo the appropriate level of Child Protection training in relation to their role and responsibilities within the organisation,
- child protection training must be updated every 3 years,
- staff will undergo informal training regarding this policy and its procedures, and
- the Programme Manager for Business & Operations will be responsible for overseeing 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, and
- unwanted physical contact.

If a 'child' 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, in the case of a member of staff, this will be followed up through the organisation's disciplinary procedures. Discussion with the Swindon Dance team may take place because of the investigation.

All incidences of bullying must be reported to a senior member of staff, see record keeping and procedures later in this policy.

See Swindon Dance Equal Opportunities, Harassment and Bullying policy.

Allegations

An allegation is defined as when a member of staff (including freelance staff and volunteers) is alleged to 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 towards a 'child' in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to a 'child', and
- behaved towards a 'child' adult in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with 'child'.

All allegations must be reported immediately to the Swindon Dance Allegations Lead or deputy. See record keeping and procedures later in this policy.

Recognising and raising concerns about 'child' abuse:

It is not for staff to take individual responsibility for deciding whether abuse is or has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to protect 'children' in order that appropriate agencies can then make inquiries and take the necessary action.

In being vigilant of 'child' protection it is crucial that all employees with responsibility for 'children' are aware of the steps used to recognise signs of abuse. LADO/Children's Social Care is 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 'child'. Therefore, in most situations it would be important to talk to parents/carers to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a 'child' seems withdrawn, they may have experienced a family bereavement.

There are circumstances in which a 'child' 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 situation appropriately). In such situations or where concerns still exist, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the duty manager as soon as possible so that the organisations Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Groups procedure can be put into action and referred to the police, Children's Social Care and/or LADO 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 Safeguarding officer at Swindon Dance. This applies regardless of whether your concern relates to the behaviour of another employee or the possibility that a 'child' might be a victim of abuse at home or elsewhere.

If you are concerned a 'child' may be being abused but they have not disclosed any information to you contact the lead or deputy Safeguard Officer via reception at Swindon Dance. If the situation is an emergency and they are not available, please contact the following:

Children's Social Care 0345 050 7666

If you have an urgent concern for a child who you feel is in imminent danger of injury or is injured call 999 or 101

Prevent Duty – the Prevention of Violent Extremism

Swindon Dance recognises that it has a duty under Section 26(1) of the Counterterrorism and Security Act (2015) to have due regard to the need to prevent persons from being drawn into terrorism.

Prevent Duty forms part of Swindon Dance's Safeguarding duty in helping to keep children, young people, and vulnerable adults out of criminal space.

Swindon Dance encourages diversity and equality in all its practises, projects, staff and the artists it works with. It is a non-political organisation and does not take part in or advocate a political view.

'children' are particularly targeted by groups who may promote violent extremist activity. Their emotions can be exploited by recruiters who will provide an arm around the shoulder and emotional support. Staff and friends can counteract this by giving support and a sense of belonging.

A person may be vulnerable due to a traumatic incident, family upheaval, feeling insignificant or frustrated. Ideology gives them a sense of purpose or excitement. Mental health issues can make people more vulnerable to radicalisation but there is not a strong correlation.

All staff should be aware of signs of radicalisation and have the confidence to report their concerns to their Line Manager or a member of the Safeguarding Team. They should be vigilant

of individuals with ideologies that legitimise the support or use of violence, where people don't see a place for 'others' and be mindful of radicalisation as a driver of behaviour change.

Some examples of risk factors are:

- peer pressure,
- family pressure,
- loss of a friend,
- exam and work pressure, and
- not knowing where they fit in.

Signs and behavioural changes to be aware/concerned about include:

- a change in language,
- being closed to discussion,
- being fixed on one subject,
- lying to parents about where they are,
- talking to new people online,
- becoming more interested in their heritage and religion, and
- attending meetings.

Swindon Dance will provide appropriate support through its own staff or by referral to external agencies such as 'Channel', for any student or member of staff in danger of radicalisation.

