

Akademi Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Policy Statement

Akademi is a South Asian dance organisation which strives towards relevance, accessibility and excellence in all of its initiatives whether professional performance and dancer development or education and community learning and participatory activity.

Akademi's education and community programme uses South Asian dance and related art forms in ways that are stimulating and relevant to life in the UK today. Its imaginative participatory projects act as a resource for learning, creativity and well-being for a wide range of communities. Workshops and residencies take place in a variety of settings including schools, colleges, youth clubs, day centres, residential homes, hospitals and prisons.

Akademi is an organisation which is committed to practice which protects all children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or religion. Staff and volunteers in this organisation accept and recognise that it is everybody's responsibility to keep children and young people safe and develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

Our Safeguarding Policy

This policy applies to all Akademi staff members, including the board of trustees, full and part time staff, volunteers, sessional workers, freelance contractors, students and anyone working on behalf of Akademi.

This Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Procedures should be read in conjunction with Akademi's other policies especially:

- Equal Opportunities
- Special Needs
- Health & Safety
- Education
- Disability Policy
- Code of Conduct When Working with Children & Young People

The purpose of this policy

We recognise we have a duty to keep children and young people safe and to ensure that children and young people we work with have the best possible outcomes during their interaction with Akademi.

- To protect children and young people who participate and/or interact with Akademi through educational workshops and/or educational/professional performances.
- To provide staff, volunteers and contractors with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.
- To establish and adhere to the best safeguarding practices to keep children and young people safe from harm.
- To establish guidelines for the practice of safe touch in a dance context

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Legal Framework

This policy is underpinned by current legislation, government guidance and standards, designed to ensure that children are protected from harm including:

- Working together to Safeguard Children, March 2015
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- Human Rights Act 1998 and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by the UK Government in 1991).

Definitions

Children are all young people under the age of 18

Vulnerable young people are those who have difficulty in protecting themselves from harm, due to physical, communication, perceptual or emotional difficulties, for example those with disabilities or learning difficulties or who are seriously or chronically ill.

Disabled children and young people are those who have “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.” (Disability Discrimination Act, 2005)

Staff includes all people employed by Akademi on any basis: permanent, part-time, free-lance, sessional, casual or voluntary.

MASH Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) (Part of the Children and Families Contact Team)

Serious Harm neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse, Child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and radicalisation (Working together to safeguard children, 2015)

Akademi recognises that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- no child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs
- all children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs
- the policy is reviewed, approved and endorsed by the board of trustees annually or when legislation changes

Akademi will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- ensuring that all staff, volunteers and contractors of Akademi adhere to this policy
- children and parents are informed of the policy and procedures as appropriate
- all concerns, and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously by trustees, staff and volunteers and responded to appropriately - this may require a referral to children’s

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social care services, the independent Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for allegations against staff, trustees and other volunteers, and in emergencies, the police

- a commitment to safe recruitment, selection and vetting
- reference to principles, legislation and guidance that underpin the policy
- arrangements for policy and procedures review
- reference to all associated policies and procedures which promote children's safety and welfare eg with regards to: health and safety, anti-bullying, protection of children online, and photography

Safe Touch:

- Akademi recognises that dance classes may sometimes require a level of physical contact exists during the dance teaching environment. The dance teacher should seek permission to touch; and explain the intention of the touch in relation to the dance class. If a student/participant refuses or indicates that they are uncomfortable with physical touch, the dance teacher should refrain from any touch, and report to the relevant line manager.
- When entering a school on behalf of Akademi, the dance artist should check the safeguarding/touch policy that the school already has in place, and any related permissions from parents.
- Be aware of any children whose parents have refused touch consent in the teaching environment.
- Physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted and should be avoided. Any touch required to aid in teaching should be carried out in front of other students.

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

Akademi's DSO:

Suba Subramaniam – Akademi Artistic Director

Work telephone number: 020 7691 3210

Work email address: suba@akademi.co.uk

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) includes:

- To ensure that all staff are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they are concerned that a child/young person maybe subject to abuse or neglect
- To provide staff with information and guidance on cases where there are concerns about children and make appropriate referrals to Camden's Social Work Services
- Ensure that any concerns about a child/young person are acted on, clearly recorded, referred on where necessary and, followed up to ensure the issues are addressed
- The Named Person(s) will record any reported incidents in relation to a child/young person or breach of Child Protection policies and procedures. This will be kept in a secure place and its contents will be confidential.

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Safe Recruitment Practices & Disclosure

In order to ensure the suitability of all artists and other staff working on projects involving direct contact with children and young people and vulnerable and/or disabled children and young people, and that they work in a way as to protect children young people from harm, Akademi will ensure that all staff:

- Supply written references from at least two people, who are not family members, who have first-hand and recent knowledge of their experience of work or contact with children. Referees are asked specifically to comment on the artist's suitability to work with children. References are checked by a follow-up telephone call before any offer of employment is confirmed.
- Sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with these groups of people and to declare all previous convictions.
- Apply for vetting through the Disclosure and Barring Service. Akademi uses the Foundation for Community Dance and advises its artists on the application process in accordance with FCD policy.

