



Apex School of Dance
Social Media Safeguarding Policy
Version 1.0

The internet can present many risks for children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable to harm by virtue of their care and support needs. Technology has many benefits but here at Apex School of Dance we recognise the use of technology can also become a platform for online bullying, sexual exploitation, sexual predation, radicalisation and other types of harm and abuse. We recognise our duty to safeguard against this by identifying this and sharing information with the relevant services where this becomes necessary to protect children, young people and adults who may be unable to protect themselves due to their care and support needs.

This policy explains how we use social media within Apex School of Dance. It details our duty to safeguard in the online environment and our expectations regarding the behaviour of teachers, staff, volunteers and the children, young people and adults who use our organisation. At Apex School of Dance, we will do everything we can to limit children's exposure to online risk. We will do this by ensuring clear guidelines and procedure for all teachers, staff and volunteers working for Apex School of Dance and will do so in line with our Safeguarding Children Policy.

It is important that all staff members and volunteers are aware that their safeguarding duty extends to the safeguarding of students online, regardless of the type of online device or the type of platform used.

The Designated Safeguarding Person at Apex School of Dance is Alison Head.

The designated safeguarding person will advise teachers, guest teachers, volunteers, students and parents/guardians where appropriate on best practice and expectations regarding the use of online classes and Apex School of Dance social media platforms. They will be responsible for the monitoring and recording of any safeguarding concerns and for ensuring that all concerns are shared with the appropriate statutory authorities, online concerns are not an exception to this.

All staff and volunteers at Apex School of Dance must be made aware of this policy and should be able to demonstrate their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults whose care and support needs leave them unable to protect themselves when online. This must include how to raise concerns with children's social care, adult social care and/or the police. Staff and volunteers shall be made aware of this through access to online safeguarding resources, training and during staff meetings.

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers at Apex School of Dance to take steps to protect children, to keep them safe from online hazards and to take appropriate action where needed. It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to take reasonable steps to protect children and young people from harm and abuse while in contact with our organisation including through online activity and our staff and to report any

incident of or suspicion of abuse to the designated safeguarding person or in their absence to the appropriate statutory authority.

It is essential that this policy is read in conjunction with our safeguarding children policy and that all recording and information sharing procedures laid out within these are followed regarding any cause for concern that arises from online interaction. This includes any online disclosures of harm or any disclosed or witnessed examples of online or cyber bullying.

A 'child' is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently, in further education, or working does not change his/ her entitlement to services or protection as a child. Our guidelines apply to all children and young people until their 18th birthday.

The designated safeguarding lead and person responsible for our organisations online presence for Apex School of Dance is Alison Head.

This individual has received training in online safety and safeguarding as detailed below:

- Safeguarding children training
- Safeguarding lead training

At Apex School of Dance, we will safeguard students using online services by:

- ensuring all social media accounts are password protected.
- the designated safeguarding officer shall have access to view sites and groups as necessary and there will be a designated member of staff who is responsible for checking and monitoring the quality and appropriateness of all posts on social media sites / groups. The member of staff with monitoring responsibility also has the right to remove inappropriate posts with immediate effect but will be asked to provide a reason for this decision where appropriate
- all social media posts will align with the work of Apex School of Dance, be fit for purpose and align with our organisational code of conduct
- all account names and email addresses shall be appropriate and fitting for a professional organisation.

Teaching staff and parent and guardians need to know:

- no identifiers shall be posted on any online forum or page for example date of birth, address or phone number and full names should only be used with consent from a parent/guardian and only if necessary
- all photos and videos used must be with full consent from a parent or guardian
- children will not be admitted into groups without the consent of their parent / guardian
- groups will not be created on platforms that are not age appropriate for the intended members.
- all communication directly with children will be approved by parents in advance and children shall not be contacted on platforms or sites that are not age appropriate
- we will make children, young people and adults aware of who they can speak to should they come across social media or online content they find distressing or should they be exposed to bullying/cyber bullying while accessing online services.

At Apex School of Dance, we expect all staff and volunteers to safeguard children and adults and to cause them no harm as outlined in our safeguarding policies. This also extends to the online environment:

- have a duty to bring to the safeguarding lead's attention anything they find to be inappropriate or potentially unsafe including online content
- will ensure on any videos they create that their background environment is clear, professional and appropriate
- will always try to consider children's understanding of the internet and their safety when making decisions about the online platforms they choose to use.
- will abide by Apex School of Dance safeguarding policies and data protection policy.
- must not 'friend' or 'follow' children, young people or their families on their personal social media accounts. All and the only social media contact must be through Apex School of Dance's business pages.
- must always choose the most formal and professional channel of communication for example email rather than WhatsApp chat and will ensure messages have an appropriate professional tone. Additionally, teachers will not start 'conversations' with students on social media or email. All communication will have a clear and legitimate purpose.
- all online communication with families should be part of an agreed social media or educational strategy

The Community:

All parents, carers, children, young people and adults using Apex School of Dance must also be aware of their duty towards others and be aware that the guidelines for behaviour set out in our code of conduct apply also to all online interaction. All involved with Apex School of Dance have a duty to uphold the code of conduct and have a right to be able to share any concerns and to be supported.

If any user of Apex School of Dance has a concern they should be listened to and this information should be recorded and passed to the designated safeguarding lead as soon as possible.

We recognise that many parents/carers do not feel confident in using the internet and are unsure how or where to report concerns. The designated safeguarding lead will maintain communication with parents who share concerns and ensure they are supported to act on their concerns in the most appropriate way.

Any concerns of significant harm will be raised with Children's Social Care or the Police as outlined in our safeguarding policy and in line with the Children Act 1989 & 2004, Care Act 2014 and Sexual Offences Act 2003.