Good practise guideline

This is a practical guide of various things that should be considered, addressed, and followed when working with 'children' at Swindon Dance or online for Swindon Dance.

Virtual lessons and live streaming

Live streaming of classes and activities should only be through official Swindon Dance accounts such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. No staff members or artists should live stream a Swindon Dance class or activity via another platform or personal account. Only authorised members of staff will have access to the organisation's accounts to schedule and host meetings and activities.

There are many different platforms available with similar functions and features. Swindon Dance uses 'Zoom' as its platform for live streaming online sessions. If a different platform to zoom must be used, please follow the below guidelines, and adapt for that platform.

When using a Swindon Dance zoom platform staff should:

- ensure a second member of staff is present during the session to take on the role of host' to oversee the start of the session, waiting room, access to activity, tutor support in the event of an incident or accident and ending of session,
- ensure only participants who have registered for the session or are part of a registered Swindon Dance group or programme are given access to that session,
- use the Zoom waiting room facility for entry by participants into all meetings and activities,
- use passwords and IDs,
- disable 'join before host' and recording and screen share for participants during sessions,
- only send the zoom link to those participating in the meeting or activity and privately,
- ensure the zoom link is not shared on any public platforms or given to anyone not participating in the session,
- ensure the host arrives in good time to launch/prepare the zoom room for the session,

- ensure the tutor is given access by the host into the zoom room prior to any participants access,
- at the start of the session confirm what is expected of the participants for example microphone on or off and why, how to get tutors attention if they require help, if their camera is to remain on and why, and any required etiquette, and
- only use break out rooms if essential and ensure there are no less than three people present,
- if you need to speak/work privately with a 'child' in a breakout room ensure a second member of staff is present,
- sessions with 'children' should not be recorded,
- if a session involving 'children' is to be recorded for a specific event consent will be obtained prior to the session, clearly stating the purpose for recording the session, how it will be used and how the data will be stored.

When working in-house at Swindon Dance:

Changing rooms

'children' 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. There is an accessible changing room with shower facilities on the ground floor if preferred.

Photography/media

Consent must be obtained by Swindon Dance for photographs and film footage to be taken of 'children'. This includes filmed or photographed items for use in media and news items. Names or other personal details should not appear under photographs in newspaper articles or online. At performances and similar events - film and photography can only be taken by Swindon Dance staff and only for training purposes or publicity. Consent 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'. Should a member of staff be required to accompany a 'child' to the toilet they should not undertake assistance of an intimate nature nor enter the toilet cubicle with the 'child'. If a 'child' requires a member of staff to remain outside the toilet door i.e., if unable to lock the door, they should take the 'child' to use the accessible toilet on the ground floor 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' and only adults with a chaperone license will be allowed to supervise backstage. All 'child' should be able to dress/undress themselves. Any 'child' needing to undress will have access to a private cubical/area or toilet to do so.

If a 'child' needs assistance this should be given in full sight of another adult. Adults should only ever do what a 'child' cannot do for themselves and always avoid contact of an intimate nature.

Collection of children

All 'children' 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 a 'child'. Regarding medical treatment for events and courses over three hours long written permission by the parent/carer is required by Swindon Dance to act "in loco parentis".

Being alone with a child

Staff should always avoid being alone with a 'child'. If it is necessary to speak to a 'child' individually then another adult should be present. If unavoidable, they should make sure they are within sight and/or hearing of others. If a staff member finds themselves in a situation where they are the only adult in the room, they must make sure that someone else can see and/or hear what is happening for example leaving the door open.

Do not have any unnecessary physical contact with 'children'.

Dance is a physical activity and as such physical contact with 'children' is inevitable. There are some basic guidelines about physical contact with 'children' that teachers should always follow:

- 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,
- always be aware of your intention within an activity, and
- ask if there are any individuals who would prefer not to be touched.

Keep relationships on a professional level

All relationships must be kept on a professional level with clear personal and professional boundaries.

