

Dancecode Child Protection Policy

1. Introduction and Commitment

Policy Statement

Dancecode is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people (defined as anyone under the age of 18) involved in our activities. The welfare of the child is paramount, and we recognise our responsibility to take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, abuse, and exploitation. This policy is aligned with key UK legislation, including the **Children Act 1989 & 2004**.

Core Principles

- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from harm and abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously, responded to swiftly, and referred to the appropriate statutory services.
- We commit to creating an environment where children feel safe, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL (New Requirement)

Role	Name	Contact Details	Responsibility
Designated Safeguarding, Lead Owner	Jennifer Hashemi	info@dancecode.co.uk	Lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, includes managing referrals.
Deputy DSL (DDSL), Founder	Lauren Carpenter	laurencarpenter10@googlemail.com	Supports the DSL and acts in their absence.

2. Staff and Volunteer Requirements

Mandatory Checks and Training

All staff employed directly by Dancecode must meet the following requirements prior to the commencement of their employment:

- **DBS Check:** Must be **DBS Checked**.
- **First Aid:** Must be **First Aid trained** or have a trained First Aider present in the venue at all times.
- **Insurance:** Must be covered under their own, or Dancecode's, insurance.
- **Policy Familiarity:** Must **read and be familiar with this Child Protection Policy** before starting their first class.

Visitors

Any visitor who does not have full DBS clearance **will not be left alone with minors**.

3. Procedures for Reporting Concerns

3.1 Staff Duty to Report

All staff and volunteers have a legal and moral responsibility to protect children and must report any concern about a child's welfare or a colleague's conduct immediately to the DSL or DDSL.

3.2 Responding to a Disclosure or Suspicion

If a child makes a disclosure of abuse or harm to a member of staff:

1. **Remain Calm:** Listen carefully and allow the child to tell you at their own pace.
2. **Do Not Interrogate:** Do not ask leading questions (e.g., "Did he hit you?"). Only ask questions for clarification (e.g., "And then what happened?").
3. **Do Not Promise Secrecy:** Inform the child that you cannot keep this information a secret, but you will only tell the people who need to know to help them. Reassure the child they did the right thing in telling you.
4. **Record Immediately:** As soon as possible, make a written note of what was said, using the child's exact words (verbatim) where possible. Note the date, time, location, and any visible injuries.
5. **Report Immediately:** Pass all recorded information to the DSL/DDSL immediately. **Do not investigate the matter yourself.**

3.3 Referral to Statutory Authorities

The DSL/DDSL is responsible for deciding whether the concern meets the threshold for referral.

- The DSL/DDSL will refer concerns to **Children's Social Care Services** or the **Police** if there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.
- In most cases, parents will be informed of the referral beforehand, **unless** the DSL/DDSL believes that informing the parents would place the child at increased risk of harm, or jeopardise an investigation.

3.4 Allegations Against Staff

Any allegation that a member of staff (paid, unpaid, or volunteer) has behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or potentially harmed a child, must be reported **immediately** to the DSL.

- The DSL must then consult with the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** within one working day.
- The LADO is responsible for overseeing and coordinating all investigations into allegations against people who work with children.

4. Safer Working Practices

4.1 Unsupervised Contact (Lone Working)

While DBS-checked, teachers must be mindful of the risks associated with lone working:

- **Avoidance:** Staff must avoid situations where they are isolated from a student.
- **Mitigation:** One-to-one classes must be held in visible areas (e.g., studios with windows) or with the parent/carer present. If unsupervised contact is unavoidable (e.g., changing for a performance, brief first aid), the staff member must ensure the contact is kept brief, justifiable, and fully documented and reported.

4.2 Transportation

- Staff should **not** transport children in their personal vehicles unless explicit, written, and time-specific **parental consent** has been obtained, and the teacher's insurance covers business use and the transportation of minors.
- If transporting, every effort must be made to have another adult present, or transport multiple children.

5. Physical Contact and Professional Conduct

5.1 Appropriate Physical Contact Policy

Teaching dance involves physical activity, and appropriate physical contact between students and teachers is essential for training. The following principles are in place to ensure welfare and protect all parties:

- **Consent:** Contact by the teacher is made with **consent from the dancer**.
- **Sensitivity:** All teachers will treat any physical contact with due **sensitivity and care**, and with due regard for the wishes of the student.
- **Prohibited Contact:** Contact will **not involve force or the use of any instrument and will never be in inappropriate places of the body**.
- **Avoiding Isolation:** Teachers will be mindful of location and **avoid situations where they are isolated from the student**. (please see 3.1 - Unsupervised Contact)

5.2 Student and Parent Reporting

Students and parents are encouraged to discuss any worries with any member of staff or an independent listener.

6. Health, Safety, and Accident Procedures

6.1 Responsibility

Dancecode takes responsibility for the health and safety of all participants. As the teacher, you must ensure any movements or exercises you teach are taught with complete confidence, factoring in any health and safety risks.

6.2 Venue Safety

- **Risk Assessment:** Dancecode staff must undertake **regular risk assessments** regarding premises hired, and any concerns must be raised with the providers.
- **Premises Check:** Upon arrival, complete your own risk assessment, including checking the floor and toilets to ensure they are clean to a high standard. Report any issues to a member of staff of the premises.
- **Jewellery:** The students' safety is paramount; staff must be conscious of jewellery (e.g., earrings) and ask to remove at teacher's discretion.

6.3 Procedure in the Event of an Accident

It is the responsibility of each teacher to **report and record any accident involving an injury**, and to provide immediate, appropriate care.

