



BODYWORK THEATRE SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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Introduction

Bodywork Theatre School is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children in our care are protected from abuse, harm, neglect and radicalisation.

Bodywork Theatre School will respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns regarding the safety of a child that may occur and aims to follow the 5 R's of safeguarding:

1. Recognise

Communities surrounding children and vulnerable adults should have a clear and definite understanding of the signs of potential abuse, harm, neglect and extremism. Symptoms of abuse are not always visible, and suspicious injuries or behaviours should not be dismissed.

These surrounding individuals must adopt an understanding of suspicious and non-suspicious behaviour and injury when considering their safeguarding duty. Trusting your instinct and treating every concern as an issue is always best.

2. Respond

If a safeguarding issue has been detected, responding to it in an appropriate manner is extremely vital.

Some children and vulnerable adults who have fallen victim to abuse and neglect will most likely need to be handled with great care and caution. You should approach these individuals in a calm fashion and foresee that they may not be willing to talk about their situation.

If they wish to discuss matters, ask open questions, which will encourage them to give just enough information to validate the claim. Once you have enough information to solidify it beyond suspicion, you should begin reporting.

3. Report

Each organisation should have a designated person or team responsible for safeguarding issues.

Another important factor in ensuring the safety and security of others is knowing who your closest safeguarding lead is. To this individual, you should report any concerns that may have arisen, and they will then take responsibility for dealing with the matter professionally.

4. Record

Recording the incident in the best detail is extremely important for the investigation. You should take precise and comprehensive notes of the situation to assist in your report and relay these where necessary.

Included in the notes should be the who, what, why, when and where of safeguarding. Details of who was involved are especially important, as well as dates and times. The recording of the events should take place as soon as possible.

5. Refer

After the previous steps, the report should be referred to the appropriate authorities to continue the investigation.

If you believe the safeguarding risk to be more urgent, such as a suspicion that somebody is under immediate or severe threat, you should contact the relevant authority immediately, whether this is the police, fire service or ambulance crew.

This Policy sets out how Bodywork Theatre School will meet its statutory duty under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and help them to achieve good outcomes.

- Bodywork Theatre School's Safeguarding Policy and Procedure is introduced to all new Teachers as part of their basic teacher training by the Principal, Theresa Kerr. It forms a regular part of the termly training and the Producer Training.
- All teachers and producers working at Bodywork Theatre School know that they have a responsibility to identify any child welfare concerns and, in partnership with other organisations, will take the appropriate action to address them.
- Theatre School Teachers or Producers understand that it is not their responsibility to investigate possible abuse or neglect.
- Staff have a responsibility to identify those children who are suffering from abuse or neglect and to ensure that any concerns about the welfare of a child are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, if the Designated Safeguarding Lead is away or off sick then it should be taken to Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead in their absence.
- The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy is to take lead responsibility for the Safeguarding and child protection within Bodywork Theatre School and to be available for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns.

There is a Designated Safeguarding Leader (Emma Duncan) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leader (Kofi Agyemang)

The Bodywork Theatre School DSL and DDSL are responsible for the following:

- having a working knowledge of safeguarding policies and procedures and updating them when necessary
- ongoing training and development for them and teachers/producers
- receiving concerns about a child

- reporting, storing and retaining child protection records following the organisation's policies and procedures

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly, or by failing to protect them from harm. Some forms of child abuse and neglect are listed below.

- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent, adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making the child feel that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- **Physical abuse** can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, cutting, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child.
- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This can involve physical contact, or non-contact activities such as showing children sexual imagery or acts or encouraging them to behave in a sexual way.
- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs. It can involve a failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, to protect a child from physical and emotional harm, to ensure adequate supervision or to allow access to medical treatment.

SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Signs of possible abuse and neglect may include:

- Significant changes in a child's behavior.
- Deterioration in a child's general well-being.
- Unexplained bruising or marks.
- Becoming unusually withdrawn.
- Seeming persistently anxious.
- Showing uncharacteristic aggression.
- Showing fearful behaviour around an adult, peer, parent or carer.
- Knowledge of adult/sexual issues inappropriate for their age.
- Running away or going missing.
- Always wearing clothes that cover body.
- Reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, e.g. in the child's home, or that a girl may have been subjected to (or is at risk of) female genital mutilation, or that the child may have witnessed domestic abuse.
- Inappropriate closeness to a member of staff or anyone else in the setting. For example, inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their role, or inappropriate sharing of images.

PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE

Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Peer-on-peer abuse is taken seriously by staff and will be subject to the same child protection procedures as other forms of abuse. Staff are aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people.

Staff will not dismiss abusive behaviour as normal between young people. The presence of one or more of the following in relationships between children should always trigger concern about the possibility of peer-on-peer abuse:

- Sexual activity of any kind, including sexting.
- One of the children is significantly more dominant than the other, causing a negative change in behaviour or demeanor.
- Unwanted physical contact.
- One of the children is significantly more vulnerable than the other. (e.g. in terms of disability, confidence, physical strength)
- There have been threats, bribes or coercion to ensure compliance or secrecy.

If Peer-on-peer abuse is suspected or disclosed staff will follow the same procedures as set out above for responding to child abuse.

EXTREMISM AND RADICALISATION

All childcare settings have a legal duty to protect children from the risk of radicalisation and being drawn into extremism. There are many reasons why a child might be vulnerable to radicalisation, e.g:

- Feeling alienated or alone.
- Seeking a sense of identity or individually.
- Suffering from mental health issues such as depression.
- Desire for adventure or wanting to be part of a larger cause.
- Association with others who hold extremist beliefs.

SIGNS OF RADICALISATION

Signs that a child might be at risk of radicalisation include:

- Changes in behaviour, for example becoming withdrawn or aggressive.
- Claiming that terrorist attacks and violence are justified.
- Viewing Violent extremist material online.
- Possessing or sharing violent extremist material.

If a member of staff suspects that a child is at risk of becoming radicalised, they will record any relevant information and refer the matter to the DSL.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

If anyone makes an allegation of child abuse against a member of staff:

- The allegation will be reported to the Bodywork Theatre School Principal and DSL Emma Duncan. If the allegation is made against the Principal or the DSL then it should be reported to the DDSL.
- The allegation will be recorded on an incident report form. Any witness to the incident should sign and date the entry to confirm it.
- The allegation must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and to Ofsted (if relevant) by the Principal/DSL within one working day, to get advice and guidance on next steps.
- The LADO will advise if other agencies (e.g police) should be informed, and Bodywork Theatre School will act upon their advice. Any telephone reports to LADO will be followed up in writing within 48 hours.
- Following the advice from the LADO, it may be necessary to suspend the member of staff pending full investigation of the allegation.
- If appropriate, Bodywork Theatre School will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

PROMOTING AWARENESS AMONG STAFF

Bodywork Theatre School promotes awareness of child abuse and the risk of radicalisation through its staff training. Bodywork Theatre School ensures that:

- Bodywork Theatre School Teachers and producers complete a Level 1 Safeguarding Training.
- The DSL and DDSL's have relevant experience and receive appropriate training in Safeguarding and the Prevent Duty.
- Safeguarding training for the relevant members of staff is refreshed every three years.
- Safe recruitment practices are followed for any new staff and DBS required.
- All staff have a copy of this Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, understand its contents and are vigilant to signs of abuse, neglect, or radicalisation.
- All staff are aware of their statutory duties with regard to the disclosure or discovery of child abuse, and any concerns about radicalisation.
- Safeguarding is a permanent agenda item at all staff meetings and training sessions.

USE OF MOBILE PHONES AND CAMERAS

- Photographs will only be taken of children with their parents' permission.
- Only photographs that have had parental permission can be shared on social media.
- Mobile phones are only used during the class for contacting parents, the Bodywork DSL/DSL or Emergency Services

PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH STUDENTS

As a theatre and dance school it's inevitable that some physical contact may need to take place from time to time. In upholding the following key principles, appropriate correction helps our students to reach a level of excellence.

- Physical contact should always be explained beforehand so it's not unexpected and the student understands the reason for it.
- Physical contact should be the minimum action necessary to meet the needs of the situation.
- Physical contact should never be an act of punishment.
- Physical contact should never be such that it makes the student uncomfortable.

There are situations within the dance studio or performance setting which physical contact with a child, young person or adult may be appropriate and necessary to demonstrate choreography, exercises or techniques, e.g.

- Correcting body position in artistic movement for dance or drama.
- Correcting body position in the acquisition of a skill.
- Preventing inappropriate body movements.
- To administer first aid.
- To partner lift or carry a person as part of the artistic and choreographic development and performance.
- Where a person is in distress, needs comforting and consents to the comfort.

