



## VMA DANCE Safeguarding Policy

Jan 2024

**Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility**

***Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a responsibility for keeping them safe.***

### **Key Principles**

- Children should be supervised at all times
- There should be clear guidelines or procedures for dealing with concerns about children
- All staff should have knowledge about safeguarding
- Professional practice is in line with Safer Working Practice
- Staff should be well supported by the Manager
- Parental involvement (e.g. as observers or as accompanying adults) should be encouraged as and when appropriate
- Staff numbers & helpers should be sufficient to run safely
- Practice should reflect policy
- Premises should be risk assessed and safe

A child is defined as anyone up to the age of 18 years. The regulation relating to children taking part in performances, activities (including modelling) apply up to statutory school leaving age, which is the last Friday in June of the school year in which they become 16. Organisations have a duty of care towards young people between statutory school leaving age until they are 18. They may not be required to be supervised by chaperones, but they still need to be protected by Child Protection policies and procedures.

**VMA DANCE** is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people up to the age of 18. We recognise our responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation.

References made to 'child' or 'children' refer to children and young people under the age of 18 years. However, the principles of the document apply to professional behaviours towards all pupils, including those over the age of 18 years. 'Child' should therefore be read to mean any pupil at the establishment in services designed for children and young people. Similar principles would also apply to services accessed by vulnerable adults.

**VMA DANCE** acknowledges its duty to respond appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. All staff and volunteers will work together to encourage the development of an ethos which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children, young people and adults.

**VMA DANCE** recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014, the Children Act 1989 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

**VMA DANCE** will ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately

**VMA DANCE** will ensure that:

- Everyone will be treated with respect and dignity
- The welfare of each child will always be considered and planned for
- Enthusiastic and constructive criticism will be given to pupils rather than negative criticism
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned
- All adult members will provide a positive role model
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate behaviour between staff and pupils and pupil to pupil
- It will comply with health & safety legislation

- It will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children
- It will undertake relevant professional development and training
- It will ensure all contact and medical details for every child is up to date and available at the place of teaching or performance.
- All staff will receive dedicated safeguarding training.

**VMA DANCE** has a designated Safeguarding lead who is in charge of ensuring that the child protection policy is adhered to. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Victoria Freeman-White and she can be contacted on: victoria@vmadance.co.uk

There is also a Deputy DSL who is Cairo Hayler and she can be contacted on: Cairo@vmadance.co.uk

In implementing this policy **VMA DANCE** will:

- Ensure that all workers/members understand their legal and moral responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation.
- Ensure that all workers/members and volunteers understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a child or young person, or a worker's conduct towards a child or young person to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). (see page 18)
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will refer any child protection concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (i.e. Children's Social Care and / or Police).
- Children, young people and parents will be informed of who the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy are and be able to raise any safeguarding concerns & know that these will be taken seriously and acted upon.
- Ensure that workers/members will work in a consistent and equitable manner in line with the safer working practice guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

This policy will be regularly monitored by **Victoria Freeman-White** and will be subject to an annual review.



Signed:

Date policy agreed: 26/01/2024

Date policy to be reviewed: 25/01/2025

## **What to do if you think a child could be experiencing abuse and/or neglect**

### **Definition of safeguarding**

*Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, defined for the purposes of this guidance as:*

- *protecting children from maltreatment;*
- *preventing impairment of children's health or development;*
- *ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and*
- *taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.*

### **Child Protection**

*Child protection: Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.*

- *Working together to safeguard children March 2018*

### **Recognising the signs & symptoms of abuse:**

1. Abuse comes under the main headings of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse neglect and exploitation. **Suspicion of abuse**
2. You may observe signs or symptoms which may indicate a child is either suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm:
  - Children whose behaviour changes – they may become aggressive, challenging, disruptive, withdrawn or clingy, or they might have difficulty sleeping or start wetting the bed;
  - Children with clothes which are ill-fitting and/or dirty;
  - Children with consistently poor hygiene;
  - Children who make strong efforts to avoid specific family members or friends, without an obvious reason;
  - Children who don't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities;

