

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Effective: January 2025

Hertsmere Academy of Dance & Performing Arts

1. Policy Statement

Hertsmere Academy of Dance & Performing Arts recognises its responsibility to promote and protect the welfare of all children and young people attending our activities. While we are not a statutory body, we take all **reasonable steps** to provide a safe, supportive environment and to respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns.

Our safeguarding practices are informed by relevant legislation, including the Children Act 1989 and 2004, the Children and Social Work Act 2017, and the Department for Education's *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2023) and *Keeping Children Safe in Out-of-School Settings*.

A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

2. Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff, teachers, volunteers, and contractors.
- All children and young people taking part in Hertsmere Academy activities.
- Any third-party providers or partners working on behalf of the Academy.

Our aim is to:

- Take proportionate and practical measures to safeguard children from harm.
- Equip our staff to identify, respond to, and report safeguarding concerns.
- Create a culture that promotes wellbeing and protects vulnerable individuals.
- Work collaboratively with parents/carers and external agencies where required.

3. Safeguarding Commitment

To the best of our ability, we will:

- Promote a safe and inclusive environment for children and young people.
- Act promptly on concerns or disclosures using the appropriate reporting routes.
- Ensure safeguarding responsibilities are clearly communicated to all staff and volunteers.
- Operate safe recruitment and supervision procedures.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities under this policy.

We acknowledge that no organisation can eliminate all risks; however, we commit to **taking all reasonable and proportionate actions** to minimise harm.

4. Definitions of Abuse

Abuse can include (but is not limited to):

- **Physical abuse**
- **Emotional abuse**
- **Sexual abuse**
- **Neglect**
- **Bullying (including cyberbullying)**
- **Child-on-child abuse**

We recognise that abuse can occur in any setting and may be perpetrated by adults, peers, or others.

5. Safer Working Practice

To reduce the risk of harm and protect both staff and children, we expect all personnel to:

- Work in open, observable spaces and avoid being alone with a child where possible.
- Treat all students with fairness, dignity, and respect.
- Communicate clearly and appropriately at all times.
- Use only necessary and appropriate physical contact (e.g., technical correction), and explain actions to the student.
- Seek consent from students and parents/carers where needed.
- Remain within the boundaries of their role, training, and responsibilities.

Physical Contact for Instruction:

Dance is a physical and precise art form, and some degree of physical contact is necessary to safely and effectively correct or demonstrate movements. Any such contact will always be appropriate, respectful, and explained clearly to the student beforehand. Staff will seek consent where possible and ensure contact is limited to what is strictly necessary for teaching purposes, in line with safeguarding principles.

6. Conduct That Must Be Avoided or Never Sanctioned

Avoid Unless Absolutely Necessary (and with consent):

- One-on-one situations with a student out of sight of others.
- Transporting a child alone without written permission from a parent.

- Entering changing rooms or private areas unless essential and authorised.

Never Permitted:

- Sexual, suggestive, or inappropriate behaviour or language.
- Rough play, bullying, humiliation, or intimidation.
- Inappropriate touching or physical contact.
- Failing to report safeguarding disclosures or suspicions.

7. Supervision, Toileting & First Aid

- Students are expected to manage their own personal care; parents must attend if a child needs toileting assistance.
- If a child needs to visit the toilet during class, they should do so in a group of at least two; a staff member will wait outside.
- All injuries or accidents must be logged, reported to the Principal and the child's parent/carer, and recorded in the venue's accident book.

8. Photography, Filming & Parental Consent

By enrolling in Hertsmere Academy of Dance & Performing Arts, parents/carers provide their consent for photographs and videos of their child to be taken and used for promotional purposes, including advertising and social media.

We maintain strict safeguarding guidelines for the use of images:

- No full names or identifying personal details will be published alongside images.
- No compromising or inappropriate photos or footage will ever be used.
- Parents/carers who do not wish their child to be photographed or filmed must inform us in writing as soon as possible. We will make reasonable efforts to accommodate these requests and keep parents updated about events where filming may occur.
- During classes, signs clearly prohibit photography or filming. If unauthorized images or videos are observed, we will ask for them to be deleted immediately.
- Despite these measures, some parents or attendees may still attempt to take photos or videos without permission. Parents/carers are therefore urged to take responsibility in helping safeguard all students by respecting these rules and discouraging unauthorized recording.
- Due to the widespread availability of personal recording devices, complete control over photography or filming, especially at public events, cannot be guaranteed. Parents are advised to remain vigilant.
- Professional photographers and camera operators engaged by the Academy follow our safeguarding policies and operate under agreed guidelines.

9. Recruitment & Vetting of Staff

We follow best practice in recruitment to reduce the risk of employing unsuitable individuals. This includes:

- Application forms or CVs.
- Interview process.
- Identity and eligibility to work checks.
- Enhanced DBS checks.
- Minimum of two references.
- Signed agreement to follow this policy and our Code of Conduct.

All new staff receive safeguarding training and an induction explaining procedures.

10. Safeguarding Training

All staff and volunteers:

- Complete safeguarding training appropriate to their role.
- Are briefed on how to recognise abuse, respond to disclosures, and report concerns.
- Are provided with written guidance and support.
- Undergo refresher training at appropriate intervals.

11. Responding to Concerns

It is not the responsibility of our staff to investigate allegations. However, we must take all concerns seriously.

If a concern arises:

1. **Listen** – Stay calm, don't ask leading questions.
2. **Reassure** – Avoid making promises of confidentiality.
3. **Record** – Document what was said as soon as possible.
4. **Report** – Share the concern with the Principal (Designated Safeguarding Lead).

If the concern involves the Principal, contact the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**.

External Referral:

The Principal may refer to:

- **Children's Social Services**
- **Police (if a child is in immediate danger)**

- **The Local Safeguarding Partnership**

The Principal is the only person authorised to speak to the media in such instances.

12. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

We respect individuals' rights to privacy; however, safeguarding concerns may require information to be shared. This will be done:

- On a strict need-to-know basis.
- In line with data protection law and government guidance.
- With external safeguarding agencies where necessary.

13. Bullying and Peer-on-Peer Abuse

We do not tolerate any form of bullying. We will:

- Treat all reports of bullying seriously.
- Investigate impartially and sensitively.
- Support the victim and address the behaviour of the perpetrator.
- Inform parents/carers as appropriate.
- Keep written records of all incidents and outcomes.

14. Record Keeping

Accurate records are essential. We maintain safeguarding records that include:

- Child's name, DOB, contact details
- Details of concern or disclosure
- Actions taken and by whom
- Dates, times, and witness accounts

Records are kept securely and retained in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements.

15. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually or following any safeguarding incident or change in legislation.

- **Date of policy:** January 2026
- **Next review due:** January 2027

16. Declaration

On behalf of Hertsmere Academy of Dance & Performing Arts, we accept our duty of care and confirm that this policy will be implemented to the best of our ability and in accordance with relevant safeguarding guidance.

Principal / Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

Name: Chahna Morgan

Date: January 2026