Staff must use their own professional judgement when they feel someone needs this kind of support. Always preface any physical contact with an explanation, e.g.

“I am going to correct the angle of your arms for this choreographic move, so, I will have to touch your arm to move it to the correct position”.

If physical contact is an issue and verbal explanation is difficult, you will need to use other forms such as pictures and diagrams to demonstrate.

Teaching in a group can have positive benefits in being able to demonstrate for example, correct posture. You may instruct one person to correct the posture of another.

BEHAVIOUR TO AVOID WITH REGARD TO PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH STUDENTS

- Avoid any contact when alone with people, unless it is clearly relevant to teaching an artistic skill.
- There may be some people for whom touching is particularly unwelcome. It is therefore important personnel receive this information before teaching, rehearsing or working with them.
- Physical contact between personnel and people of the opposite sex becomes increasingly open to question as young people reach and proceed through adolescence.
- Staff should bear in mind that even innocent and well-intentioned physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued.
- The way our behaviour is experienced and interpreted may not match our intentions however well meaning.

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

If a child discloses to a member of staff that they are being abused, the member of staff should:

- Remain calm and try not to show any shock or disbelief.
- Listen with the utmost care to what the child is saying and take notes if possible.

- Always inform the child that this information will have to be passed on but only to people who need to know and who will help protect their safety and welfare.
- Always offer reassurance to the child or young person. Let them know that they were right to inform you, that the abuse isn't their fault, that they've done the right thing and that you are listening to them and treating the information seriously.
- Do not rush the child into giving details of the abuse. Your role is to listen to what the child wants to tell you and not to conduct an investigation.
- Always use language that the child understands and wherever possible the child's words, to clarify or expand what has been said.
- Avoid asking leading questions and instead ask open questions that allow them to answer in their own way.

IF A CONCERN IS RAISED

- If the teacher or producer raises a concern, then they must speak to the DSL immediately.
- If the disclosure implicates the DSL then the DDSL should be contacted instead.

URGENT CONCERN

If the situation is urgent and the child is at risk by going home with the parent/carer then the police should be contacted immediately on 999. This would be in a situation where the Teacher/producer felt that the child was in immediate danger.

CAUSE FOR CONCERN BUT CHILD NOT IN IMMEDIATE DANGER

- The DSL or DDSL will ask the teacher or producer to make a full written record in the provided CAUSE FOR CONCERN FORM which is then sent to the DSL or DDSL.
- The Bodywork Theatre School Teacher/Producer has a duty to share information regarding any concerns which they may have about a child but only with relevant people, organisations and agencies, not with family, friends or colleagues who have no right or need to know.

ACTION TAKEN/REFERRAL

Once the DSL has received the CAUSE FOR CONCERN form, they will review the information and then make a decision about the action to take. The local LADO will be happy to advise if the DSL is unsure how to proceed.

1. Decision to monitor the concern: If this is the decision made, then the Teacher/Producer should monitor the child and feedback to the DSL within an agreed timescale. The DSL will write up a confidential report and review with the Teacher/producer.

2. Speak to the parent/carer: The Teacher/producer will speak with the parent or carer about the concern or disclosure.

Once discussed with parents/carers, the following possible actions can be taken:

1. No action - but the DSL should write a confidential report stating the reason why no action is being taken and store it securely.
2. Decision to monitor the concern. See above.
3. Discuss the case on a “no names” basis with the relevant borough/local authority’s Child Protection Co-Ordinator or Child and Family Contact Team and ask their advice.
4. Refer to the relevant Social Care Department in the local authority of the child’s address. If a referral is necessary the parent/carer would need to be told that the information is going to be passed on to the relevant social services.

All referral information and decisions, phone calls, discussions and actions should also be recorded and kept with the full record. This should also include a record of any decisions made not to refer the incident, along with the reasons.

PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING AN ALLEGATION OF HISTORICAL ABUSE.

If someone reports a case of historical abuse, then it should be referred to the DSL and if they’re not available, the DDSL.

Once the DSL has received the allegation, they should report it to the LADO within one working day who will be able to advise on next steps. When you first receive the allegation, gather as much information and detail about the incident/s as possible, for example;

- any letters/texts/photos
- accounts of discussion/written records/disclosure
- chronology of events where appropriate
- identification and details of any witnesses