

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

## Policy Statement

J4K Performing Arts is a part-time performing arts school for children for ages 3-11 years of age in Cornwall that operates with a strong welfare focus.

The core aim of J4K Performing Arts is:

- To promote and advance the education of children and young people, particularly in the art of drama, by means of giving instruction in and promoting a study practice programme and teaching of all subjects connected with performing arts.
- To have fun through performing arts
- To develop performing arts, social and life skills through excellent teaching
- To foster an appreciation of the arts
- To recognise, nurture and develop talent
- To create an environment which welcomes and encourages all members of the community to participate in activity.

J4K Performing Arts is committed to safeguarding all children and young people that come into contact with our work. We believe that all children have an equal right to protection from abuse, emotional abuse and neglect regardless of their age, race, religion, ability, gender, language, background or sexual identity and consider the welfare of the child to be paramount.

This policy follows statutory guidance and legal frameworks that underpin the policy/procedure Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018) and defines a child or young person as anyone under the age of 18 (The Children's Act 1989, 2004 & Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006). This policy recognises that there may be additional needs associated with children and young people with disabilities, from minority ethnic backgrounds or who are otherwise excluded from mainstream services. We also recognise that some of our work is with young adults over 18 years, some of whom may be vulnerable at different times in their lives. The principles of this policy also, therefore, apply to anyone under the age of 25 who may use J4K Performing Arts.

We enable our staff and those who work with us to make informed and confident decisions regarding safeguarding issues and take all suspicions and allegations of abuse, emotional abuse and neglect seriously.

We expect everyone (staff, trustees, partners, agency staff, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of J4K Performing Arts) to have read, understood and adhere to this policy and related procedures, except where it has been formally agreed that another appropriate policy provides greater protection for children.

J4K Performing Arts will take every reasonable step to ensure that children and young people are protected where:

- Our own staff are directly involved in a project or programme
- We broker the relationship between a school/ young people's setting and a creative practitioner/ organisation
- We contract a creative practitioner/ organisation to work with a school/ young people's setting
- We work in partnership with another organisation or agency

We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Taking leadership responsibility and via a clear line of accountability for our safeguarding arrangements
- Adopting this policy and adhering to our associated procedures and code of conduct for staff
- Recruiting trustees, staff, creative practitioners and other adults working in schools/young people's settings safely, including the requirement for individuals to obtain criminal records checks from the Disclosure and Barring Service for eligible posts and the completion of all other elements of our recruitment procedure
- Sharing information about safeguarding and child protection with school staff, partners and our staff and trustees promptly, ensuring that staff are trained and supervised adequately, carry out their roles competently and that they work in an environment where they feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role
- Ensuring that children, young people and parents are able to raise concerns where they exist and are aware of our policy on safeguarding and child protection
- Sharing concerns with agencies who need to know involving children, school staff and parents appropriately and without delay, in accordance with our procedures for sharing information
- Ensuring that staff, volunteers and others working on behalf J4K Performing Arts are fully informed about the processes for dealing with concerns about possible abuse
- Adopting a clear policy around the management of allegations against staff and practitioners, in liaison with our partners
- ensuring that all staff, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of J4K Performing Arts knows the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead Person (DSL); Victoria Nagy and their role.
- ensuring that all staff, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of J4K Performing Arts understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and for referring any concerns to the DSL; Victoria Nagy [j4kperformingarts@yahoo.com](mailto:j4kperformingarts@yahoo.com) 07534900377

We are committed to reviewing this policy and procedures annually, updating our processes as appropriate. This policy was last updated Feb 2023 and is reviewed by Victoria Nagy and Jenifer Hare.

## 2. Understanding Child Abuse

Just 4 Kids Performing Arts ensures that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount;
- all children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse;
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- all staff have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

## Policy aims

The aim of the *Just 4 Kids Performing Arts* Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of *Just 4 Kids Performing Arts*;

- allow all staff to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues;
- to ensure all action is taken in line with the following legislation/guidance: Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures  
[https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/cornwall\\_scilly/index.html](https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/cornwall_scilly/index.html)

## **Promoting good practice**

Child abuse, particularly sexual 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 situations. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, 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 should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

When a child enters a club activity having been subjected to child abuse, performing arts can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem and confidence. In such instances Victoria Nagy will work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

## **Good practice guidelines**

All personnel are encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how we create a positive culture and climate:

### **Good practice means:**

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Making performing arts fun, enjoyable and promoting team work, fairness and objectivity.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people and their parents should always be consulted and their agreement gained.

- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance in performing arts.
- Being an excellent role model.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

### **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 in the club or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session, staff will:

- avoid spending time alone with children away from others
- avoid taking or dropping off a child to an event or activity.

### **Practices never to be sanctioned**

The following should **never** be sanctioned. We never:

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child
- do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves
- invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

### **Incidents that must be reported/recorded**

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the appropriate officer and record the incident. We will also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- if a pupil is accidentally or intentionally hurt during the classes or performances
- if he/she seems distressed in any manner
- if a performer appears to be sexually aroused by staff or pupil's actions
- if a performer misunderstands or misinterprets something a staff member/s have done.

### **Use of photographic/filming equipment at performing arts classes/workshops/events**

Permissions will be sought from parents concerning taking photographs or video film footage for sharing on Just 4 Kids Performing Arts online, such as our website and social media accounts.

## **Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers**

*Just 4 Kids Performing Arts* recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Preselection checks include the following:

- All volunteers/staff complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent will be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau.
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo).
- Staff and volunteers will complete the DBS check annually.

## **Interview and induction**

All employees will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers receive an induction, during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).
- Their qualifications should be substantiated.
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- Child protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified.
- They must read and sign that they have read the *Just 4 Kids Performing Arts* Child Protection Policy.

## **Training**

In addition to preselection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is not likely to result in allegations being made.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
- Work safely and effectively with children.

## ***Just 4 Kids Performing Arts* requires:**

- Performing Arts staff to attend a recognised child protection awareness training workshop, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection.
- Relevant personnel to receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.
- Relevant personnel to gain a national first aid training (where necessary).
- Attend update training when necessary. Child Protection training is refreshed every two years.

## Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in *Just 4 Kids Performing Arts* in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities.

*Just 4 Kids Performing Arts* will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- a criminal investigation
- a child protection investigation
- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision.

### Action if there are concerns

#### 1. Concerns about poor practice:

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; *Just 4 Kids Performing Arts* Safeguarding Lead will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

- If the allegation is about poor practice by the *Just 4 Kids Performing Arts* Safeguarding Lead, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to:
  - Local Authority Designated Officer.
  - 01872 326536.
  - lado@cornwall.gov.uk.
- 2. who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

#### 2. Concerns about suspected abuse:

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the *Just 4 Kids Performing Arts* Safeguarding Lead (Vicky Nagy, Tel: 07534900377 – 24 hours), who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

- The *Just 4 Kids Performing Arts* Safeguarding Lead can refer the allegation to the multi-agency referral unit, who may involve the police. Call multi-agency referral unit on 0300 123 1116. Out of hours, call 01208 251 300.
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
- If the *Just 4 Kids Performing Arts* Safeguarding Lead is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to Jenifer Hare, Deputy Safeguarding Lead, who will refer the allegation to LADO.

## Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- the Just 4 Kids Performing Arts Safeguarding Lead
- the School (if appropriate) where the club takes place
- the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- the person making the allegation
- social services/police
- the *Just 4 Kids Performing Arts* Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead will contact Multi Agency Referral Unit (MARU). The MARU provides a multi-disciplinary response to concerns about the welfare or safety of a child or young person. Staff will seek advice about who should approach the alleged abuser (or parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

Information should 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).

## Internal enquiries and suspension

- The *Just 4 Kids Performing Arts* Safeguarding Lead will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries *Just 4 Kids Performing Arts* will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the *Just 4 Kids Performing Arts* must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse:

- Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189, E-mail: [bac@bacp.co.uk](mailto:bac@bacp.co.uk), Internet: [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk) .
- Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

## Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children).

Where such an allegation is made, the club should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

### **Action if bullying is suspected**

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying in performing arts:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns (It is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately). Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the Just 4 Kids Performing Arts Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead (wherever the bullying is occurring).

### **Concerns outside the immediate performing arts environment (e.g. a parent or carer):**

- Report your concerns to the Just 4 Kids Performing Arts Safeguarding Lead, who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible or the school.

### **See below for the information MARU or the police will need:**

- If the Safeguarding Lead is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact MARU or the police or the school immediately.
- MARU and the Just 4 Kids Performing Arts Safeguarding Lead will decide how to involve the parents/carers.
- Maintain confidentiality on a **need to know** basis only.
- See below regarding information needed for social services.

### **Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse**



To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible referral to the police or MARU should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact social services or the police direct, or the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111