

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

(including vulnerable adults)



May 2025



Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Indigo Arts ensures that:

- ♦ the welfare of the child is paramount
- ♦ all children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- ♦ all suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- ♦ all staff have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

Policy statement/aims

Indigo Arts has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in their classes from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. Indigo Arts will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in their classes through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines and Safeguarding practises supported by recognised national bodies and local government.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

Policy aims

The aim of the Indigo Arts Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- ♦ providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Revolution Performing Arts
- ♦ allow all staff to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.
- ♦ to ensure all action is taken in line with the following legislation/guidance: South West Child Protection Procedures (SWCPP), <http://www.online-procedures.co.uk/swcpp/>
- ♦ Promoting good practice

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

When a child enters a club activity having been subjected to child abuse, performing arts can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem and confidence. In such instances Senior Staff including the Company Manager and Safeguarding Officer will work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

Good practice guidelines

All personnel are encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how we create a positive culture and climate:

Good practice means:

- ◆ Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- ◆ Treating all young people/adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- ◆ Always putting the welfare of each young person first.
- ◆ Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- ◆ Making performing arts fun, enjoyable and promoting team work, fairness and objectivity.
- ◆ Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people and their parents should always be consulted and their agreement gained.
- ◆ Keeping up to date with legislation, technical skills, qualifications and insurance in performing arts.
- ◆ Being an excellent role model as adults & volunteers
- ◆ Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- ◆ Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- ◆ Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

Practices to be avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the club or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session:

avoid spending time alone with children away from others
avoid taking or dropping off a child to an event or activity

Practices never to be sanctioned

The following should never be sanctioned. We never:

- ◆ engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- ◆ allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- ◆ allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- ◆ make sexually suggestive comments to a child under any circumstances
- ◆ reduce a child to tears as a form of control, belittle or threaten.
- ◆ fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child
- ◆ do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the appropriate officer and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- ♦ if you accidentally hurt a performer
- ♦ if he/she seems distressed in any manner
- ♦ if a performer misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Use of photographic/filming equipment at performing arts events

Permissions will be sought from parents concerning taking photographs or video film footage. Parents are permitted to film performances (based on agreements given by parents) in which their child features, but will be informed before each event that footage or images which include children from other parents must not be posted on social media.

Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers

Indigo Arts recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Preselection checks include the following:

- ♦ All volunteers/staff complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self disclosure about any criminal record.
- ♦ Consent will be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau.
- ♦ Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- ♦ Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo).

Interview and induction

All employees will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers receive an induction, during which:

- ♦
 - A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).
- ♦ Their qualifications should be substantiated where a teaching role is undertaken
- ♦ The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- ♦ Child protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified.
- ♦ They should sign their agreement to abide at all times by the Indigo Arts Child Protection Policy.

Training

In addition to preselection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- ♦
 - Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is not likely to result in allegations being made.
- ♦ Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- ♦ Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
- ♦ Work safely and effectively with children.

Indigo Arts will endeavour to provide safeguarding training to all staff and volunteers and will, at the very least, ensure that key staff are trained to level of Safeguarding Leads so that best practise is then passed on in specifically arranged sessions. Relevant personnel to receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.

Relevant personnel to gain a national paediatric first aid training (where necessary).

Attend update training when necessary. Child Protection training is refreshed every two years.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Indigo Arts in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities. If working within a school, the first point of contact will be the school office.

Indigo Arts will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- ♦ a criminal investigation
- ♦ a child protection investigation
- ♦ a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision.

Concerns about poor practice:

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the Indigo Arts Safeguarding Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

If the allegation is about poor practice by the Safeguarding Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to discuss concerns (01908 254300; lado@Milton-keynes.gov.uk) and also the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 01908 253169 or 01908 253170 for advice or to make a referral. (Out of hours service can be contacted on 01908 265545.)

Concerns about suspected abuse:

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Indigo Arts Lead Child Protection Officer (Kathy Larcombe, 07545123930 – 24 hours), who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

the Indigo Arts Child Protection Officer
the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
the person making the allegation
social services/police

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Internal enquiries and suspension

The Indigo Arts Child Protection Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual ac-

cused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries. Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries Indigo Arts will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, Indigo Arts must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse:

Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189, E-mail: bac@bacp.co.uk, Internet: www.bacp.co.uk

Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

Action if bullying is suspected

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying in performing arts:

- ◆ Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- ◆ Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns (It is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately). Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.
- ◆ Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- ◆ Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- ◆ Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- ◆ Report any concerns to the Revolution Performing Arts Child Protection Officer or the school (wherever the bullying is occurring).
- ◆ Concerns outside the immediate performing arts environment (e.g. a parent or carer):
- ◆ Report your concerns to the Club Child Protection Officer, who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible or the school. See 4. below for the information social services or the police will need :
- ◆ If the Club Child Protection Officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact social services or the police or the school immediately.
- ◆ Social Services and the Club Child Protection Officer will decide how to involve the parents/carers.
- ◆ Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.

Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- ◆ The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.
- ◆ The child's home address and telephone number.
- ◆ Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- ◆ The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- ◆ Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- ◆ A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- ◆ Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- ◆ The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- ◆ Have the parents been contacted?
- ◆ If so what has been said?
- ◆ Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- ◆ If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?
- ◆ Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.

Where possible referral to the police or social services (MK's MASH) should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact social services or the police direct, or the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111

Risk Assessments

In line with standard practise, all activities are risk assessed by members of the committee and staff. Any activities outside of usual session practises (eg a trip to the theatre) will have separate and activity-specific risk assessments. For outside trips, staff will carry out pre-visit assessments on the route/site of the visit.

Visitors

Visitors to the usual sessions (eg. Workshop providers) will be required to produce valid DBS documents before arrival and will be checked by reference or by speaking with companies who have formerly employed them. In the event that these visitors are not DBS checked (eg. A visiting actor from the theatre) their time will be spent only in a public space and be accompanied by our staff at all times. At no times will young people be left alone with visitors for any reason.

Equipment

All equipment will be in warranty or beyond this, checked yearly by certified maintenance staff. Any malfunction or damage must be reported to the company manager immediately.

No equipment will be used which is unsuitable for purpose. Where electronic or other equipment is used for performance, appropriate steps will be taken to keep children at a safe distance or separated from the equipment.

Materials & Texts

Although controversial, challenging or socially realistic ideas/texts are found throughout the arts, we will ensure that—to the best of our ability—source materials, prompts, discussions and so on are age-appropriate, and where possible, parents are consulted before use.

Policy to be reviewed by the committee in May 2026

New Employee/Volunteers—detach this from the main document and sign to confirm that you have read and agree to the contents of the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy 2025.

Name:

Position: (eg volunteer)

Phone:

I have read and understand the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

I agree to abide by the guidelines in the policy to ensure safety for all children in our care.

Signed:

Date: