

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Effective Date: 01/11/2024

County Dance is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all students, particularly children and vulnerable adults. This policy outlines our approach to safeguarding and child protection, ensuring the well-being of every individual involved in our programs.

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to all County Dance staff, volunteers, contractors, and any individuals working with children or vulnerable adults on behalf of County Dance. It outlines our commitment to safeguarding, expected behaviours, and the procedures for handling concerns.

2. Our Commitment to Safeguarding

We are dedicated to:

- Creating a safe, inclusive, and positive environment for children and vulnerable adults.
- Promoting the welfare and protection of all students.
- Preventing any form of abuse, exploitation, or harm.
- Responding promptly and effectively to any safeguarding concerns.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Staff and Volunteers:** All County Dance staff, volunteers, and contractors are responsible for upholding this policy, being vigilant, and reporting concerns. All staff are provided with guidance on safeguarding best practices.
- **Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO):** Jaime Dieguez is our Designated Safeguarding Officer and the main point of contact for safeguarding issues. The DSO is responsible for coordinating safeguarding efforts, handling concerns, and liaising with external agencies as necessary.

4. Code of Conduct

We expect all staff and volunteers to:

- Treat children and vulnerable adults with respect and dignity.
- Prioritise safety and respond to any signs of distress or discomfort.
- Avoid inappropriate behaviour, including any form of physical, emotional, or verbal abuse.
- Maintain professional boundaries; no private or unmonitored contact with students outside class without parental consent.
- Obtain parental or guardian consent for any form of physical contact required for dance instruction.

5. Safe Recruitment

All new staff and volunteers who work with children or vulnerable adults must undergo appropriate background checks, including DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks, as required by law.

6. Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

If there are concerns about a child's or vulnerable adult's welfare:

- Reporting: Any member of staff or volunteer who suspects or is aware of a safeguarding issue must report it to the DSO immediately.
- Record-Keeping: The DSO will document all reported concerns, including any actions taken and the outcome.
- External Referral: If necessary, the DSO will escalate concerns to external authorities, such as children's services or the police.

7. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All safeguarding concerns and records will be handled in strict confidence. Information will only be shared with relevant individuals on a need-to-know basis and in compliance with data protection laws.

8. Training and Awareness

County Dance ensures that all staff and volunteers are informed about this safeguarding policy and receive basic safeguarding training. The DSO will participate in ongoing safeguarding training and updates to remain current on best practices and legal requirements.

9. Reporting Abuse Outside County Dance

If a child or vulnerable adult discloses abuse or neglect that has taken place outside County Dance, staff should provide support and immediately report the information to the DSO, who will escalate to the appropriate authorities.

10. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or as needed to ensure it remains current with best practices and legal obligations. Any updates will be communicated to staff and volunteers promptly.

Contact Information

For any safeguarding concerns, please contact:

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO): Jaime Dieguez james@countydance.co.uk
County Dance: info@countydance.co.uk