- Children who are having problems at school, for example, a sudden lack of concentration and learning or they appear to be tired and hungry;
  - Children who talk about being left home alone, with inappropriate carers or with strangers;
  - Children who reach developmental milestones, such as learning to speak or walk, late, with no medical reason;
  - Children who are regularly missing from school or education;
  - Children who are reluctant to go home after school;
  - Children with poor school attendance and punctuality, or who are consistently late being picked up;
  - Parents who are dismissive and non-responsive to practitioners' concerns;
  - Parents who collect their children from school when drunk, or under the influence of drugs;
  - Children who drink alcohol regularly from an early age;
  - Children who are concerned for younger siblings without explaining why;
  - Children who talk about running away; and
  - Children who shy away from being touched or flinch at sudden movements.
- *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused March 2015*

### **Physical Abuse:**

#### 3. Physical abuse

Physical abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Physical abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Babies and disabled children also have a higher risk of suffering physical abuse.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Physical abuse can also occur outside of the family environment.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of physical abuse:

- Children with frequent injuries;

- Children with unexplained or unusual fractures or broken bones; and
- Children with unexplained:
  - bruises or cuts;
  - burns or scalds; or
  - bite marks.

In the performance sector, physical abuse could also include adult's coercion into or conspiring with children and young people's excessive physical exercise and training and/or deprivation of sufficient rest and sustenance.

Parents and other adults should also be alert to self-abuse including cutting and eating disorders.

### **Emotional Abuse:**

4. Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Although the effects of emotional abuse might take a long time to be recognisable, practitioners will be in a position to observe it, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

Emotional abuse may involve serious bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong;
- Parents or carers who withdraw their attention from their child, giving the child the 'cold shoulder';
- Parents or carers blaming their problems on their child; and

- Parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example, by name-calling or making negative comparisons. In the performance sector this will also include trainers/teachers, mentors, production staff and chaperones in loco parentis

## **Sexual Abuse**

5. Sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child. You should be aware that many children and young people who are victims of sexual abuse do not recognise themselves as such. A child may not understand what is happening and may not even understand that it is wrong. Sexual abuse can have a long-term impact on mental health.

Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual abuse:

- Children who display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age;
- Children who use sexual language or have sexual knowledge that you wouldn't expect them to have;
- Children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games; and
- Children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections or underage pregnancy

## **Child exploitation including County Lines**

Criminal exploitation is child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes.

County Lines is the Police term for urban gangs exploiting young people into moving drugs from a hub, normally a large city, into other markets – suburban area and

market and coastal towns – using dedicated mobile phone lines or ‘deal lines’. Even young children have been exploited into carrying drugs for gangs. This can involve children being trafficked away from their home area, staying in accommodation and selling and manufacturing drugs. Any concerns should be reported directly to the Police on 101 or 999 if a child is thought to be at immediate risk.

For more information go to: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/gangs-criminal-exploitation/>

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual exploitation:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant;
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- Children who regularly miss school or education or don't take part in education.

### **Neglect:**

6. Neglect is a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter. It is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development.



Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse. It is important that practitioners remain alert and do not miss opportunities to take timely action.<sup>3</sup> However, while you may be concerned about a child, neglect is not always straightforward to identify.

Neglect may occur if a parent becomes physically or mentally unable to care for a child. A parent may also have an addiction to alcohol or drugs, which could impair their ability to keep a child safe or result in them prioritising buying drugs, or alcohol, over food, clothing or warmth for the child. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal drug or alcohol abuse.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of neglect:

- Children who are living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe;
- Children who are left hungry or dirty;
- Children who are left without adequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat;
- Children who are living in dangerous conditions, i.e. around drugs, alcohol or violence;
- Children who are often angry, aggressive or self-harm;
- Children who fail to receive basic health care<sup>4</sup>; and
- Parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured

- *Definitions taken from "What to do if..."*

## **Child on Child Abuse**

Child on a child abuse is behaviour by an individual or group, intending to physically, sexually or emotionally harm others. It can happen to children of a similar age or stage of development and can be harmful to the children who display it as well as those who experience it.

At VMA dance we have a Student Code of Contact which is displayed at the studio and also available on our website. All students are made aware of the code of contact and how they are expected to behave.

Teachers and parents are also made aware of what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviours.

## **Preventing Extremism**

Children can be at risk of possible radicalisation which can lead to extremist activity. Some possible indicators of concern can be; notable changes in behaviour/mood/appearance; may express extreme political views e.g. far right, ISIS; may appear increasingly sympathetic to terrorist acts; friends may change and they may spend more time on the internet.

