



## **Children, Young People & Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy and Procedures**

**The Policy has been approved by:**

**Avant Garde Dance Board of Directors in December 2017**

**Reviewed By TA (CEO) and PL (Interim EP) AUGUST 2020**

### **Introduction and Statement of Intent**

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Avant Garde Dance is committed to providing an environment in which children, young people and vulnerable adults participating in activities run or organised by the company, can work and create in safety, free from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

In line with the Children Act 1989 and 2004, Avant Garde Dance will ensure that the safety and welfare of the children and young people is paramount. All children and young people, whatever their age, race, ethnic origin, nationality, language, culture, religious beliefs, social class, disability, gender, and/or sexual identity/orientation have a right to protection from abuse.

In order to achieve this objective Avant Garde Dance has developed a policy and set of procedures to be followed by all individuals, whether they are directly employed by the company, employed as freelancers on behalf of the company.

Avant Garde Dance also recognises that practitioners of physical disciplines are vulnerable to accusations of contact that may be deemed "inappropriate"; therefore, it is in everyone's interest that the company clearly outlines to its representatives a set of guidelines and practices to adhere to.

The aim of Avant Garde Dance's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy is to promote good practice by providing young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst participating in Avant Garde Dance's activities. The procedures outlined in this policy will allow all staff to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Please note- for the purpose of this policy, a child or young person is defined as somebody under the age of 18 years.

## TERMINOLOGY

The following terminology is used throughout this policy:

'child protection'	is protecting children from abuse and neglect
'safeguarding'	is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm
'young person/people'	refers to children and young people up to their 18th birthday
'abuse'	abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm.
'activities'	refers to Avant Garde Dance's programme of activities available for young people. This typically (but not exclusively) includes one-off workshops, residencies, work placements and performances.
'DBS'	is the Disclosure and Barring Service (replacement to the CRB). A DBS check is for those working in Regulated Activity with Children or Vulnerable Adults
'Avant Garde Dance hosted'	refers to activities that are being led by Avant Garde Dance, in which they are solely responsible for ensuring participants' safety.
'Host'	is used to describe an organisation or educational institution that has invited Avant Garde Dance to deliver learning activities for their members, students or exclusive audience.

## **AVANT GARDE DANCE'S DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER**

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The overall responsibility for child protection lies with the Senior Management and Board of Avant Garde Dance. The Learning and Participation Manager will act as the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), (Prince Laryea, currently interim Executive producer will take on the DSO responsibility until such time as a L&P manager is appointed. The role of the DSO is, in close liaison with the Senior Management and Board Group, to lead on day to day child protection procedures. This will include:

- attending child protection & safeguarding training and keeping up-to-date with current legislation and developments in the field of child protection & safeguarding
- providing all employees and freelance artists with a full induction to the company's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and good practice guidelines
- undertaking practical measures to support all employees delivering Regulated Activity in applying for Enhanced Disclosure Certificates through the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- acting as the main point of contact for Avant Garde Dance's employees and volunteers on matters of child safety and good practice for working with young people.

In consultation with the Senior Management, the DSO will respond to child protection and safety enquiries from parents, young people, Host organisations and outside agencies. Together, the DSO and Senior Management will act on any child protection allegations and incidents in liaison with Hosts, Children's Services and the NSPCC.

In the instance that the DSO is unavailable to respond to matters regarding child protection Avant Garde Dance's Executive Producer will lead as DSO.

## **Code of Practice**

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Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and creative or educational environments. There may be instances when Avant Garde Dance's employees or volunteers have regular contact with young people and this could make them an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. There may also be occasions when a member of Avant Garde Dance witnesses child abuse or bullying, or when a young person discloses such information to them. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the procedures set out in this policy (Procedures).

All adults working with children young people and vulnerable adults on behalf of Avant Garde Dance will personally:

- Treat all children, young people and vulnerable adults with respect
- Be sensitive to, and take account of, the needs of the individual's gender, age, stage of development, religion, culture and race.

- Avant Garde Dance will insist that at least one member of staff from the Host organisation is present throughout all activities involving young people. We will follow NSPCC guidelines for supervision on 1 adult to 8 children aged 9-12 and 1 adult to 10 young people aged 13-18.

- For Avant Garde Dance hosted activities, the DSO will work with the practitioner to identify potential risks and agree strategies to manage those risks in advance. Or, at a Host organisation, the main contact will be responsible for sharing risk assessments with the practitioner.

