

Hitchin School of Dance

Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Policy

Updated: March 2025

At Hitchin School of Dance we are fully committed to the safeguarding, protection and welfare of all of our students.

We recognise that some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs, mental health needs, SEND needs or other issues.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Hitchin School of Dance including any volunteers or guest teachers.

Our aims:

- To provide a fun and safe environment for children and young persons to come and learn to dance*
- Support a child's development during their dance classes*
- Create a safe and positive environment for all members of the school*
- Handle any problems that arise with discretion and professionalism*
- Provide students with professional training from qualified and/or experienced staff*

The purpose of this policy is to protect the children and young persons who dance at Hitchin School of Dance including their regular classes, shows, rehearsals, workshops or any other activities organised by Hitchin School of Dance.

It provides parents, staff and volunteers a guidance for our approach to child protections and what they should do should they suspect a child or young person is at risk or may be experiencing harm.

Our designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is Gabrielle Tuck (Principal). They are in charge of making sure safeguarding within the school is adhered to and will act appropriately should a concern arise. They have regular safe guarding training through a secondary job at a Nursery school as well as updating regularly a Paediatric First Aid certificate. Gabrielle can be contacted Info@hitchinschoolofdance.com or 07801261249.

All staff will have read and been aware of this policy. They will also be regularly kept updated but the DSL on how to raise a concern about a child or young person or a worker's conduct towards a child or young person.

Our duties and responsibilities:

- We require all staff to have an updated DBS and have up to date safeguarding training.*
- Our teachers and staff have a duty of care and to report any concerns they may have to the DSL at the next opportunity. If this is verbal, it needs to be confirmed in writing.*
- All staff must take practical steps to ensure children and young persons are kept safe from harm including the disclosing of sensitive and/or personal information as well as not sharing to social media unless given written permission from the parent/carer. They also have a duty to protect the class from any hazards in the classroom.*

Consent to share information:

Gabrielle Tuck has written permission form all parents if they are happy for children and students to be used on social media or to be filmed or pictured.

Our staff always ask permission from the student should they need to correct their dancing physically. All parents are aware that to ensure safe training, we may need to physically correct the students in class.

Child protection:

Child protection is part of safeguarding and focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or like to suffer significant harm.

What we do at Hitchin School of Dance to protect our students and young persons:

- *Treat all dancers and parents with respect*
- *Put the welfare of each child first*
- *Be aware of how COVID-19 can affect a child's mental health this also applies to the parents/guardians of our students*
- *All staff will have a current and up to date DBS check*
- *All staff are fully insured*
- *Approach and deal with any form of bullying immediately; physical, mental or if we are aware of it via social media platforms that involved direct contact between our students.*
- *Ensure all contact details and medical information is up to date and all staff are aware*
- *Ensure all staff are qualified in their relevant field and can show the necessary qualifications*
- *Undertake relevant training to keep our knowledge up to date*

Pictures, videos and social media:

Pictures and videos may be taken during classes, rehearsals and shows. Parents have given written permission for photos and videos to be taken. Any child not with permission will not be pictured and used on social media accounts. Rehearsal videos are only sent to those students involved and that have permission from the parents for it to be shared with their peers.

First aid:

Our teachers are first aid trained and there is always a minimum of one first aider and one first aid kit on site during lesson times. For shows, rehearsals and performances the ratio of first aiders to children increases. Gabrielle Tuck has emergency contacts of all parents/guardians in case of an emergency.

Show & Backstage Safeguarding

In addition to our normal safeguarding policies we feel there are additional points staff and helpers need to be aware of during the duration of Hitchin School of Dance's show. Our Safeguarding policy is to ensure every child is safe and protected from harm during performances, backstage and while under the care of Hitchin School of Dance.

Backstage helpers/chaperones:

- There will be a minimum of 1:12 ratio of adults helpers to students backstage. All backstage help will be DBS checked and/or hold a chaperones licence. At no point will a student be left alone backstage with an adult who is not DBS checked.*
- Under no circumstances will any persons be allowed backstage that has not been given permission by Gabrielle Tuck.*
- We have assigned a head chaperone who will oversee all other chaperones and backstage help. They are the first point of call if there is an issue backstage. This will then be referred to the DSL if needed.*
- Any windows into the backstage changing area will be covered.*
- Everyone backstage will be signed in and out of the building, this includes teachers, students, adult dancers and all backstage helpers. Each chaperone/DBS checked adult will be assigned a group of 12 students who will be under their supervision for the entirety of the shows. They will have a clear name badge for students to be able to see.*

Safety of Children:

- Following GDPR regulations, only Gabrielle Tuck will have a list of all emergency contact numbers and medical notes. GT will make chaperones aware of any medical needs of students within their care.*
- Students will be performing for no more than two hours in total with a 20 minute interval in between each act. In the case of a two show day, every student will have a minimum of a 3.5 hour break in between shows which will be offsite. Students are performing no more than three shows across two days.*
- There will be a minimum of two first aiders on site at any one time.*
- There will be a no nut policy back stage due to a students allergy*
- There are male, female and non-gender specific toilets accessible to all students and backstage helpers.*
- On the first show day, all students, teachers and backstage helpers will be made aware of the fire exits and what do to if the fire alarm goes off. This will include a student count of the ones assigned to each chaperone/DBS adult, register (Gabrielle Tuck will be responsible for), meeting point.*