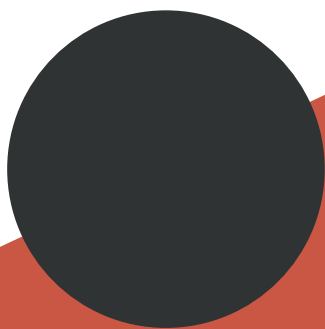


Safeguarding Policy

Children & Vulnerable Adults

2021/2022



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



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Overview

Live performance has the power to fire the imagination, uplift and connect us. It creates moments that touch hearts and minds like nothing else. It makes memories that last lifetimes.

For over 30 years, we've been promoting, supporting and producing some of the most extraordinary events in the UK. We've brought live performance to unexpected places – town centres, village squares, beaches and hilltops – for everyone to enjoy.

In everything we do, we have just two rules: **anything's possible and everyone's invited.**

Vision

Extraordinary moments connect and uplift us all.

Mission

We create opportunities for everyone through the performing arts.

Purpose

Artistic talent: We enable outstanding artists in the performing arts to create inspiring work.

Togetherness: We strengthen communities through shared experiences that are remembered and talked about for decades.

Opportunity: We break down barriers that stop people getting involved in performing arts, be that rural isolation, ill health, social deprivation or other obstacles.

Place: We celebrate our natural landscape and sense of place.

Our Governing Documents are available on request. Activate is a charity and a company limited by guarantee with a voluntary board of directors.

Context

In 1999 Government figures indicated that over 31,900 children were registered as being in need of protection from abuse. Children and vulnerable adults may be abused regardless of their age, racial origin, social class, gender, culture, religious belief, disability or sexual identity. Most abuse is committed by those who are known to the child/vulnerable adult (VA) and who are trusted by the child/ VA. This can be from within or outside the family including a sports situation.

As an organisation with responsibility for children, we have both a moral and a legal obligation to ensure the highest possible standard of care for those children who use our services.



Activate is committed to providing safe, enjoyable activities and opportunities for young people. To this end the following Safeguarding Policy Document has been compiled.

The purpose of the policy is to safeguard children and vulnerable adults placed in our care and to facilitate the best possible professional practice from Activate staff and volunteers.

Policy Statement

Activate is committed to ensuring that children/VA are protected and kept safe from harm whilst they are engaged in any activity associated to Activate.

We will endeavour to achieve this by:

- Ensuring that our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised.
- Ensuring that any organisation/group working with children who work in partnership with or supported by Activate, has a robust safeguarding policy.
- Providing clear procedures for parents and children to voice their concerns or lodge complaints if they feel unsure or unhappy about any issue.

Policy Aims

This Safeguarding Policy is provided as part of an induction package to all those employed, whether paid or unpaid, who will have direct contact with children. The aims are:

- To create a healthy and safe environment at all activities.
- To ensure children are listened to and kept safe from harm.
- To support and encourage parents to voice their opinions regarding the welfare of their children.
- To ensure staff and volunteers who administer sessions are well informed, supported and enabled to provide the best possible practice.

Objectives

The objectives are:

- To raise the level of awareness of staff and volunteers about child abuse and its various forms.
- To raise the level of awareness of staff and volunteers about what children are entitled to be protected from.
- To ensure that all staff can recognise signs which could signify the abuse of a child.
- To promote the general welfare, health, and full development of children during all sessions.
- To develop effective procedures in recording and responding to accidents and complaints and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse.



Employment

Recruitment and Selection of Staff/Volunteers

All dance/theatre leaders/Activate employees who provide or supervise activities for children will be police checked to ensure that there are no irregularities in their background which may give cause for concern. All new employees whether paid or unpaid will be provided with the Safeguarding Policy and asked to sign to confirm that they will abide by it.

Application forms are designed to ascertain as much information as possible, such as but not limited to:

- Past career. Relevant interests, any gaps in employment and reasons for leaving, educational, National Governing Body and First aid qualifications.
- Consent for police and social services checks.
- Two references are taken up, and where relevant followed up by letter or telephone. References taken up will ascertain the person's suitability to work with children.
- It is made clear that all information remains confidential.
- Personal identification will be confirmed by reference to a birth certificate or National Insurance number.
- That where necessary, dance/theatre leaders and artists hold adequate professional indemnity and/or personal liability insurance to cover their teaching role.

Induction and Training

The recruitment and selection process is followed up by relevant training.

