



# **Child Safeguarding Statement & Child Safeguarding Policy**

**January 2019**

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# Dance Ireland Child Safeguarding Statement

1. Name of service being provided: dance classes, rehearsals & professional development.

2. Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm:  
Dance Ireland is the national development organisation for dance and manages DanceHouse on license from Dublin City Council.

At Dance Ireland the care and safety of all children<sup>1</sup> and young people when they are at DanceHouse or participating in Dance Ireland activities is our primary concern. We are committed to creating a safe, friendly and conducive environment which inspires confidence and creativity in children and young people who participate in Dance Ireland activities and/or attend DanceHouse. We believe it is important that all people who work with children and young people are aware of the issues of good practice and their responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children and young people. Our guidelines have been developed bearing the dance setting in mind.

Dance Ireland:

- Recognises that all children and young people have the right to freedom from abuse<sup>2</sup>.
- Ensures that all our staff are carefully selected and accept responsibility for helping to prevent the abuse of children and young people in their care.
- Responds swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and provides parents and children with the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have.
- Assigned a Designated Liaison Person who takes responsibility for child safety and acts as the main point of contact for parents, children and young people and outside agencies.
- Ensures access to confidential information is restricted to the Designated Liaison Person or appropriate external authorities.

3. Risk Assessment

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child and young person while availing of our services. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

	<b>Risk identified</b>	<b>Procedure in place to manage identified risk</b>
1	Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of children while in DanceHouse (studios, communal spaces, bathroom/changing areas)	All teachers in DanceHouse must sign up to the teacher code of practice. No children allowed in DanceHouse without supervision. Buddy system in place for under 12's
2	Risk of harm from staff member/teacher	All teachers in DanceHouse must sign up to the teacher code of practice. No children allowed in DanceHouse without supervision. Buddy system in place for under 12's
3	Risk of emotional or physical harm to child due to individuals exhibiting challenging behaviour or substance abuse	No child to be left unsupervised outside of DanceHouse. Venue Officers screen those at the front door before allowing entry

<sup>1</sup> As per the *Children First Guidelines*, a child is defined as an unmarried person under the age of 18 years.

<sup>2</sup> As per the *Children First Guidelines*, abuse is defined as neglect, bullying, emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse.

4	Risk of harm from other children (bullying etc.)	All children in DanceHouse to adhere to the Code of Behaviour for Children & Young Adults
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#### 4. Procedures

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015; Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017), and Tusla’s Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children and young people while they are availing of our service and are contained in our Child Safeguarding Policy:

- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service or within DanceHouse;
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children;
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm;
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla;
- Procedure for appointing and maintaining a list of people who are Designated Liaison Persons and Deputy Designated Liaison Persons;

The Child Safeguarding Policy is available upon request.

#### 5. Vulnerable Adults<sup>3</sup>


The procedures contained in our Child Safeguarding Policy extend to the provision of services to vulnerable adults.

#### 6. Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an on-going process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed every two years, or more frequently if there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed:



Paul Johnson, Chief Executive

Date: 25 January 2019

For queries, please contact Eve Lalor, General Manager, Relevant Person & Designated Liaison Person under the Children First Act 2015.

Deputy Designated Liaison Persons: Dance Ireland Venue Officers.

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<sup>3</sup> The HSE defines a Vulnerable Person as an adult who is restricted in capacity to guard himself/herself against harm or exploitation or to report such harm or exploitation, as a result of physical or intellectual impairment.

## **Child Safeguarding Policy – Dance Ireland 2019**

### ***Code of practice for staff & teachers***

In devising the following code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of Dance Ireland and DanceHouse activities. The aim is to ensure that the creativity and individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption-free environment.

The following code of behaviour offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by teachers at DanceHouse and off site.

It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within DanceHouse and a high level of cooperation among staff and between staff, users and parents.

