

CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY

Clays Dance Academy (CDA) is committed to ensuring the wellbeing and safety of all children, young people and vulnerable adults at risk, connected with our business activities and to providing a safe and suitable environment for all those attending our programme.

The school recognises that it has a moral, legal and social responsibility to provide a safe environment for all those participating in its activities and has a commitment to identify, manage and monitor allegations of discrimination, harassment, abuse and bullying.

The protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults is a priority for all staff and teachers and they must make themselves aware of this Children and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and the procedures as laid down in this document.

This policy applies to all staff members of the business including full time, part time, casual staff and volunteers.

It is through the application of this policy and procedures and demonstrating best practice that the school will seek to promote safety, welfare and wellbeing of all children and vulnerable adults at risk, to participate in any school activity in an enjoyable, safe and inclusive environment.

The principle will continue to review this policy to ensure that it is achieving its aims and may amend this policy at any time.

CDA will endeavour to ensure that all children and vulnerable adults attending school activities are protected from harm by: -

- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety, welfare and security of any child or adult attending our classes.
- Ensuring that all teachers are appropriately DBS checked.
- Ensuring that all staff know how to identify and report any abuse or safeguarding issues.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Having a Designated Safeguarding Lead – Samantha Clay.
- Establishing a teaching environment where children and young people feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Ensuring that any physical contact is always appropriate and never in a closed environment. Dance is a physical activity and a teacher will sometimes need to give manual or physical corrections. This should

always be given openly, professionally and maintaining the students best interests. Students should always be consulted and their agreement obtained beforehand. Any sensitivities raised by a student or their guardian concerning manual correction of a student should be noted and respected.

- Teachers will treat all students with respect and dignity, irrespective of age, culture, disability, gender, religion or racial origin.
- Ensure that all classes are conducted in an open environment.
- Parents or guardians are not permitted into the class environment except for watching days or by prior consent of the Principle or Teacher.

Guidance

Good Practice

- Behave professionally and be aware of responsibilities as a teacher.
- Communicate at an appropriate level.
- Treat everyone with respect.
- Be aware, approachable and understanding.
- Listen to children.
- Be aware of policies and procedures.
- Report suspicions within these guidelines.

Do not: -

- Harm or frighten a child.
- Make racist, sexist or any other remark, which may upset or humiliate.
- Threaten, shout or be aggressive.
- Force a child to do something that they do not want to do.
- Show favouritism to any one individual or group.
- Mistreat, demean, ignore or make fun of someone.
- Let a child expose themselves to danger.
- Touch inappropriately.
- Use inappropriate language.
- Engage in inappropriate behaviour.
- Treat vulnerable adults as children.
- Take photographs of children without first obtaining appropriate permission.
- Do anything for someone of a personal nature that they can do themselves.
- Place yourself in a vulnerable position.

Recognition of Abuse.

It is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may be occurring or has already taken place. It is acknowledged that most people working with children, young people or vulnerable adults are not experts in recognition. Indications that abuse is or has occurred to someone may include: -

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- Any injuries for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- The child or young person describing what appears to be an abusive act involving him or her.
- Someone else expressing concern about the welfare of another child or young person.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour – e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts or temper.
- Sexual awareness inappropriate for age.
- Being mistrustful of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Having difficulty making friends.
- Being prevented from socialising with other children or young people.
- Loss of weight for no apparent reason.
- Becoming dirty or unkempt.

It is important to recognise that the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that actual abuse is taking place. All children or young people will suffer cuts, bruises and grazes from time to time and their behaviour may sometimes give cause for concern. There may well be reasons for these factors other than abuse. If, however you are concerned about the welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult you must act. Do not assume that somebody else will.

Confidentiality.

There is always tension around the issue of confidentiality. The advice for all staff is that no guarantee of confidentiality can be given to a child or young person although this does not mean that the parents have to be told.

A child or young person should never be pressured into giving information or to show evidence of marks of abuse or injury unless they are willing to do so. If they choose to show markings, two nominated persons should be present.

A member of staff should have no reservations about referring a child protection issue to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The key issue is that the welfare of the child is protected.

It is essential that any information and details on any child abuse issue is properly recorded, documented and retained.

Allegations against staff.

There may be occasions when children accuse members of staff of abusing them. These are very serious allegations but in some cases these are found to be false or unfounded.

Whenever possible staff should avoid situations where they are in a one to one contact with children.

The following guidelines are to advise staff in situations where they may have to restrain or provide medical attention and there is likely to be physical contact with a child.

Should such a situation arise, call for another adults or helpers assistance. It is unnecessary and unrealistic to suggest that staff should only touch pupils in an emergency. However staff must bear in mind that even perfectly innocent actions can sometimes be misconstrued. Children or young people may find being touched uncomfortable or distressing for a variety of reasons. It is important for teachers to be sensitive to a child's reaction to physical contact and act appropriately. It is important not to touch children or young people, however casually, in ways or on parts of the body that might be considered indecent.

There are occasions when there is no alternative to restraining a child or young person physically, in their or others interests of safety. No more than minimum necessary force should be used and such interventions should be made only when they are likely to succeed. Always call for the assistance of another adult immediately.

The purpose of intervention must be to restore safety and restraint should not continue longer than absolutely necessary.

Physical contact and restraint should never be used in anger. Staff should seek to avoid any injury to the child and are not expected to restrain a child if by doing so will put themselves at risk.

What to do if you expect abuse has occurred.

It is important to remember that signs and symptoms of abuse do not necessarily mean that abuse has occurred. However, if you are concerned about a child you must act. Do not assume that someone else will do so.

- It is your responsibility to take action.
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If your information has come from the child or young person then you must do the following: -

- Make no promises to act in confidence.
- Inform the child or young person that it is in their best interest that someone else is informed immediately.
- Listen with care and consideration and show the child or young person that you take them seriously.
- Stay calm and do not take any inappropriate action.
- Do not make promises that you cannot keep.
- Ask a few simple questions and try to gauge the depth of the problem.
- Stress to the child or young person that they have done the right thing by telling you and that they are not to blame.
- Involve a second witness as soon as possible. Write things down and get it witnessed.

Procedure for the Designated Safeguarding Lead if possible abuse is recorded.

- The DSL will ask for a written factual statement from the person making the report.
- If the report involves another member of staff, that person will also asked to write a report. Any statement made by the child or young person should be reported in their own words. These reports should be confined to facts and should not include any opinion or judgement.
- Investigations into possible abuse will require careful management. They can be complex and require particular experience and expertise. The DSL will seek advice of Social Services or the Police before setting up an internal inquiry and take their advice on informing the child's or young person's parents. All information will be dealt with confidentially and shared only with the people who need to know.

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Samantha Clay
Principle – Clays Dance Academy