For any concerns phone the Police if there is an immediate threat on 999 or for less urgent concerns ring 101 or the Anti – terrorism hotline Tel 0800 789321

## **Disclosure**

### **Disclosure of abuse**

If a child confides in you that abuse has taken place:

- Remain calm and in control, but do not delay in taking action
- Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Don't promise to keep it a secret. Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Make it clear to the child that you will need to share the information with others and that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help
- Reassure the child that they 'did the right thing' in telling someone.
- Tell the child what you will do next
- Speak immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (the person with responsibility for child protection). It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually Children's Social Care or the Police
- Never investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where a child makes a disclosure

- As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was said, using the child's own words. Note the date, time, any names that were involved or mentioned, and who you gave information to. Make sure you sign and date your record.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead would discuss concerns with a parent/carer if this was thought not to place the child at further risk. When the disclosure is about something a parent/carer has done, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should always seek advice from Children's Social Care First. (See Appendix 1)

**Other safeguarding issues can include:**

- Forced marriage
- Honour-based violence
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Gangs and youth violence
- Gender based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Mental health
- Drugs/alcohol
- Domestic Abuse
- Private fostering
- Sexting/grooming and other E safety issues
- Teenage relationship abuse
- Adolescent to Parent Violence
- Trafficking
- For more information use following link to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 the <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

**If you have any concerns that a child may be experiencing or at risk of harm or neglect, please contact the relevant Children's services (where the child lives)**

Requests for service, and concerns about children's safety should now be reported using the West Sussex Integrated Front Door (IFD) Portal, which can be accessed via the WSCC Web Site Request support or raise a concern about a child. The link to the new portal can be found below.

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/keeping-children-safe/request-support-or-raise-a-concern-about-a-child/>

### **Photographs and images of children**

- There are risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on web sites and in other publications such as theatre programmes. Photographs can be used by perpetrators as a means of identifying children when they are accompanied with personal information, for example 'this is X who goes to such-and-such a school who likes playing football'. This information can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to start to 'groom' that child for abuse. Secondly the content of the photo can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. There is evidence of this adapted material finding its way onto child abuse image sites.
- VMA Dance ask all parents to agree to their images and use of images policy when enrolling into a class. All parents are made aware of what images may be used for or promotion/websites. Vma dance assess potential risks and make decision about the type of images they wish to use.
- Vma dance avoid use of identify data alongside images when being used online.
- Photographs of children are not be taken on personal equipment.

The use of cameras or mobile phones and camera or filming capability in dressing rooms and other inappropriate environments is expressly forbidden and young people are made aware of this.

If Vma dance permits the use of personal photograph taking, parents/carers must be advised that this is for personal use only and photos of other children must not be put on social media without the permission of the child's parent(s)

### **Internet Safety**

- Most of our children will use mobile phones and computers. They are a source of fun, entertainment and education. However, we know that some men, women and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from

sending hurtful or abusive texts and e-mails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, radicalisation, webcam photography or face to face meetings.

- All staff/ volunteers must not communicate with children via their phone or on social media. Initial communication should be with the parent/carer. If any remote teaching for example is to take place with the child this must be with agreement and supervision of the parent/carer.
- Staff should not be 'friends' on social media with any pupil.
- Cyber bullying by children via texts and e-mail will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying.
- Mobile phones with cameras should not be permitted in the changing rooms except for emergency communication with the designated members of staff. No photos are to be taken by anyone on any device backstage.

## **Safer Recruitment**

All staff and volunteers must go through a recruitment process which takes into account safeguarding issues as follows:

- A DBS check for the Child Workforce that is enhanced with barring.
- Two references, at least one of which must be a professional reference. If the second reference is personal it must not be from a family member
- The interview process must include questions about safeguarding and sharing VMA dance's safeguarding policy and expectations
- Relevant qualifications and experience in order to practice safely

## **Parents**

- Vma Dance believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and the organisation. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of VMA dance and to share responsibility for the care and safeguarding of the children. All parents will be given a copy of VMA Dance's Child Protection / safeguarding policy and procedures or sign posted to it on the school web site.
- All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after classes, rehearsals or performances. Vma dance has a responsibility to ensure suitable arrangements are in place to take children home.
- Whenever possible there should be a minimum of two emergency contacts for each child.