The following guidelines must be followed by all staff and those working with children/young people in DanceHouse:

- Children should not be left unattended or unsupervised, at any time while in DanceHouse. It is the responsibility of the hirer to ensure that chaperone arrangements are in place to supervise children at all times, while using (but not exclusively):
  - Toilets
  - Changing Rooms
  - Common Areas
  - Studios
- Collecting Children/Young people; the foyer area of DanceHouse is the designated dropping off/picking up point. No child should be left unsupervised by a teacher or parent outside of DanceHouse, particularly outside of opening hours. DanceHouse opening hours can be found on our website.
- A buddy system is advised for all groups of young children (i.e. those aged 12 and under), with children remaining with their buddy at all times during their time in DanceHouse.
- Be sensitive to the risks involved in participating in contact games and exercises.
- Be sensitive to the fact that jokes of a sexual or religious nature may be offensive to others and should never be told in the presence of children.
- Be sensitive to the possibility of becoming over involved or spending a great deal of time with any one young person. They need to be clear about the purpose and nature of their relationship with any young person. All students should be treated equally.
- Children/young people should be encouraged to report cases of bullying behaviour to either the Designated Liaison Person or any employee of their choice.

- Never meet alone with a young person. Be sensitive to the potential risk to personal safety and false allegations which may arise. If required to speak privately to a young person, do so in a public space, i.e. corridor, foyer, and inform another colleague that you are doing so.
- All students should be encouraged by their tutors to respect the personal space, safety and privacy of their peers.
- While physical contact of a comforting and reassuring nature is a valid way of expressing concern and care for children, no such contact is permitted. Staff and teachers should be aware of what physical contacts are inappropriate, what actions might be misunderstood and what situations might render them vulnerable.
- Staff and teachers must never physically punish or be in any way verbally abusive to a young person.
- Teachers/Facilitators will keep a record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupils. Parents will be involved at an early stage, rather than as a last resort.
- Communication with parents will be verbal or by letter, depending on circumstances. The parents will be invited to come to DanceHouse to discuss their child's case. A single instances of gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of minor misbehaviour may result in expulsion. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour and, depending on circumstances, may result in expulsion.
- Photographs: in the interest of privacy and child protection, the use of photographic equipment and video cameras is not permitted in DanceHouse or at Dance Ireland activities without the prior consent of the tutor/parents/DanceHouse management. A signed consent form will be required, before any photography or recording is allowed (see Appendix 2)

### **Implementation of the code**

All teachers/persons hiring space at DanceHouse who work with children and young people will be informed of Dance Ireland's Child Safeguarding Statement & Safeguarding Policy and requested to sign up to same. Failure to sign up to the policy will result rental contract being cancelled.

### ***Code of behaviour for children & young people***

- Always arrive in plenty of time for your class.
- You must sign in when you arrive at DanceHouse and must also sign out before you leave. Upon signing in you must go to the assigned studio and remain there for the duration of the class/workshop. Students must not leave the premises without the consent of their teacher.
- Always consider the staff working at DanceHouse: do not run or shout in the corridors, stairs, lift, toilets/changing areas, reception area.

- Always place rubbish in the bins provided.
- Always listen to staff members and respect them when they are talking.
- Always tell a member of staff if you are involved in or witness an accident.
- Always tell a member of staff if you have, or witness any problems.
- Always respect property.
- Food and drink are not permitted in the studios – bottled water only.
- Always be sensitive to the fact that jokes of a sexual or religious nature may be offensive to others.
- You should not bring your valuables to DanceHouse. DanceHouse provides lockers which we encourage you to use. However, DanceHouse is not responsible for any loss or damage to goods which are left at the owner's own risk.
- You should not, under any circumstances, use a mobile phone to take pictures while at DanceHouse or taking part in Dance Ireland activities.
- The possession, use or distribution of alcohol, tobacco or illegal substances while in DanceHouse or taking part in Dance Ireland activities is not permitted, and will qualify as gross misbehavior, and may result in expulsion.

