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Child Protection

VMA DANCE's Child Protection policy, with links to the ISTD Child Protection Policy.

As part of the policy, staff, teachers & members who are in contact with children and vulnerable persons are expected to operate procedures particularly on employment, data protection, procedures at events and photography.

VMA DANCE has procedures in place so that any allegation or complaints of abuse are taken seriously and investigated, which includes informing the principal of the complaint. They have the power to suspend the individual against whom the complaint has been made from employment or membership until the investigation is complete and a decision on the action to be taken has been made.

In addition, each member should keep a list of any person in their school, or associated with it, who may have access at any time to records about children, or who may be helping with activities which may bring them into a supervisory contact with children using their facilities, services or activities, whether paid or voluntary. All those on the list should be asked to undergo a disclosure check by the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) to ascertain their suitability to supervise, protect and safeguard the welfare of children using VMA's facilities. VMA operate a scheme for members to obtain DBS Disclosures through Due Diligence Checking.. The full policy is as follows:

Children and Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy

1. VMA and all its members are aware that children under 18 and vulnerable persons of any age can be involved in their activities and that they have a responsibility, within the limits of their control and jurisdiction, to protect and safeguard the welfare of every such child and vulnerable person.

2. It is the policy of VMA that all children and vulnerable persons have the right to protection from abuse. All staff, teachers and members who are in contact with such children and vulnerable persons are expected to be familiar with and to apply the procedures on:

- Employment including temporary/sub-contracted staff, and examiners
- Data protection, especially in regard to children
- Procedures at VMA events, competitions, and course
- Photography and video recording

VMA will ensure that the following procedures are in place so that any allegation(s) or complaints of abuse are taken seriously and investigated.

3. Any complaint or incident to be reported under this policy should be reported in the first instance to the person in charge of the event or activity indicating that an abuse of a child or

vulnerable person's welfare may have taken place. If the person in charge is the person against whom the complaint is being made, the matter should be referred to the Principal (Vicky Freeman-White) or if the complaint is about them, to the local authorities

4. On receipt of a complaint the Principal will convene, as soon as possible. All parties to the complaint will have the right to be heard, including the parents or legal guardian(s) of the child or vulnerable person concerned.

5. VMA DANCE will be informed of the complaint and have the power to suspend the individual(s) against whom the complaint has been made from employment or membership until the investigation is complete and a decision on the action to be taken has been made.

6. VMA Dance's Child Protection officer (Vicky Freeman-White) will advise on procedures to ensure VMA DANCE and its members are aware of their responsibilities, and is responsible for liaising with its Umbrella Body on DBS Disclosures. The Child Protection Officer will keep and update a list (the List) of all VMA staff and each member will likewise keep a list of any other person who, from time to time, may have access to records about children, or who may be helping with activities which may bring them into a supervisory contact with children using their facilities or the VMA's facilities, services or activities, whether paid or voluntary.

7. All persons noted in the List will be asked to undergo a disclosure check by the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) to ascertain their suitability to supervise, protect and safeguard the welfare of children using the VMA or members facilities.

8. A copy of this policy document and guidelines on good practice will be given to all persons noted in the List. The Chief Executive will ensure that the policy and its implementation will be kept under review. The final status of the DBS check will be reported direct to the Chief Executive and be held securely in confidence.

Child Protection – Good Practice Guidelines

The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate:
Good practice

- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoid private unobserved situations and encourage open communication with no secrets).
- Treat all children equally and with respect and dignity.
- Always put the welfare of each child first.

Practices to be avoided

- Avoid spending time alone with children away from others save in essential one to one situations when extreme care should be exercised.

Practices never to be sanctioned

- Allowing or engaging in horseplay, physical or sexually provocative games.
- Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child or young person, even in fun.
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control.
- Failing to act on and record any allegations made by a child.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur during or in the context of an VMA event or activity, it should immediately be reported to the designated Child Protection Officer:

- If you accidentally hurt a child.
- If a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.
- If a child is unusually distressed and you have any suspicions of or concerns about potential abuse.