REFERRAL PROCEEDURES:

Responding to signs or suspicions of abuse

Anyone who is made aware of actual or possible child abuse, neglect or serious harm **should report and discuss their concerns as soon as possible** to Akademi's DSO (CONTACT DETAILS ABOVE). Any incidents, disclosures or observations should be recorded by filling in the Safeguarding & Child Protection Report Form, available on request from DSO.

Responding to allegations of abuse against a member of Akademi staff or volunteer

These should be reported as soon as possible to Akademi's DSO and as above any incidents, disclosures or observations should be recorded by filling in the Safeguarding & Child Protection Report Form. Please see the DSO for a copy of the form.

Responding to allegations of abuse against someone not working in the organisation

This may be a parent, carer, service user, service provider, another child or anyone else. As above any incidents, disclosures or observations should be reported as soon as possible to Akademi's DSO and recorded by filling in the Safeguarding & Child Protection Report Form.

Guidance on responding to a child disclosing abuse

- **Stay calm**
- **Listen** carefully to what is said
- **Do not promise to keep secrets** – find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others
- **Allow** the child to continue at her/his own pace
- **Never ask questions**
- **Reassure** the child that they have done the right thing in telling you
- **Tell them** what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared

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- **Record** in writing what was said using the child's own words as soon as possible – note date, time, any names mentioned and to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated

Confidentiality Policy

The legal principle that the 'welfare of the child' is paramount means that the considerations of confidentiality which might apply to other situations at Akademi should not be allowed to over-ride the right of children to be protected from harm. However, every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned when an allegation has been made and is being investigated.

Recruitment of Freelance Artists and Staff

Akademi:

- Only employs artists, where possible, who have actually been **observed** working with children, young people or vulnerable adults (as appropriate) by the Education Officer or the Deputy Officer
- Asks that a teacher, youth worker, care worker or other group leader **from the host organisation** is present during workshops
- Only contracts photographers and film makers working on education and wider work that have a Disclosure and Barring check through the vetting procedure in place

***Disclosure and Barring Service** is an information service provided by the UK Government. A Disclosure is an impartial and confidential document that details an individual's criminal record, and where appropriate, details of those who are banned from working with children. In due course, Disclosures will also contain details of those banned from working with vulnerable adults. Disclosure supersedes previous police checking procedures. For further information regarding Disclosure, please visit the website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about>

Students on placement and other volunteers

From time to time Akademi hosts placements from students studying dance, performing arts, arts education and other similar courses who wish to gain practical experience of participatory arts work with children and young people:

- Students must not have unsupervised contact with children.
- References must be sought from course tutor and at least one other referee who can vouch for their suitability to work with children.
- Students must be asked for evidence of a recent DBS check (Disclosure and Barring Service), Enhanced Disclosure by showing original documents to the DSO. Your DBS reference number will be noted and the details kept on file.
- Akademi will arrange for a DBS application for students who will be placement with Akademi for longer than two months, if they cannot provide evidence of a recent Enhanced Disclosure.
- Students should receive adequate supervision and monitoring and not given responsibilities appropriate to their age and ability. They should not be asked to teach or take sole responsibility for a whole class or group.

CONTACT DETAILS OF EXTERNAL CHILD PROTECTION AGENCIES

- a. Camden Children and Families Contact Service**
Tel no: 020 7974 3317
Out of office hours: 020 7974 4444
Email: LBCMASHadmin@camden.gov.uk
5 St Pancras Square
London N1C

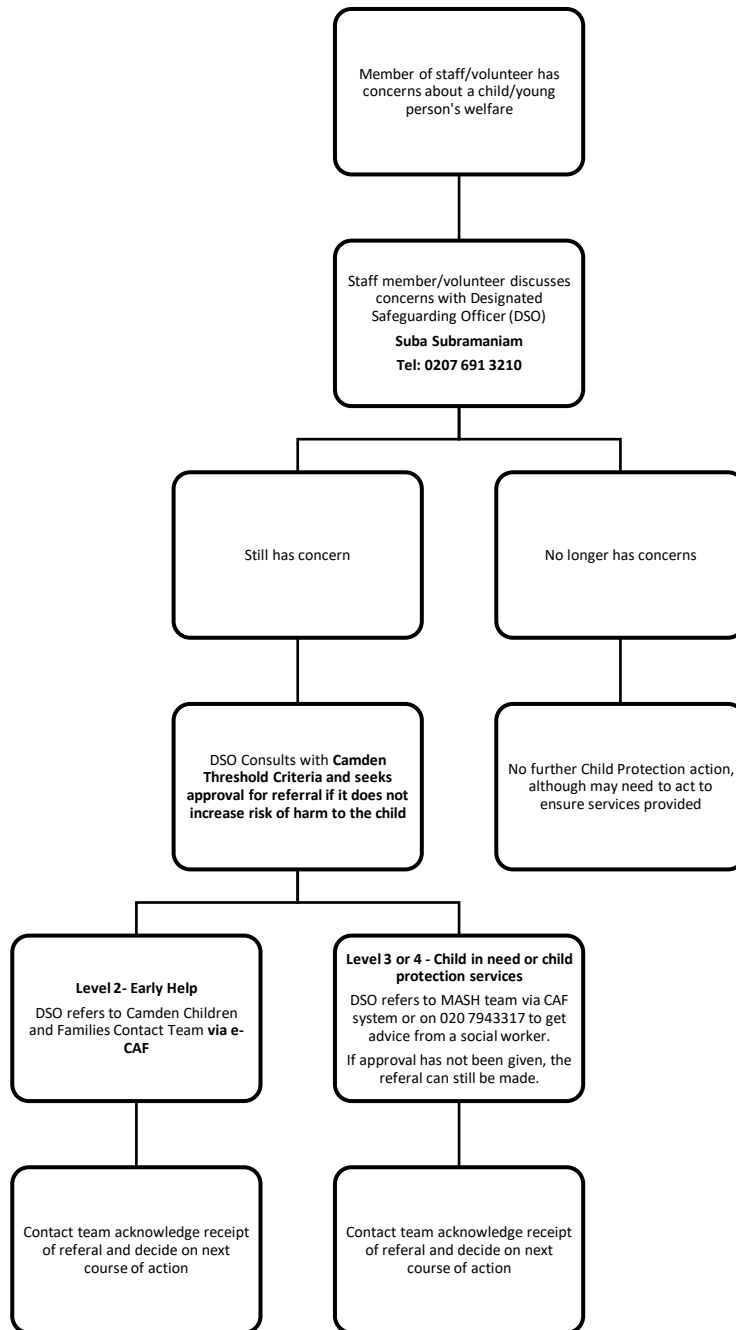
- b. NSPCC Child Protection Information Services**
Tel: 0800 800 500
Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

- c. Child Protection in Sport Unit**
(A partnership between NSPCC and Sport England)
Tel: 0116 366 5590
www.sportprotects.org.uk

- d. Department of Health – ‘A practical Guide to the Act for all Organisations working with Children’**
Department of Health
PO Box 777
London SE1 6XH
www.doh.gov.uk/scg/childprotect

- e. Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre**
Tel: 020 7240 5703
Address: Old Brewer's Yard, 17-19 Neal Street, Covent Garden, London, WC2H 9UY
www.cdmt.org.uk

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If you have reason to believe that a child is at immediate risk of harm, contact the police on 999

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline

The NSPCC Child Protection Helpline is a free 24-hour service that provides counselling, information and advice to anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse. Telephone: 0808 800 5000 - Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Specific guidance and further information on child protection in the performing arts:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/safeguarding/safeguarding-in-the-performing-arts/>

Appendix 1

CHILD PROTECTION; DEFINITIONS AND INDICATORS

Definitions

Child protection is part of the safeguarding agenda that focuses on preventing maltreatment and protecting children at risk of neglect or abuse. Under the Children Act 1989, CSSW have a legal duty to investigate and take any action to protect children where there are concerns that they are at risk of suffering **significant harm**, which is defined as:

Neglect: failure to provide basic care to meet the child’s physical needs, such as not providing adequate food, clothing or shelter; failure to protect the child from harm or ensure access to medical care and treatment.

Physical abuse: causing physical harm or injury to a child.

Sexual abuse: involving children in sexual activity, or forcing them to witness sexual activity, which includes involving children in looking at or the production of pornography.

Emotional abuse: failure to provide love and warmth that affects the child’s emotional development; psychological ill treatment of a child through bullying, intimidation or threats.

Possible indicators of abuse and neglect

Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate or inappropriate clothing • Appears underweight and unwell and seems constantly hungry • Failure to thrive physically and appears tired and listless • Dirty or unhygienic appearance • Frequent unexplained absences from school • Lack of parental supervision
Physical abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any injury such as bruising, bite marks, burns or fractures where the explanation given is inconsistent with the injury • Injuries in unexpected places or that are not typical of normal childhood injuries or accidents • High frequency of injuries • Parents seem unconcerned or fail to seek adequate medical treatment
Sexual abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual knowledge or behaviour that is unusually explicit or inappropriate for the child’s age/stage of development • Sexual risk taking behaviour including involvement in sexual exploitation/older boyfriend • Continual, inappropriate or excessive masturbation • Physical symptoms such as injuries to genital or anal area or bruising, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy • Unwillingness to undress for sports
Emotional abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental delay • Attachment difficulties with parents and others • Withdrawal and low self-esteem
Indirect indicators of abuse and neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden changes in behaviour • Withdrawal and low self-esteem • Eating disorders • Aggressive behaviour towards others • Sudden unexplained absences from school • Drug/alcohol misuse • Running away/going missing
Parental attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misusing drugs and/or alcohol • Physical/mental health or learning difficulties • Domestic violence • Avoiding contact with school and other professionals