### ***Confidentiality***

We in Dance Ireland are committed to ensuring people's rights to confidentiality. However, in relation to child protection and welfare we undertake that:

- Information will only be forwarded on a need to know basis in order to safeguard the child/young person.
- Giving such information to others for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality;
- We cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the child or young person are at risk.
- Primary carers, children and young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is being made to Túsla, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk.
- Images of a child/young person will not be used for any reason without the consent of the parent/carer.

### ***Types of abuse and how they can be recognised***

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. The important factor in deciding whether the behaviour is abuse or neglect is the impact of that behaviour on the child.

## **Neglect**

Child neglect is the most frequently reported category of abuse, both in Ireland and internationally.

Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety.

The following are features of child neglect:

- Children being left alone without adequate care and supervision
- Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding
- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. a child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation
- Inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture
- Lack of adequate clothing
- Inattention to basic hygiene
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age
- Persistent failure to attend school
- Abandonment or desertion

## **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen.

Emotional abuse may be seen in some of the following ways:

- Rejection
- Lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment
- Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play)
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned)
- Continuous lack of praise and encouragement
- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child
- Bullying
- Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on his or her behaviours or actions
- Extreme overprotectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking child in bedroom)
- Ongoing family conflicts and family violence
- Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development

## **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Physical abuse can include the following:



- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

The Children First Act 2015 includes a provision that abolishes the common law defence of reasonable chastisement in court proceedings. This defence could previously be invoked by a parent or other person in authority who physically disciplined a child.

### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes:
- Inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography [for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means]
- Inviting, coercing or inducing a child to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent or obscene act
- Showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse
- Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person

### ***Circumstances which may make children more vulnerable to harm***

Some children may be more vulnerable to abuse than others. Also, there may be particular times or circumstances when a child may be more vulnerable to abuse in their lives. In particular, children with disabilities, children with communication difficulties, children in care or living away from home, or children with a parent or parents with problems in their own lives may be more susceptible to harm. Such factors include:

#### **Parent or carer factors:**

- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Addiction, including gambling

- Mental health issues
- Parental disability issues, including learning or intellectual disability
- Conflictual relationships
- Domestic violence
- Adolescent parents

**Child factors:**

- Age
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Disability
- Mental health issues, including self-harm and suicide
- Communication difficulties
- Trafficked/Exploited
- Previous abuse
- Young carer

**Community factors:**

- Cultural, ethnic, religious or faith-based norms in the family or community which may not meet the standards of child welfare or protection required in this jurisdiction
- Culture-specific practices, including:
  - ❖ Female genital mutilation, forced marriage, honour-based violence or radicalisation

**Environmental factors:**

- Housing issues
- Children who are out of home and not living with their parents, whether temporarily or permanently
- Poverty/Begging
- Bullying
- Internet and social media-related concerns

**Poor motivation or willingness of parents/guardians to engage:**

- Non-attendance at appointments
- Lack of insight or understanding of how the child is being affected
- Lack of understanding about what needs to happen to bring about change
- Avoidance of contact and reluctance to work with services
- Inability or unwillingness to comply with agreed plans

***Duties of the Designated Liaison Person***

**Designated Liaison Person**

Dance Ireland has appointed a Designated Liaison Person (General Manager) to act as a liaison with children, parents and outside agencies when dealing with any child protection issues. This DLP acts as a resource to any staff member who has child protection concerns and is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to Tusla or An Garda Síochána.

Duties of the DLP include:

- To operate within the guidelines set by the appropriate authorities and those approved by Dance Ireland.