- When young people have been identified as having additional needs or behaviours that are likely to require additional supervision, specialist expertise or support, the DSO will discuss this with main contact (if at a Host organisation) or with the parent / carer (at Avant Garde Dance hosted activity) and where appropriate the young person, to ensure the young person can be supported to participate safely.
- Practitioners should consider individual needs of each participant, particularly where background information has been provided by Host organisations or by Avant Garde Dance.
- Practitioners must plan activities to ensure the whole group can participate.
- All representatives of Avant Garde Dance should demonstrate behaviour that promotes the welfare of young people, to reduce the likelihood of allegations being made.
- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication).
- Treating all young people equally, with respect and dignity.
- Being aware and respectful of young people from different faiths and cultures.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers young people.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Making activities fun, enjoyable and fair.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with participants (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a young person).
- Due to the physical nature of Avant Garde Dance's educational workshops, at the start of each session the practitioner should always remind young people that there will be contact-based activities. This prepares the participants, giving them the option of whether they are comfortable taking part.
- If any physical contact/support is required by the practitioners, it should be provided openly and with explanation.

**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, such as a schoolteacher or the young person's parents:**

- Spending time alone with young people away from others.
- Taking or dropping off a young person to an event or activity.
- Do not administer first aid to young people. There should always be a member of the host organisation present to take responsibility for incidents requiring first aid.
- Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained, for example physically handling disabled participants.
- Do not promise to keep secrets for a young person as this may be at the detriment of the young person's welfare.
- Do not give personal contact details to a young person (e.g. personal mobile phone number/Facebook profile)
- Do not use physical intervention to manage challenging behavior

**Practices never to be sanctioned:**

- Physical punishment or the threat of such
- Refusal to speak to or interact with the child.
- Depriving young people of food, water, access to changing facilities or toilets or other essential facilities.
- Verbal intimidation, ridicule or humiliation, or reducing a young person to tears as a form of control
- Engaging in rough or sexually provocative games.
- Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a young person.
- Failing to act upon and record any concerns raised by a young person.
- Doing things of a personal nature for young people that they can do for themselves.
- Inviting or allowing young people to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

## Procedures

### Incidents that must be reported/recorded:

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the appropriate officer. The DSO will liaise with you and Host organisation to ensure that the parents of the young person are informed, unless this puts the young person in danger:

- If you accidentally hurt a young person.
- If a young person seems distressed in any manner.
- If a young person appears to be behaving inappropriately or makes you feel uncomfortable.
- If a young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.
- If a young person discloses anything to you that causes concern.
- If physical intervention is required to manage challenging behaviour.

## TAKING ACTION AGAINST CHILD ABUSE

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As an artist or arts organisation working directly with young people you should always have a named contact with legal responsibility for participants under age 18 (usually a school teacher or youth worker at a Host organisation, or an emergency contact if during an activity hosted by Avant Garde Dance). You should never assume sole responsibility for a young person.

### If a young person discloses information to you:

It is possible that a young person, who is suffering or has suffered from abuse will confide in you. This is something that you should be prepared for and must handle carefully. The following action should be taken in this instance:

**Remain calm and in control – don't panic.**

**Listen carefully to what is being said – you need to remember as much as you can.**

**Find an appropriate, early opportunity to explain you will need to share information with others - do not promise to keep secrets.**

**Don't give your own view or opinions – or ask leading questions**

**Say what you will do next and who you will share information with**

**Make a record immediately afterwards then follow procedures**

Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, especially if they are on parts of the body that are not usually prone to injury.	Inappropriate sexual knowledge.
Fingertip bruising	Distrusting adults where a close relationship would normally be seen, for example, aunties and uncles or older brothers and sisters.
An injury where the explanation seems inconsistent.	Engaging in sexually explicit behavior.
A young person describing what appears to be abuse involving him / her.	Possible difficulty making friends.
Another young person / adult showing concern about the welfare of another child becoming very quiet, outbursts of anger etc.	Eating patterns may vary including overeating or loss of
	Losing weight unexpectedly.

It is important to note that this list only highlights some of the common indicators of abuse and that there are many more. The indicators above can also be present but may not mean that abuse is taking place. It is not your responsibility to judge whether abuse is taking place but it is our responsibility to act and report on any suspicions or concerns that we may have.

### **Allegations made against Avant Garde Dance staff**

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It is highly advisable to follow the good practice guidelines, as set out on p2, at all times to avoid allegations of child abuse. All allegations or concerns should be directed to the DSO or Artistic Director who will liaise with NSPCC for advice and work together to follow the procedures in this policy.