Do not arrange to meet a student or 'child' 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

When working with 'children' on behalf of Swindon Dance off-sight including in schools, staff should:

- follow any relevant procedures required by the school, organisation, or community group,
- arrive early enough to check any required procedures i.e. signing in and out, wearing an ID badge,
- always use the staff toilets not the children's, especially when in a school,
- where possible and practical another adult should be present during project work with 'children' outside formal education, and
- individual projects should be risk assessed.

When working in schools it is essential that there is always a teacher from that school present, they have knowledge of the pupils and site and are required to take responsibility for the behaviour of the group. Any activity should not start until a teacher is present. If a teacher leaves the room during a session the session should continue rather than leave the group unsupervised, however if there are two or more artists present one should leave to find the head teacher, or suitable responsible staff member as soon as possible to inform them of the problem. Swindon Dance should be notified as soon as possible afterwards.

Incident and/or accident

In the case of an incident or accident staff should follow company process for incidents and accidents as laid out in the Employees Handbook. In the case of an incident or accident occurring during an online session the 'host' should take the lead and follow company procedure as much as possible or adapt for the situation to ensure the safety and privacy of the person/s involved is

given precedence. The 'host' should assess the required level and type of action to undertake, for example would a private chat using the chat function be sufficient, should the persons camera and microphone be turned off to give privacy. Should the 'child's' parent/carer be asked to join the conversation. All conversations and any actions taken should be agreed with the 'child' and their parent/carer via the private chat function and a copy of the conversation made where possible.

Travel

When travelling with 'children', staff should use public transport or hired mini-bus services with the correct ratio of staff/chaperones to age and group size. Staff should only take 'children' in their private motor vehicles in exceptional circumstances where they have been authorised to do so, and where no other form of transport is suitable for example, public transport is not available, or parents/carers cannot take (or arrange for them to be taken) to activities.

Staff who use their own vehicles are responsible for ensuring that their motor insurance policy includes cover driving for work and for the transportation of other people. 'Children' must not be offered a lift where this has not been pre-arranged and agreed.

'Children' should be seated in the back of the vehicle and where possible, another parent/person should accompany the group. Staff must not accept any money or gifts such as petrol money in return for transportation services. Travel expenditure reimbursement should be claimed in accordance with the organisation's Travel and Expenses Policy.

Recommend adult to child ratios as the minimum numbers to help keep children safe:

0 - 2 years - one adult to three children.

2 - 3 years - one adult to four children.

4 - 8 years - one adult to six children.

9 - 12 years - one adult to eight children.

13 - 18 years - one adult to ten children.

Source, NSPCC

Record Keeping

As stated throughout this policy, any concerns of abuse or possible abuse, must be recorded as soon as possible and as accurately as possible, noting what was said or seen, putting the event into context, and giving the date, time, and location.

All records must be dated and signed. All hand-written records will be retained, even if they are subsequently typed up in a more formal report.

Written records of concerns should be kept even where there is no need to make a referral.

With allegations, the 'Child/Young person/Vulnerable Adult Protection Allegation Report Form' should be used.

All records relating to a 'child' protection concern will be kept in a secure place and will remain confidential.

See the following procedures for which process to follow in the event of a safeguarding issue arising.

Procedure #1

The following procedure should be followed if a 'child' 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' who discloses abuse. If you can see the disclosure coming, you need to make the 'child' 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' 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' says. Allow the 'child' to talk as much or as little as they want. Do not interrupt.
- Do not be judgmental or make the 'child' feel bad. Reassure them they are doing the right thing in telling you.
- Do not question the 'child' except to clarify what they have said. You are simply establishing the key facts.
- Make clear notes either during or immediately after the conversation with dates, events and actions and sign and date all the records. Where possible use the Swindon Dance report form.
- Inform the designated Lead Child Protection Officer or Deputy Lead Child Protection Officer at Swindon Dance as soon as possible. These are:

Lead Safeguarding Officer – Viv Slayford

Deputy Lead Safeguarding Officer – Katie Purcell

If neither are in the building, reception staff will confirm which of them is 'on call' and details of how to contact them. If you are unable to contact either Child Protection Officer (Lead or Deputy) and the 'child' is NOT at imminent risk, then contact your Line Manager. In the case of an emergency where a 'child' IS at imminent risk or is injured the contact either, Children's Social Care, Swindon's Safeguarding hub, or the police.