- Reports suspicions and allegations of child abuse to the statutory authorities, i.e., Tusla or An Garda Síochána.
- Liaises between the young people, staff and the statutory authorities where necessary.
- Creates and maintains links with the statutory authorities and other relevant agencies and resource groups.
- Facilitates the provision of support to any victim or employee making a referral and provides support also to the person against whom the allegation has been made.
- Advises his/her employers, staff and students on individual cases.
- Advises on good practice.
- Organises/facilitates training and workshops on guidelines in child protection.
- Maintains proper records on all cases referred to him/her in a secure and confidential manner.
- Keeps up to date on current developments regarding provision, practice, support services, legal obligations/requirements and policy.

The Designated Liaison Person is also the Relevant person (see Child Safeguarding Statement).

Both Venue Officers are Deputy Designated Liaison Persons. They will assume responsibility when the designated liaison person is not available or on leave.

### ***Safe Recruitment and Selection Policy Statement***

We will ensure that our staff are carefully selected, trained and supervised to provide a safe artistic environment for all children and young people.

We undertake that:

- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities will be outlined for every job.
- Candidates will be asked to sign a declaration form.
- Written references which are recent, relevant, independent and verbally confirmed will be necessary.
- The factors that would exclude an applicant are as follows: any child-related convictions, refusal to sign the application form and declaration form, insufficient documentary evidence of identification, concealing information on one's suitability to working with children.
- All staff will be required to consent to Garda clearance, and if they are directly in contact with children, this will be sought.

### ***Managing and supervising staff***

Dance Ireland wishes to protect staff (paid and voluntary) and children/young people and in order to do this we will ensure that:

- New staff will take part in a mandatory induction training session.
- New staff are made aware of the organisation's code of conduct, child protection procedures, and the identity and role of the Designated Liaison Person.
- New staff undergo a probationary period.
- Existing staff will receive an adequate level of supervision and review of their work practices.
- Existing staff have read and signed the Child Safeguarding Statement & Child Safeguarding Policy & Procedures.
- Existing staff will be provided with child safeguarding training.

### ***Dealing with allegations***

If a child abuse case is suspected or alleged, the following steps should be taken by the Designated Liaison Person, or by an employee or young person wishing to make the report themselves. It is not necessary for you to prove that abuse has occurred to report a concern to Tusla. All that is required is that you have reasonable grounds for concern:

1. You can report your concern in person, by telephone or in writing — including by email — to the local social work duty service in the area where the child lives. You can find contact details for the Tusla social work teams on the Tusla website ([www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)).
2. If you are concerned about a child but unsure whether you should report it to Tusla, you may find it useful to contact Tusla to informally discuss your concern.
3. The information to include in your report can be seen in **Appendix 3**.
4. In the event of an emergency, or the non-availability of Túsła staff, the report should be made to An Garda Síochána. This may be done at any Garda station. Under no circumstances should a young person be left in a dangerous situation pending the intervention of Túsła.

This procedure should be followed even where the suspicion arises in another organisational context but is disclosed to an employee who is delivering a class in another setting. In this instance s/he should report to the Designated Liaison Person.

In the event of allegations being made against a staff member, the protection of the child/young persons is the first and paramount consideration. The company has a dual responsibility in respect of both the child/young person and the employees. The same person will not have the responsibility for dealing with both the reporting issues and the employment issues. An allegation against an employee must be assessed promptly and carefully.

If reasonable grounds for concern exist a formal report to Túsła should be made. The company should ensure actions taken by them do not undermine or frustrate any assessment or investigation by Túsła or An Garda Síochána. The company should take protective measures that are appropriate to the level of risk and not

unreasonably penalize the employee unless necessary to protect the child/young person, i.e., increased supervision, assigned different duties, suspension.

Reasonable grounds for a child protection or welfare concern include:

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused

Procedures for dealing with allegations against staff:

- If allegations are made against the Designated Liaison Person, this should be dealt with by the Chief Executive of the organisation.
- The staff member should be informed as soon as possible that an allegation has been made against them and the nature of the allegation.
- Parents and guardians and the child/young person should be informed of actions planned and taken.
- The staff member should be given an opportunity to respond.
- The Chairperson of the company should be informed as soon as possible.
- Any action against the employee should be taken in consultation with Tusla and An Garda Síochána.
- After consultation the Chairperson will advise the accused and agreed procedures will be followed.

