

## Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and

**ELEV8 STUDIOS DANCE ACADEMY** have a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for children all staff, chaperones, parents/legal guardians and volunteers accept their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to ensure that everyone follows procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities. Elev8 Studios Dance Academy acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of every child and young person who has been entrusted to its care and is committed to working to provide a safe environment for all members. A child or young person is anyone under the age of 18 engaged in any dance activity, always acting in the best interest of the child.

**There are three elements to our policy:-**

- i) **Prevention** through awareness of each individual child's needs and the regular training of our staff and volunteers.
- ii) **Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect.** All staff and volunteers are trained in safeguarding at least annually and will abide by our Staff Code of Conduct. The DSL has also had appropriate training for her role and has a good understanding of specific safeguarding issues.
- iii) **Procedures** for identifying and reporting cases or suspected cases, of abuse.

The aim of this policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of **ELEV8 STUDIOS** and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

### **Prevention**

We recognise that the "entertainment industry" can be a very "adult" environment and we expect that all staff, chaperones, parents/legal guardians, volunteers and anyone else who comes into contact with children to behave in an appropriate manner at all times, and to remember that "The Welfare of the Child is Paramount". As a minimum, anyone working with children will have an enhanced DBS disclosure including a barred list check, verification of ID, to references and a check on their right to work in the UK. Any other checks, such as prohibition from teaching check, overseas check and self-declaration concerning disqualification from working with young children will be carried out as appropriate.

**ELEV8 STUDIOS** will therefore:-

- Act within the Children's Act 1989 & 2004
- Act within The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel welcome and familiar with their environment and are informed of personal (toilets, dressing rooms etc) and emergency arrangements (fire exits, meeting points etc) and any Health and Safety Procedures (Dangerous equipment, First aid etc)
- Inform each child who the appropriate person or people are to speak to if they have any questions, problems or concerns.
- Ensure that all children are treated with respect and dignity and are treated as individuals and offered equality of opportunities.
- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and unnecessary physical contact with children) and involve/allow parents/chaperones wherever possible, to take responsibility for the child/children they are responsible for. (parents must only have responsibility for their own child)
- Recognising the individual needs of the child. eg recognising when a child may be tired and may need a break.
- Ensure that children are supervised appropriately.
- Ensure that Chaperones other than the child's parent, are registered with the local authority in which they reside and have an enhanced DBS check.
- Ensure all crew and staff coming into close contact with a child are DBS checked.
- Ensure that all staff and crew who don't necessarily have close contact with children but who are assisting in the production are aware of their conduct around children.

### **Photographic procedures**

- Always use a parental permission form to obtain consent for a child to be photographed or videoed
- Obtain the child's permission to use their image.
- Only use images of children in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. Some activities, including drama, present a greater risk of potential misuse.
- Address the use of images of children on the organisation's website. Avoid personal information about children which could be used by an individual to learn more about a child.
- Avoid using children's names in photographic captions. If the child is named, avoid using his or her photograph. If the photograph is used, avoid naming the child.
- Always issue written expectations of professional photographers or the press who are invited to an event, making clear the organisation's expectations of them in relation to child protection.
- The use of cameras, or mobile phones with camera or video capability, in dressing rooms and other inappropriate environments is expressly forbidden.
- Do not allow photographers unsupervised access to children.
- Do not approve photography sessions outside the event or at a child's home.

### **Definitions of Child 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.

N.B. Under no circumstances should any staff member or volunteer inflict physical or psychological harm on a child.

## **Physical Abuse**

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates or induces illness in a child whom they are looking after.

## **Sexual Abuse**

Forcing or enticing a child/young person to take part in sexual activities, whether 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**

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 children. 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.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Staff understand that those children with SEND can face additional safeguarding challenges, including their behaviour, mood and injury relating to the child's condition without staff undertaking further exploration, being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children without outwardly showing any signs; and having communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.

## **Legislation, Policy and Guidance**

**ELEV8 STUDIOS** will adhere to the relevant legislation when working with children and young people under the age of 18 years as outlined in the following:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
- The Equality Act (2010)
- The Children and Young Persons Act (1933)
- The Children and Young Persons Act (1963)
- Children Act (1989)
- Children Act (2004)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

## **Suspicion of Abuse**

If you see or suspect abuse of a child, immediately make this known to the designated safeguarding lead responsible for child protection.

## **Disclosure of Abuse**

If a child tells you that they or another child or young person is being abused:-

- Always stop and listen straight away, show that you take their allegations seriously.
- Encourage the child to talk, but do not ask leading questions, interrupt or ask the child to repeat itself.
- Never promise that you will keep what is said confidential or secret – explain that if you are told something of concern that you will need to let someone know but that you will only tell the people who need to know and can help.
- Record what you have been told accurately and as soon as possible. Use the child's own words. Make a note of the time, location, whether anyone else present and of the Child's demeanour.
- Ensure that your concerns are reported immediately to the designated individual/manager
- Do not confront the alleged abuser.