In both cases you should inform Swindon Dance's Lead Child Protection Officer as soon as possible.

- **Children's Social Care:** 0345 050 7666
- **Swindon Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub:** 01793 466903
- **Emergency Duty Service:** 01793 436699 out of office hours
- **Police:** 999 for emergency or 101 for NON-emergency

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 Swindon Dance Lead or deputy Child Protection Officer.

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

Procedure #2

The following procedure should be followed if someone (child, young person, 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. You are not investigating; you are simply establishing the key facts.
- Make clear notes either during or immediately after the conversation with dates, events and actions and sign and date all the records. Where possible use the Swindon Dance report form.
- Inform the designated Lead Allegations Officer or Deputy Lead Allegations Officer at Swindon Dance immediately. These are:

Lead Allegations Officer – Viv Slayford

Deputy Allegations Protection Officer – Sarah Fletcher

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

In the case of an emergency where you are unable to contact either Child Protection Officer (Lead or Deputy) then contact Children's Social Care or LADO 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.

- **Children's Social Care:** 0345 050 7666
- **Swindon LADO:** 01793 466849 / 466958
- **Emergency Duty Service:** 01793 436699 out of office hours

Confidentiality for all involved needs to be paramount. 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 or deputy Child Protection Officer.

Procedure #3

The following procedure should be followed if you are concerned about changes in a 'child's' behaviour regarding terrorism and radicalisation.

This is part of Swindon Dance's safeguarding role and should be addressed in the same way.

- Make a note of any changes in behaviour or appearance that you have noticed, include dates and time period that these changes occurred over.
- Check with a trusted colleague for example a fellow teacher, manager. Articulate what gave you cause for concern. This colleague may well have their own concerns and be able to help put that concern into context. The changes may be due to other issues.
- The 'child' needs to feel as safe as possible and to know that the disclosure will only be discussed with those involved in its investigation.
- Inform the designated Lead Safeguarding Officer or Deputy Lead Safeguarding Officer at Swindon Dance as soon as possible.

Further action will involve talking to the individual about their feelings and views with follow-up conversations with parents/carers and a plan of action / recommendations put in place for example an uncle and brother took one such young male to football replacing the need for him to mix with extremists at matches, put into place.

There may be a referral to a councillor to discuss their personal concerns.

Where there is a concern regarding radicalisation Swindon Dance will liaise with the Regional Prevent Coordinator, the chair of the Local Channel Panel and Wiltshire Police.

Swindon Dance designated Lead and Deputy Lead Safeguarding Officers are:

Lead Safeguarding Officer – Viv Slayford

Deputy Lead Safeguarding Officer – Katie Purcell

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

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

Children's Social Care: 0345 050 7666

'Channel' is a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Programme, that:

- is an early intervention framework,
- is confidential,
- ensures referrals will not show up anywhere,
- does not seek to criminalise
- gives additional support
- gives young people support too re-direct to.

They must have parental permission for referral.

'Child' Protection Allegation Report Form

Allegation report #

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

Allegation details:

Include a list of any written evidence (letter email) attached.

Checklist 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?		

The following definitions should be used when determining the outcome of an allegation investigation.

Definition		Yes	No
Substantiated	There is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation		
Unsubstantiated	There is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. Does not imply guilt or innocence		
Unfounded	There is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made		
False	There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation		
Malicious	There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive		

Actions taken:

Date	Action	Outcome

Further notes if required:

Policy owner/nominated lead, V Slayford
Date of last review, Feb 2024
Review due date, Feb 2025