Providing First Aid

1. **Stop the Activity:** Ensure the immediate safety of the injured child and all other children.
2. **Assess and Administer:**
 - If the injury is minor (e.g., small cut, scrape), a **First Aid trained** member of staff should administer basic first aid treatment from the First Aid Kit.
 - **Always seek to administer First Aid with another adult present**, if possible, to act as a witness.
3. **Consent and In Loco Parentis:**
 - A child **cannot give consent** for medical treatment. Unless there is an emergency, staff must attempt to contact the parent/guardian for permission before administering anything beyond basic first aid.
 - **If a child is alone, seriously injured, or unconscious**, the teacher must act in the place of a parent (in loco parentis) to deal with the situation immediately and ensure the child receives urgent medical attention.

Recording and Communication

1. **Record the Incident:** An Accident Log is available on the Student's note section on Class Manager registers and in the First Aid Kit Bag. The record must include:
 - The child's name, age, and class.
 - The date, time, and location of the incident.
 - A detailed description of the injury and the cause of the accident.
 - A description of any first aid administered.

2. **Parent Sign-Off:** The record of the accident and treatment must be **signed by the parent/guardian** at pick-up as a formal acknowledgement of the event.
3. **Further Action:** The teacher must **communicate any further action** (e.g., need for a doctor/hospital visit) with the parent at pick-up.

7. Emergency Procedures (Fire and Personal Safety)

7.1 Seeking Emergency Help (The "Call for Help" Protocol)

- **Immediate Danger (Life-Threatening Injury):** Call **999** immediately. State the location and the nature of the emergency clearly.
- **Non-Life-Threatening Injury:** Contact the parent/guardian immediately using the emergency contact details on the register.

Reporting to Dancecode: Any accident or **near miss occurrence** (no one injured, but potential to injure) must be reported **immediately to the DSL (Jen Hashemi)** via the designated communication channel.

7.2 Fire Safety

- **Familiarisation:** Members of staff must **familiarise themselves with the venue's procedures** in the event of a fire.
- **Evacuation:** Immediately stop, grab the electronic device with access to the register if safe to do so, and **walk (do not run)** students to the nearest safe fire exit.
- **Assembly Point:** At the assembly point, **report to the Fire Marshall** and **take a register and headcount** for your class.

7.3 Personal Safety and Intruder Protocol

- **Security:** Lock all external doors to prevent the public from entering. If this is not possible, ensure a member of the premises staff is present.
- **Public Access:** **Do not allow any member of the public to enter the dance studio or watch from the windows.**
- **Refusal to Leave:** In the event a person refuses to leave, you must ask them to leave/stop without putting yourself at risk. You have the right to **stop the class and call the authorities.**
- **Immediate Danger:** If you are concerned that you or your students are in a potentially dangerous situation, you must **call the authorities immediately and get yourself and your students to safety.**
- **Incident Reporting:** Any incidents of this nature must be **communicated to Jen at the earliest convenience.**

8. Photography, Video, and Confidentiality

8.1 Photography and Video Protocol

To ensure the safety and privacy of students, staff must adhere to the following:

- **Consent Check:** Before taking photos/videos for social media content, staff must **double check the photo consent found on the register portal.**
- **Deletion:** Once the photo/video has been taken and sent to the team to post, the staff member must **completely delete the photo from their device** (including backups).
- **Media Use Rights:** Staff must be familiar with the Media Use Rights Permission Policy. The images will only be used for Dancecode marketing, promotion, and social media.

8.2 Confidentiality

- **Sensitive Information:** Staff will be in possession of sensitive information involving children and families' contact details.

- **Duty of Confidentiality:** It is a condition of employment that you have a **duty of confidentiality to the Company**, and you must not discuss any Company sensitive or confidential matters whatsoever outside of the business.
- **Breach:** Any breach of confidentiality would be deemed as **gross misconduct** and could lead to dismissal.

9. Equality and Inclusion

Dancecode recognises that some children are more vulnerable to harm than others. We commit to ensuring that our policy and procedures actively protect all children, particularly those who are subject to discrimination or who have protected characteristics under the **Equality Act 2010**:

- We will ensure safeguarding measures are accessible and understandable to children with learning disabilities or communication difficulties.
- All concerns will be assessed without bias, ensuring that a child's gender, race, disability, or religious belief does not affect the decision to refer a safeguarding concern.

10. Data Protection (GDPR Compliance)

10.1 Information Collected

Dancecode collects and uses personal data required for safeguarding children and for examination and competition entries. This includes:

- Pupils' date of birth.
- Details of pupils' medical/special and educational needs where applicable (to ensure safe practice).
- Parent contact details.

10.2 Purpose of Processing

Pupil information is processed for legitimate interests, including communication of information to teachers to carry out their roles, including in respect of **safeguarding and child protection** (e.g., emergency contacts and medical history for health and safety).

Please see our Privacy Policy for further information on Data Protection.

11. Policy Management and Review

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed and updated by the DSL **at least annually** and whenever there are significant changes in legislation or organisational structure.

Staff Training

- All staff and volunteers must undergo an Enhanced DBS Check and receive initial safeguarding and child protection training at induction.
- All staff must receive **regular, refresher safeguarding training** (recommended annually) to keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date.

Health and Safety and Emergency Procedures

(The existing sections on Accident Procedures, Fire Safety, and Venue Safety remain essential for the physical safeguarding of children and are fully incorporated.)

Data Protection and Confidentiality

(The existing sections referencing GDPR compliance and the duty of confidentiality are fully incorporated, ensuring that sensitive safeguarding records are kept securely and separately from general student files.)

Signed: J.Hashemi
Name: Jennifer Hashemi
Role: Dance School Principal

Last reviewed: November 2025