- Staff are made aware that child abuse can and does occur and that it could be perpetrated by colleagues, who are members of staff or volunteers within Activate.
- It is made clear that most abusers are not the monsters most people picture them to be, but ordinary men and women, more commonly men, and at the extreme, clever, manipulative and powerful.
- Staff are made aware that children can find it very difficult to tell about abuse. They need to be listened to, taken seriously, and have their concerns acted upon.
- Staff are made aware of what they need to do in response to concerns reaching their eyes and ears.

Supervision

In general, people work most effectively where there is a supervisory structure that ensures they are supported, managed and developed. Activate will ensure that supervisors are sensitive to any concerns about abuse, act on them immediately, and offer support to those who report.

It is the responsibility of the dance/theatre leader to monitor good practice, this can be done in a number of ways, for example:



- Observation of dance/theatre leadership practice.
- Provide feedback on performance against work programme.
- Feedback from participants attending activities.

Information to Give to Employees

Recognition of abuse

It is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place even for those experienced in working with child abuse. Activate acknowledges its staff, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, are not experts at such recognition. It is important therefore to recognise that **it is not their responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse is taking place, but to report** where they have concerns or suspicions where an allegation has been made.

The concern that the child may have been abused could relate to something which has happened whilst the child is engaged in an activity provided by Activate, or it may be a disclosure made by the child to a staff member or volunteer or a concern about something the child has experienced outside of the activity provided by Activate. Either would require a proactive response.

There are many ways in which child abuse may manifest itself, for example:

- 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;
- an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent;
- the child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her;
- someone else, a child or adult, expresses concern about the welfare of another child;
- unexplained changes in behaviour over time e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper;
- inappropriate sexual awareness;
- engages in sexually explicit behaviour in games;
- is distrustful of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship will normally be expected;
- has difficulty in making friends;
- is prevented from socialising with other children;
- displays variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite;
- loses weight for no apparent reason;
- becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt.

This list is NOT exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the above is NOT proof that abuse is actually taking place.

Main Forms of Abuse.



Physical Abuse

Where adults physically hurt or injure children by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning and biting or by giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison. **In a dance or theatre situation physical abuse can occur when the type of training or activity exceeds the capacity of the child's physical capability.**

Sexual Abuse

This occurs when children are abused by adults who use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse, fondling and the showing of pornographic material. Physical contact with children could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. **The role of a dance/theatre leader, in an activity situation, could provide the means of an abusive situation occurring.**

Emotional Abuse

This may be caused by a persistent lack of love and affection, where a child may be constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted. It may also occur when there is constant overprotection (which prevents children from socialising), or there is neglect, physical or sexual abuse. Emotional abuse might occur if children are subjected to excessive criticism, inappropriate personal or sexual remarks, bullying, being exposed to undue or inappropriate pressure or exposed to danger.

Neglect

This occurs where adults fail to meet the child's basic needs such as food or warm clothing, fail or refuse to give children love, affection and attention. Children might also be constantly left alone or unsupervised. Neglect could include not ensuring children are safe, exposing them to undue cold or to unnecessary risk of injury. **Neglect could occur during organised activities if young people are exposed to the risk of injury or there is a failure to ensure their safety.**

Effects of Abuse

Abuse in all its forms can affect a child at any age. The effects can be so damaging that, if untreated, they may follow an individual into adulthood. For example, an adult who has been abused as a child may find it difficult or impossible to maintain a stable, trusting relationship, become involved with drugs or prostitution, attempt suicide or even abuse a child in the future.

There have been a number of studies that suggest children with disabilities are at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves, or adequately communicate that abuse has occurred. Children from ethnic minorities who could also be experiencing racial discrimination may feel doubly powerless.



Bullying.

Bullying is in effect another form of abuse and can be either physical, psychological or verbal in nature and is frequently undertaken by a young person. In dance/theatre activities the bully can be

- A parent who pushes the child too hard
- A dance/theatre leader with a “train at all costs” attitude
- Another dancer/actor who intimidates

Bullying can take many forms

- Physical: pushing, hitting etc
- Verbal: name calling, teasing, sarcasm
- Emotional: tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating
- Racist: taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or abusive comments

There are various ways in which bullying shows itself

- Behavioural changes such as reduced concentration, clingy, depressed, tearful, reluctance to attend training or club activities
- A reduction in the standard of performance
- Physical signs such as headaches, stomach aches, difficulty in sleeping, damaged clothes
- A shortage of money or frequent loss of clothing

Children and Young People with Disabilities.