Staff will act on any concerns that a child has been abused or may be at risk of abuse or exploitation (including online) immediately, by speaking to the DSL who will record the concern and consider making a referral to, or seeking advice from, children's social care services; if there is an immediate risk of harm, they will make the referral immediately.

## **Handling Allegations**

- If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff, volunteer or anyone else working in contact with children, it must be reported to the DSL who will refer to the LADO. If it concerns the DSL, it must be reported to a Co-Director.
- The alleged perpetrator should not be made aware of the allegation at this point.

We endorse and adopt Responsible Recruitment guidelines for recruiting new teachers and volunteers and we will:

- Specify what the role is and what tasks it involves
- Request identification documents and Enhanced DBS.
- As a minimum we will meet and chat with the applicant(s) as a means of interview before appointing them

All current Elev8 Studios Dance Academy members who are regularly caring for, supervising, training or being in sole charge of children and young people will be required to provide evidence of an Enhanced DBS.

If there are concerns regarding the appropriateness of an individual who is already involved or who has approached us to become part of Elev8 Studios Dance Academy, guidance will be sought from appropriate governing bodies including the local authorities and examination bodies affiliated with the school: Royal Academy of Dance, Imperial Society of Dance, International Dance Teachers Association, Acrobatic Arts and LAMDA. It is noted and accepted that Elev8 Studios Dance Academy will consider the relevance and significance of the

information obtained via the Enhanced DBS and that all decisions will be made in the best interests of children and young people. All staff and volunteers will read KCSIE Part 1 and Annex B, and After-school clubs, community activities, and tuition.

It is accepted that Elev8 Studios Dance Academy aims to prevent people with a history of relevant and significant offending from having contact with children or young people and the opportunity to influence policies or practice with children or young people. This is to prevent direct sexual or physical harm to children and to minimise the risk of 'grooming' within dance/drama/musical theatre.

Low Level Concerns: A member of staff or volunteer should share with the DSL any concerns they have about other members of staff or volunteers who they believe are not following the dance school's expected behaviour and standards. The DSL together with the co-directors will decide whether this is an allegation of harm or a low-level concern, and may seek advice from the LADO.

## **Studio Access**

Access to the building is by video buzzer and only authorised persons will operate. Any person found in the building who should not have access will be challenged and be asked to leave - if necessary the police will be called.

## **Recording**

· In all situations the details of allegation or reported incident must be recorded. Make accurate notes of time, dates, incident or disclosure, people involved, what was said and done and by whom, action taken to investigate, further action taken e.g. suspension of individual and if relevant: reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, name of person reporting and to whom it was reported

The record will be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know

Elev8 Studios has a complaints procedure that indicates how students, young people and families can raise a safeguarding concern. We would always direct reports firstly to the DSL following the contact details below:

Contact Details for DSL: [dance@elev8studios.co.uk](mailto:dance@elev8studios.co.uk) / 01234 339761

Contact Details for LADO: 0300 300 8142•

Contact Details for Bedfordshire Police: 01234 842 212 / 101

**DO NOT worry that you might be mistaken; you have a responsibility to pass on your concerns following a disclosure. Never think abuse is impossible, or that an accusation about a person you know well and trust is bound to be wrong.**

**IT IS YOUR DUTY TO REFER CONCERNS ON, NOT TO INVESTIGATE, PERSONS BELOW:**

The Designated Individuals/Managers for child protection and safeguarding

Name: Lesley Brocklesby

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Position in company: Designated Safe Guarding Lead

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The Designated Individuals/Managers for child protection and safeguarding

Name Angela Feehan / Sarah Young

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Position in company: Co-Directors

**This policy and procedures will be reviewed annually by the DSL and the Co-Directors – the next review is 1st April 2025.**

## **APPENDIX 2: OUTDOOR LESSON SAFEGUARDING CONSIDERATIONS**

*Added to policy on 28.07.2020*

As a further response to COVID-19, Elev8 Studios Dance Academy has chosen to begin offering outdoor classes as of 04.08.2020 - 09.2020 and will reinstate it should this be required by government guidelines or ELEV8 STUDIOS participate in outdoor classes in the future.

In order to properly safeguard our students during open-air classes, we will add the additional steps to the above safeguarding policy.

1. Students will be asked to wear appropriate outdoor dance wear ie.leggings and t-shirts and bring trainers to wear on feet if required.
2. Space for use by Elev8 Studios Dance Academy students will be clearly marked by guide cones and marker spots. Students are not allowed to leave these areas without a teacher or parents having collected them.
3. Teachers will choose spaces based on being out of the public's way, in as private as space as possible.
4. Any persons making students/teachers uncomfortable by their presence near student area will be asked to move on.