The same procedures apply when dealing with allegation against a non-staff member (i.e. teacher renting DanceHouse).

### ***Dealing with a disclosure***

- Stay calm and listen to the child/young person, allowing them enough time to say what s/he needs to say.
- Do not ask leading questions or prompt details.
- Reassure the child/young person but do not promise to keep anything secret.
- Do not make the child/young person repeat the details unnecessarily.
- Explain to the child/young person what will happen next (explanation should be age appropriate).

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but should not be ignored. In all cases the safety and welfare of the child or young person is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of

the Designated Liaison Person. This information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner.

The ability of the statutory authorities to investigate and assess a case of potential or actual child abuse will depend on the quality of information available to them. Different levels of information will be available to persons reporting who may or may not be familiar with the young person's personal situation. Within these constraints, every effort should be made to clarify the grounds for concern and assist the statutory authorities to decide how far and in what manner to pursue an investigation. When completing a report form, factual detail is required, not opinions or impressions. Check the details against the first record made of the incident or concern to ensure accuracy. Sign the form and date it when completed. While the information in some cases will be limited, as much as possible the following details should be included in a Reporting Form (see **Appendix 3**).

### ***Dealing with a retrospective allegation***

Some adults may disclose abuse that took place during their childhood. Such disclosures may come to light when an adult attends counselling, or is being treated for a psychiatric or health problem.

The reporting requirements under the Children First Act 2015 apply only to information that you received or became aware of since the Act came into force, whether the harm occurred before or after that point. However, if you have a reasonable concern about past abuse, where information came to your attention before the Act and there is a possible continuing risk to children, you should report it to Túsla.

### ***Where reasonable grounds for concern are not immediately apparent***

Where an employee has a suspicion of abuse and there may be insufficient evidence to substantiate it, s/he should continue to monitor the situation. The following steps are recommended:

- The employee should, as soon as possible, discuss this situation with the Designated Liaison Person. All discussions should be restricted to those with an obligation to know.
- Alternatively, s/he may contact the Túsla for advice. Any communication of a suspicion of abuse, provided it is not made maliciously, is legally privileged and protected under The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998.
- The employee may continue to observe the behaviour of the young person and the suspected abuser, recording any information which may be relevant using the guidelines for completing the Reporting Form as contained in this policy under the section on Recording and Retention of Information.
- The employee should endeavour to be available to the young person involved. This has to be done in a sensitive manner. It is not proper for the worker to intimate or suggest to a person that s/he may have suffered an abuse.

### ***Accidents procedure***

Guidelines for dealing with and reporting accidents are available to all staff under Dance Ireland's Health and Safety Policy and Statement.

This includes information on dealing with various types of accidents, procedures for reporting accidents and accident report forms.

All Dance Ireland staff are aware of reporting procedures, location of first-aid boxes etc.

### ***Recording and Retention and Storage of Information***

In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, it is extremely important to record the details of an allegation or reported incident, regardless of whether or not a referral is subsequently made to a statutory agency. This should happen as soon as possible after an incident takes place.

Any reports/completed forms should be stored in a safe and secure location. The need for good record keeping at all stages of the Child Protection Process cannot be over emphasised. Employees need to be mindful of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act.

Adjustments cannot be made to an existing document. In the event of anew developments/information, a new document should be completed which will accompany the existing document. These documents should be stored permanently as they belong to the organisation, not to the person who first made the report.

When an individual makes a report to the statutory authorities, the possibility always exists that s/he may be called to give evidence should legal action be taken. It is therefore important to record details of disclosure and any other relevant information that may have been heard and seen.

### ***References***

*Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children & Young People in the Arts Sector*, The Arts Council of Ireland (2006)

Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)

Tusla's Child Safeguarding: *A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*.