Children and young people with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to abuse for several different reasons depending on their impairment.

Reasons include:

- A dependency on others for their primary needs such as feeding, clothing and intimate care may make a young person feel powerless to report abusive treatment and might mask abusive behaviour
- Different communication methods or lack of appropriate vocabulary might provide a barrier for a child wanting to communicate their concerns
- Social isolation
- Staff and volunteers must be vigilant about the possibility of such children being abused and establish ways of working that safeguard these vulnerable children and young people.



Protecting Children on Planned Activities

Making arrangements for the proper supervision of children is one of the most effective ways of minimizing opportunities for children to suffer harm of any kind whilst in your care.

Planned Activities

- All journeys/visits are planned carefully and a detailed programme of activities for children who are involved in the project is prepared.
- Ensure there are responsible adults who are responsible for the welfare and safety of the children for the whole time they are away from home.
- Young people are not left to their own devices, unless there are clear boundaries and arrangements for meeting up.
- All children are adequately supervised and engaged in suitable activities at all times.
- In circumstances when planned activities are disrupted, e.g. due to the weather conditions, then we will have a number of alternative activities planned.
- Parental consent is obtained, in writing, for all organized trips.
- Parents are given full information about a trip, including details of the programme of events, the activities in which the children will be engaged and the supervision ratios.

Supervision of Children

- Leaders in charge ensure that all staff and volunteers who accompany groups are fully competent to do so.
- Children must be supervised at all times, preferably by two or more adults.
- Children must not be left unsupervised at any venue whether it is indoors or outside.
- Staff and volunteers should know at all times where the children are and what they are doing.
- Any activity using potentially dangerous equipment should have constant adult supervision.
- Dangerous behaviour by children should not be allowed.

Protecting Children Online

Activate recognizes its duty of care for children and young people in its charge to ensure their safety whilst using the Internet. The areas of risk are as follows:

Child sex offenders – the Internet is an ideal medium for sex offenders. It provides anonymity as well as access to child pornography, contact with other offenders and a means to access children.

Contacting children – there are increasing instances of sex offenders using the Internet to make contact with children and young people. They can target them through chat rooms, news-rooms or groups, email lists and using interactive games. They usually pretend to be someone else of a different age and sometimes of a different gender. They will ‘groom’ children by establishing trust in much the same way as they do face to face. They will attempt to establish a ‘special’ friendship, pretending they are offering the childcare and affection. Once they have gained the trust, they will try to plan a meeting.



Unsuitable material for children – children can be exposed to pictures or written material that is pornographic, upsetting or offensive. Sometimes inoffensive material, such as pictures of children engaged in sporting activities, maybe wearing swimming costumes can be downloaded and used by paedophiles. If a club posts pictures of children who have national profiles related to their sport or activity, sex offenders could easily locate a child, given sufficient identifying material, such as their school or sporting timetable.

Use of the Internet must be monitored. Computers should be kept in an open and accessible area. Photographs that could identify a young person must not be posted on the Internet unless there is permission by the guardian and for consented use only. Children and young people must be asked to immediately exit any chat room or shut down from a site that has violent, obscene or suggestive messages or images. Any misuse must be reported to the Director. Filters and security settings are in place to ensure safety.

We have created a specific Online Safety Policy Statement that should be read in conjunction with this Policy.

Good Practice

It is possible to reduce situations where abuse may occur. The following are more specific examples of care which should be taken when working within a dance/theatre context with children:

You should:

- Always be publicly open when working with children. Avoid any situations where you and an individual child are completely unobserved (encourage an open environment).
- Where possible, children should not be left unattended, however this will depend on age and circumstances.
- If any form of personal contact is required, it should be provided openly. Parents today are becoming increasingly sensitive about physical contact, so their concerns must be considered and an appropriate response taken to inform them of your actions.
- Where possible, parents should take on the responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, ensure that you work in pairs, and do not enter changing rooms of the opposite sex.
- Where there are mixed groups, supervision, where possible, should be by a male **and** female member of staff.
- You must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat everyone equally.
- You must place the well-being and safety of the performer above the development of performance.



You should never:

- Engage in sexually provocative games
- Share a bedroom with a child
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate contact
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child even in fun
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves
- Enter the changing rooms of the opposite sex

Failure to follow these guidelines may well result in formal action under Activate's disciplinary procedures.

Occasions may arise where a member of staff or volunteer does things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or have disabilities. These duties should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents/carers and the children involved.

If a child is accidentally injured as a result of your actions, seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, such incidents should be reported as soon as possible to another colleague and a written report made. Parents and supervisors/managers should be informed of all incidents.

Everyone should be aware that it is **not good practice to:**

- Spend any time alone with children away from others. When talking to children on your own ensure you can be seen by others.
- Take children alone on car journeys, however short.
- Take children to your home where they will be alone with you.

If exceptionally any of these situations are expected to occur, plans on how to ensure the child is safe and sound must be made with your supervisor and enacted with the knowledge of the parents.

What To Do If You Have Concerns

It is not your role to take individual responsibility for deciding whether or not child abuse is actually taking place. However, there is a responsibility to protect children by referring your concerns to the appropriate agency which is the local Social Services office, who can then make enquiries and take any necessary action. Social Services will take responsibility for informing the police. Where there is an immediate need to protect the child from danger the police must be advised.



There should always be a commitment to work in partnership with parents or carers where there are concerns about their children. Therefore, in most situations it would be important to talk to parents or carers to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, he/ she may have experienced a family bereavement.

However, there are circumstances in which a child may be placed at even greater risk if such concerns were shared (e.g. where a parent or carer may be responsible for the abuse, or not able to respond to the situation appropriately). In such situations, or where concerns still exist, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the person in charge as soon as possible.

Once the incident/allegation has been reported it is the responsibility of the person in charge to inform the social services (see useful contacts) without delay. If the person in charge is not available, the person discovering or being informed of the abuse should immediately contact the social services, who will decide how and when parents/carers will be informed and ultimately become responsible for what steps to take next.

IT IS YOUR ROLE TO REPORT NOT TO JUDGE

What to do in responding to a child

Children who are being abused will only tell people they trust and with whom they feel safe. By listening to, and taking seriously what a child is telling you, you will already be helping to protect them.

Guidelines

- Create a safe environment by:
Staying calm, not showing shock, horror or disbelief and not rushing into actions which may be inappropriate.

Confirming you know how difficult it must have been to confide in you and that they have done the right thing.

Reassuring the child and stressing he/ she is not to blame.

Listening to what the child says. Show you are taking what is being said seriously.

- Where possible remain in view, do not go somewhere on your own.
- **Be honest** and **do not make promises you cannot keep**. Explain you will have to tell other people in order to stop what is happening.
- **Ensure you** are quite clear about what the child says so you can pass it on to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults professionals. Use open questions to encourage the child to use their own words but **do not** press for detailed information.

N.B. The law is very strict and a child abuse case can be dismissed if it appears the child has been led or words have been suggested.



- Record exactly what the child has said to you, in a legible and accurate format, as soon as possible after the incident. As far as possible use the child's own words. Stick to the facts and do not give your opinion.

Note the child's name, address, date of birth, the nature of the allegation, a description of any visible bruising or other injuries, your observations (e.g. a description of the child's behaviour and physical and emotional state), exactly what the child said and what you said.

Record the child's account of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred, any action you took as a result of your concerns (e.g. who you spoke to and resulting action, including any contact with parents, managers or social services). Include names, addresses and telephone numbers,

Sign and date what you have recorded and store the information in accordance with relevant procedures.

- Do not take sole responsibility - consult someone else (e.g. a senior colleague or someone you can trust) as soon as possible so you can begin to protect the child and gain some support for yourself.

NB: In determining your actions, remember that only experienced and specifically qualified and trained professionals should deal with cases or suspicions relating to child abuse.

Dealing with Allegations against Staff/Volunteers

Should a member of staff or volunteer become aware of an allegation (against a colleague) of an incident of child abuse taking, or having taken place, it is vital that the following procedures are followed:

- Take the allegation seriously. It is your duty to consider any allegation to be potentially dangerous to the child and therefore report it.
- Make a written record of any details of which you are aware, as part of your report.
- Report the allegation to a more senior member of staff, giving details of the allegation, how you became aware of it and any other relevant details. In a case where the senior member of staff may be involved, report to another senior colleague or staff member you can trust.
- Do not judge or investigate. As an employee or volunteer it is important not to lose focus of our role. By reporting an allegation quickly, any necessary investigations and/or judgement can then be made by trained professionals.
- Maintain confidentiality. It is extremely important that any allegations are not discussed (unless absolutely necessary) as any breaches could be damaging to both the child and to any investigation that may follow.
- Any requests for information from members of the public (including parents) or the media should be directed to a designated member of staff and should be given the 'no comment' response.



Confidentiality

When dealing with any case/suspicion/allegation relating to child abuse, you must be made aware that any breaches in confidentiality can be very damaging to the child, family and any safeguarding children and vulnerable adults investigations which may take place.

It is important that the rights of both the victim and the alleged perpetrator are protected by ensuring that only those who need to know are given the relevant information.

This will mean, at the very least, informing:

- Your supervisor or the most senior staff member available.
- The local Social Services team.
- The parents of the child (only if social services ask for this to be done).

Informing the parents of a child about whom you are concerned will be handled in a sensitive way and only undertaken in consultation with the local social services.

Depending upon the outcome of initial inquiries, staff and other agencies who have contact with either the child concerned or the alleged perpetrator may need to be given brief details of the incident and subsequent action. The statutory agency will provide advice as to who should be told, when they should be told, and the kind of information which it is appropriate to share.

Off Duty Contact between Staff/Volunteers and Children

Members of staff/volunteers must maintain a professional relationship with children during any off-duty contact, continuing to follow the guidelines and policies set out for working contact.

Staff/volunteers should be particularly careful to limit and, if possible, eliminate any one-to-one contact. This should also include driving children to and from activities. Where an arrangement is made in an emergency, it is important to ensure there is a second adult in the vehicle.

Designated Person

At Activate there are two people responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children. They are: the Director and the Board Member responsible for Policies.

Responsibilities of the designated person are:

- To be familiar with the Area Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults Committee Procedures as followed by the local Social Services Department
- To be familiar with any safeguarding children and vulnerable adults procedures produced by Activate
- To obtain training on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and their responsibilities



- To have responsibility for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and child welfare issues in Activate and keep the Board appropriately informed
- To liaise with Social Services Department and other agencies regarding the safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and welfare issues of the children and young people within work organised by Activate
- To hold information and contact details on child abuse and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults/safeguarding procedures, consultation, referral and support services available
- To be available to offer advice and information within Activate on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults/safeguarding and welfare issues – making it clear how they can be contacted
- To ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by the organization, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome
- To be able to offer information and advice regarding counselling services (or other) available if required by staff or child
- To advise Activate of Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults training needs.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Social Services local office (Wimborne/ Ferndown) Tel 01202 877445.

Social Services Out of Hours service 01202 668123.

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Helpline 24 hours, call free 0800 800500.

Dorset Police 01202 226206.

Area Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Committee – 01305 225910 (Chair Mike Henrey)

DECLARATION

Activate is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children and vulnerable adults by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

As an employee of Activate it is therefore important that you have taken the time to thoroughly read the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy. By being made aware of the policy, it is our intention to ensure that all employees are pro-active in providing a safe environment for the young people in their care. Any disciplinary measures required as a result of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with normal disciplinary procedures.

I have read, understand and agree to abide by Activate's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy.

Signed.....Date.....



Incident Report Form

Date

Venue

Time

Name of child

DOB

Address

Tel no



Next of kin

Address (if different from above)

Tel no (if different from above)

Person expressing the concern

Tel no

Nature of concern

What has prompted the concerns? (physical, behavioural, other)



Has the child been spoken to?

Who by?

What was said to the child and what did the child say?

Is there an alleged abuser?

Who is this?

Has this person been approached?

Have anyone else been consulted?



Name of reporting person

Signature

Date

This form must now be passed to: Director, Activate, 7-9 The Little Keep, Barrack Road, Dorchester, DT11SQ. Tel 01305 260954

You will receive written confirmation of its receipt.



Making a Referral

Here are some questions you need to think about when you are concerned about a young person and are considering making a referral:

- What could you say to the young person?
- How should you record your concerns?
- What information, if any, should be given to the parents?
- With whom could you discuss your concerns within your own work setting?
- To whom should you make an official report of your concern?
- In what format should the referral be made?
- What do you think will happen when the referral is made?

Questions you may need to ask Social Services on referral:

- Who am I talking to?
- Who is the team leader?
- Who is the social worker dealing with the case?
- What do I say to the young person?
- What is the likely timescale of further action?
- What is the likely course of action?
- When are you likely to be contacting the parents?
- When will you contact me again?

Next Review

Due January 20223