## **Unsupervised Contact**

- Vma Dance will ensure that no unauthorised adult has contact with the children.
- If possible, there should be two adults in the room when working with children
- If unsupervised contact is unavoidable (i.e. only one member of staff present), steps will be taken to minimise risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area or in a designated room with the door open.
- All children will be chaperoned at all times by a chaperone designated by vma dance, their own parent or a local authority approved chaperone whilst taking part in performances.

## **Good Behaviour -pupils, staff, volunteers and parents**

- It is expected that all staff, volunteers, pupils and parents respect each other
- If there are incidents of unacceptable verbal or physical behaviour relating to pupils these will be challenged by staff and where appropriate brought to the attention of the parent.
- All prejudice incidents will be challenged
- Sanctions should be applied in agreement with parents where necessary
- Any incidents of unacceptable verbal or physical behaviour from staff must be brought to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Manager. The relevant disciplinary process will be followed. If this has put a child at risk of significant harm or the behaviour indicates the person may not be suitable to work with children, the incident must be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

## **Staff Code of Conduct**

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain confidence and respect of the general public and those with whom they work.

- All staff will abide by the Safer Working Practice guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
- Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity
- Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear
- Adults should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably.

Staff must not:

- behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or to act as an appropriate role model.
- make, or encourage others to make sexual remarks to, or about, a student
- use inappropriate language to or in the presence of pupils

- make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate, or might be interpreted as such.

### **Power and positions of trust and authority**

- All those working with children are in a position of trust in relation to all pupils at VMA Dance
- The relationship between a person working with a child/ren is one in which the adult has a position of trust.
- This means that staff must not use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a student or families detriment
- Staff must not use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine students
- Staff must not use their status and standing to form or promote relationships with students which are of a sexual nature, or which may become so.
- The potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable students means that adults have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification

### **Recognising the signs of abuse of position of trust**

Some children are more vulnerable than others and victims are often selected because the offender perceives them as isolated, and/or emotionally needy.

Some potential signs for concern:

- A member of staff or volunteer giving a student preferential treatment or attention
- Spending time alone with the student outside of the classroom
- Frequently spending time with the student in a private or isolated areas
- Regularly transporting students
- Be-friending student's family and visiting their home
- Acting as particular student's 'listening ear'
- Taking students out
- Giving students small gifts, money, toys, cards or letters
- Using text, e-mail or social media sites to communicate inappropriately with students
- Being overly affectionate with particular student(s)



- Flirtatious behaviour or suggestive remarks around students
- Other students making jokes or references about a member of staff and specific students

### **Social contact outside of the workplace**

It is acknowledged that staff may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents of pupils, independent of the professional relationship outside of the workplace. However, staff should be aware that professionals who sexually harm children often seek to establish relationships and contact outside of the workplace with both the child and their parents, in order to 'groom' the adult and the child and/or create opportunities for sexual abuse. It is also important to recognise that social contact may provide opportunities for other types of grooming such as for the purpose of sexual exploitation or radicalisation.

Staff should:

- always approve any planned social contact with pupils or parents with senior colleagues
- advise senior management of any regular social contact they have with a pupil which could give rise to a concern
- refrain from sending personal communication to pupils or parents unless agreed with senior managers
- inform senior management of any relationship where this extends beyond the usual parent/professional relationship
- inform senior management of any requests or arrangements where parents wish to use their services outside of the workplace e.g. babysitting, tutoring.
- Not seek to communicate/make contact or respond to contact with pupils outside of the purposes of their work. All communications should be open and transparent, avoiding any communication which could be interpreted as 'grooming behaviour'
- Not give out their personal details
- Not request or respond to any personal information from children other than which may be necessary in their professional role.
- Only use equipment and internet services provided by the setting
- Follow the settings Acceptable Use Policy
- Ensure that their use of technologies could not bring their employer into disrepute

## **Sexual conduct**

- Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a pupil is unacceptable.
- It is an offence for a member of staff in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with a child could be a matter for criminal and/or disciplinary procedures.
- All staff should undertake appropriate training so that they are fully aware of 'grooming behaviours' and of their responsibility to always report concerns to a senior manager any concerns about a colleague which could indicate that a pupil is being groomed.

