

Child Protection Policy



Statement

The Vincent Martin Company of Dance and Musical Theatre (DMT) has a duty of care to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all its students whilst taking part in classes/ performances. A child is defined as young persons under the age of 18 (The children Act 1989) and therefore, DMT takes pride in making sure the safety and wellbeing of any student under this age is correctly cared for.

Policy Aims

The aim of The Vincent Martin Company of Dance and Musical Theatre's Child Protection Policy is to promote good, healthy and safe practice:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of DMT.
- All staff/volunteers to have a current DBS and to have undergone a chaperone course with a chaperone license achieved.
- Staff/ volunteers to make informed and confident responses to child protection issues.
- To promote Good Practice.
- Child 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 situation including the home, school and outside environments. A 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 and safe guarding issues should be reported to The Principal straight away without the discussion to other parents, students or staff.**

Good Practice Guidelines

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

- Always working in an open environment avoiding (where possible) private or unobserved situations/conversation and encouraging open communication with the support of another member of staff.
- If a child feels the need to talk to a member of staff with a personal matter, it is the member of staff's responsibility to inform that student, that they may not be able to keep the conversation confidential. Where ever possible, in involve another member of staff as a witness to the conversations. All conversations

such as this MUST be given to The Principal in a hand written document signed-dated by both student and member of staff in question.

- Treating all students equally with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each student first.
- Building professional balanced relationships based on mutual trust.
- Ensuring any form of manual/physical support required should be provided openly.
- Manual Support within Class - It is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving, students should always be consulted and their agreement gained, prior to any manual support is given. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible.
- Always ensure parents, teachers and volunteers work in pairs.
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of the students.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of students – avoiding excessive training and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing parental consent to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of treatment given.

Practises to be avoided

The following should avoid except in emergencies. If a case arises where these situations are unavoidable (eg. The child sustains an injury and need to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick up a child at the end of a session), it should be with the full knowledge and consent of the Principal or the child's parents.

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Taking or dropping off a child to an event, unless written agreement is given and accepted between parent and staff.

Practises never to be sanctioned

You should NEVER

- Engage with an inappropriate personal conversation with a student (no matter what the age). Teacher/staff to student relationship MUST stay strictly professional.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.

- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for students that they can do for themselves.
- It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young/unable. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the students involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. Particularly if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

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

- Document any accident or injury with the level of seriousness and the care plan taken after.
- If you accidentally hurt a student.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a student misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done
- If a child feels the need to talk to a member of staff with a personal matter, it is the member of staff's responsibility to inform that student, that they may not be able to keep the conversation confidential. Where ever possible, in involve another member of staff as a witness to the conversations. All conversations such as this MUST be given to The Principal in a hand-written document signed-dated by both student and member of staff in question.

Use of Photographic/filming equipment at events

There is evidence that some people have used performance events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people. DMT will always request written parental consent before any photographs or filming takes place.

Video as a teaching aid: this considered a legitimate teaching aid, but DMT will always request written parental consent before the use of this aid and all materials will be stored in a locked cabinet when not in use.

Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers

DMT recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children and all reasonable steps will be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with DMT student.

Pre-selection checks will include the following:

- All volunteers/staff will complete an application form. This will include self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent will be requested from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau
- Two confidential references will be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity will be requested.

Interview and audition process needed for teaching staff.

- Qualifications are substantiated, where appropriate.
- Job requirements and responsibilities will be clarified.
- They will read and accept DMT's Code of Conduct.
- Child protection procedures will be explained and training needs clarified.
- Give advisory information outlining good practice and information on what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.
- Give advisory information outlining good practice and information on what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour between children.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in DMT Company, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. There is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. The Principal must be made aware of any cases where he or she is not directly involved in.

Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information will be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

This will include the following:

- The Principal
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services

- The alleged abuser (and parents if the abuser is a child)

Bullying

If bullying is suspected, the following actions will take place to help the victim and to prevent bullying:

- All signs of bullying will be taken very seriously and reported to The Principal.
- All children will be encouraged to speak about their concerns. The victim will be helped to speak out and to tell someone in authority.
- All allegations will be investigated and actions taken to ensure the safety of the victim.
- Victims and alleged bullies will be spoken to separately
- Victims will be reassured that they can trust who they are speaking to and they will be helped but promises **must not be made** to tell no one else.
- Records of all discussions will be kept, signed and dated.
- Any concerns must be reported to The Principal immediately.

Contacts

If you have any enquires in relation to this policy, please contact Vincent Martin.

Declaration

On behalf of the Vincent Martin Company of Dance and Musical Theatre we the undersigned will oversee the implementation of the confidentiality policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

Signed:

Name in print:

Position of person:

Date:

[The Vincent Martin School of Dance and Musical Theatre](#)

www.danceandmusicaltheatre.com

DMT.VMartin@outlook.com

01293 217 665