If the allegation made against a member of staff meets any of the following criteria Avant Garde Dance will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may harm a young person.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to a young person
- Behaved towards a young person/people in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with young people

The LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) is responsible for:

- Providing advice and liaison
- Monitoring the progress of each case
- Ensuring that cases are dealt with as quickly as possible
- Ensuring the process is fair and thorough

The LADO will also advise Avant Garde Dance on what, if anything, may be shared with the person who is subject to an allegation. They should decide, in consultation with the police or other relevant agencies, what may be shared in situations that may possibly lead to a criminal investigation.

### **Confidentiality**

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Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information will not be shared without consent, except where required to do so by law or by court order, or where it is in the public interest to do so, for example in cases of suspected child abuse.

Advice from NSPCC, Children's Services and the LADO will be followed carefully to ensure information is not shared unless completely necessary.

Information will 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).

## **Whistleblowing**

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The [NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line](#) is for anyone with child protection concerns in the workplace. The helpline provides support and advice to those who feel unable to get a child protection issue addressed by their employer. It can be contacted anonymously on [0800 028 0285](#).

## **Self-disclosure & employment of ex-offenders**

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In line with the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (UK wide) (1974) (Exceptions) (Amendments) Order 1986 (UK wide) it is a legal requirement that adults intending to work with young people should declare all convictions, including spent convictions. Avant Garde Dance requires applicants for posts involving contact with young people to complete a self-disclosure form (see appendix). Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar an applicant from working with the company, but this will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of any offences.

## **Disclosure and Baring Service Checks**

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In accordance with the Protection of Children Act 1999, Avant Garde Dance is required by law to check all company representatives that will work with young people in Regulated Activity under the age of 18 for history of a criminal record.

The Practitioner's consent is required for the company to fulfil this obligation and it is the practitioner that must submit their details to the Disclosure and Baring Service every two years. For regular practitioners Avant Garde Dance will encourage the use of the DBS Update Service enabling practitioners to reuse their DBS certificate and employers can carry out free, instant online Status Checks on employees' DBS if requested. Avant Garde Dance must see a valid DBS certificate in order for the Practitioner to represent the company.

## **Training**

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Checks are only part of the process to protect children and young people from possible abuse. Appropriate training will enable individuals to recognise their responsibilities with regard to their own good practice and the reporting of suspected poor practice/concerns of possible abuse.

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## Responsibility

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It is the responsibility of all Avant Garde Dance members to adhere to this policy and its guidelines. The effectiveness of this policy and its related procedures will be monitored and developed where necessary by the DSO and Senior Management. The Advisory Group will review the policy every two years and agree to any changes.

## Dissemination

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Avant Garde Dance will make the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy available to all staff and volunteers. It should be made clear to staff and volunteers that failure to conform to the policy will result in disciplinary action and possible exclusion from the organisation.

When Avant Garde Dance is working in partnership with another organisation or agency (e.g. a school), they will be made aware that this policy is in place and can be obtained from the website.

This policy will be available to all Avant Garde Dance members and any outside organisations or individuals. Requests for copies of the documents should be submitted to the DSO.

## Use of photographic/ filming equipment

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Photographing and filming young people under the age of 18 is allowed only when a legal guardian (parent/carer) has given prior consent and only if intended for use as a teaching aid or promotional tool. If a member of Avant Garde Dance intends to photograph or film young people participating in the company's Learning and Participation activities, they must speak to the DSO who will liaise with the host organisation and issue photo permission forms and guidelines to parents in advance (see appendix H and I). These forms must be signed by a legal guardian and returned on or before the day of photography/filming. If forms are not returned photography and filming cannot be allowed.

## Social Media

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Avant Garde Dance engages with several social media platforms – Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Vimeo and YouTube. The company is represented by authorised users who post on behalf of the organisation, and employees (permanent or temporary), performers and members of the creative teams who comment about on their personal channels.

The Digital Marketing Manager has overall responsibility for digital communications on all social platforms and content on our website. ([www.avantgardedance.com](http://www.avantgardedance.com)). Clear guidance and handbooks have been created for any other members of staff posting on these forums on behalf of the company.

## Worried About a Child?

Please contact;

Hackney First Access Screening Team (FAST) **0208 356 5500**

City of London Children & Families Team **0207 332 3621**

For out of hours (5pm – 9am), please contact the Emergency Duty Team **0208 356 2710**

For [non-recent \(historical\) abuse](#) please contact the numbers above and/ or the Police.

Worried about Exploitation? Call the NSPCC Exploitation Helpline **0808 800 5000**

City of London & Hackney Safeguarding Children Board - <http://www.chscb.org.uk/>