Staff should:

- Avoid any communication with a pupil which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive, provocative or give rise to speculation.
- Not make sexual remarks to or about a pupil
- Not discuss sexual matters with or in the presence of pupils other than within agreed curriculum content or as part of their recognised job role

## **Allegations against staff**

- Any report of concern about the behaviour of a member of staff or allegation of abuse against a member of staff must immediately be reported to the / DSL or who will refer to the appropriate Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), If this is an allegation that a member of staff may have caused harm to a child. Any concern or allegation against the Proprietor(s) should be reported to the Local Authority for investigation by the LADO The role of the LADO is to coordinate all allegations and concerns made against a person who works or volunteers with children.
- The LADO may also be involved where a staff member or volunteer has 'behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children' i.e. where they have been involved in an incident outside of work which did not involve children but could have an impact on their suitability to work with children such as a domestic abuse incident. The manager will need to consider what triggered these actions and could a child in the school trigger the same reaction, therefore being put at risk. (this is known as transferrable risk).

Staff should:

- Be familiar with VMA Dance's arrangements for reporting and recording allegations
- Know how to contact the LADO/ designated officer and regulatory body direct if required

- Take responsibility for recording any incident, and passing that information where they have concerns about any matter pertaining to the welfare of an individual in the setting

The setting should have an effective, confidential system for recording and managing concerns raised by any individual regarding adults' conduct and any allegations against staff and volunteers

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/keeping-children-safe/request-support-or-raise-a-concern-about-a-child/>

## **01403 229900**

*If you are unsure what support you require or have an urgent safeguarding concern that requires a same day response, phone: 01403 229900 (Monday-Friday, 9.00am-5.00pm). For out of hours enquiries, including weekends and bank holidays, contact our Emergency Duty Team on 033 022 26664.*

### **If you have concerns about a colleague**

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a child are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of a child is paramount. VMA Dance's whistle blowing code enables staff to raise concerns or allegations in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

### **Responsibilities of the organisation**

When putting on a production:

At the outset of the production **VMA DANCE** will:

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the production process

- Identify at the outset the person who will have designated responsibility for child protection
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting (if necessary in consultation with the Local Authority)
- Ensure that the children are supervised by a responsible adult at all times
- Ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead knows how to contact Children's Social Care if they need to report any concerns. (See Appendix 2)

**Links to referenced documents:**

1. West Sussex Child Protection
2. <https://www.westsussexscp.org.uk>
3. Keeping Children Safe in Education  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
4. What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – March 2015  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2>
5. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018  
<http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/chapters/contents.html>
6. Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with children and young people  
<https://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Guidance-for-Safer-Working-Practices-2015-final1.pdf>

## Appendix 1

### Disclosure

- If a child discloses abuse or what may seem to be abuse;
- Begin by believing the child
- Remain calm (easier said than done!)
- Do not ask any leading questions, use the following strategy:
- **T – Tell me**
- **E – Explain that to me**
- **D – Describe that to me**
- Make some notes and contact Children's Social Care



## **Appendix 2**

### **Additional things to remember when chaperoning at performances:**

- Wear your Id badge at all times  
Maximum ratio is 1:12
- The names of children you are looking after
- Parent contact details / who is collecting
- Parent contact details should be in a place that is accessible to those who may need it -  
**NOT ON A MOBILE PHONE**
- Medical needs
- Fire exits
- First aid procedures
- Separate changing rooms/areas for boys and girls over 5
- Separate toilets
- Time in/out breaks and who is collecting
- Children should have a performance license
- Parents (not chaperoning) should remain at the stage door
- No child should perform if they are injured/unwell.

### **Helpful Hints:**

#### **DO:**

- Make sure the children you are looking after are comfortable
- Know who you are working for, the other chaperons and who to report any concerns to
- Escort the children to and from the stage/film set/modelling shoot
- Complete daily time sheets
- Challenge people/behaviours
- Be alert to possible risks

#### **DON'T:**

- Give your own child preferential treatment if you are also chaperoning other children
- Let the child perform if unwell
- Leave the child alone with another adult (unless it is their parent or teacher)
- Take photos of the child/ren
- Use inappropriate language or smoke while on duty
- Consume or be under the influence of alcohol
- Wear inappropriate clothing.