



THE ROYAL BALLET SCHOOL

Child Protection Policy

The School aims to provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident, and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties believing they will be effectively listened to.

The Head of Boarding Simon Bushnell, is the Lower School's designated Child Protection Co-ordinator (CPC) and the Head of Lower School, Pippa Hogg the Deputy CPC. Martin Fosten, the Academic and Pastoral Principal is the CPC at the Upper School.

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set out clear guidelines and procedures which should be followed by all the staff at The Royal Ballet School whenever there is concern about possible or actual child abuse. Everybody within the school who has a managerial function is expected to ensure that these procedures and guidelines are available to, and understood by, all the staff for whom they have responsibility. This policy is included in parent/ student handbooks at both the Upper and Lower schools and additional copies are available on request from the school secretary. This policy is also available to all staff via the School's I.T. network.

What is Child Abuse?

Where any person, having permanent or temporary custody of a child, mistreats or knowingly colludes with the mistreatment of that child this is deemed to be abuse.

Abuse can take several forms, and the following are commonly used categories:-

Physical Abuse

This is any actual or likely physical injury to a child which has been deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented. It often manifests itself as unexplained injury or as injuries where the explanation is not consistent with the extent or pattern of the injuries. (Giving a child poisonous substances, inappropriate drugs and alcohol can also come in this category)

Emotional Abuse

This is actual or likely adverse effects on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by severe or persistent criticism, rejection or emotional ill-treatment. This might also be associated with physical or sexual exploitation.

Neglect

Neglect is the failure to protect a child from exposure to danger or failing to carry out important aspects of care so that the child's health or development might be impaired. This could include poor attention to medical needs,



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cleanliness and physical care as well as failure to protect from cold and starvation.

Sexual Abuse

This is the actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent or their involvement in any sexual activity which is unlawful, which they do not fully understand or to which they are unable to give informed consent. Activities which violate the sexual taboos of family roles may also be deemed abuse as may non-contact activities such as allowing the child to watch pornographic videos or to witness sexual activity.

It is the duty of all members of the school staff (academic, pastoral, administrative, domestic and maintenance and whether full-time or part-time) to be alert to the possibility of its occurrence and to act, in accordance with this policy, if they suspect it may be happening.

How do I recognise Child Abuse?

The simplest cases to recognise are non-accidental injuries and injuries which are not consistent with the explanation given. Concerns or incidents might be reported by another pupil or an adult but other signs which when taken together could indicate abuse are

- Unusual tiredness, inappropriate clothing or poor personal hygiene
- An change in appetite – a significant and prolonged increase or decrease
- Unexplained patterns of lateness or illness
- Sudden changes in behaviour or mood e.g. hyperactivity, extreme passivity depression
- Acting out of aggressive, disruptive, unacceptable or inappropriate behaviour in such a way as to indicate stress or turmoil
- Reluctance to change in front of peers and others of same gender
- Fear of medical treatment
- Stories of a 'friend' who suffers from abuse

Do not jump to conclusions because of the presence of just one of these factors they probably occur at some stage of maturity in many children. They should not be considered in isolation but viewed within the context of the child's overall demeanour and informed by your knowledge of the particular parent/child relationship.

Additional signs, which may be symptomatic of sexual abuse include

- Delayed or no learning progress
- Low self-esteem
- Acting in a sexually inappropriate way towards adults and/or peers
- Uneasiness or unusual behaviour with adults



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- Drawings of a specific sexual nature

What should I do if I suspect abuse?

If any member of staff has reason to believe that a pupil may be suffering from abuse he/she must communicate that suspicion to the designated Child Protection Co-ordinator at the earliest possible moment. (If the suspicion is against the Child Protection Co-ordinator, communication should be made with the Deputy Protection Co-ordinator or directly with Ofsted **Tel. 08456 404040**. If the suspicion is against another member of staff, please see 'whistleblowing' policy below.)

1. If any member of staff has reason to believe that a pupil may be suffering from abuse he/she must communicate that suspicion to the designated Child Protection Co-ordinator at the earliest possible moment.
2. If you have been approached by a pupil, then it is vital to listen to and reassure that pupil but do not promise that you will keep the conversation secret. Explain that you are ready to listen but that when you have heard the account there may be parts that you have to tell somebody else in order to get the help required.
3. The approach should be to acquire as much information as possible, without seeming to cross-examine the pupil. It is particularly important not to use leading questions or to put words into the pupil's mouth. It is better if the pupil can present his/her account uninterrupted and no suggestions should be made with regard to the interpretation of the alleged events.
4. Immediately after the conversation, careful notes must be made giving an accurate and full account of what was said. These notes should include all relevant information regarding the setting and circumstances of the communication, including the time and the persons present, and a copy of these notes must be given to the Child Protection Co-ordinator.
5. As soon as possible and certainly within hours of the event, the pupil should be interviewed by not less than two adults and a careful record must be kept of this interview. One of the objectives must be to ascertain if there has been any previous complaint and, if so, to ensure that the Child Protection Coordinator has written details of this complaint as soon as possible.



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All these processes must be conducted in conditions of complete discretion and information should only be given to other staff on a 'need-to-know' basis

How will allegations be treated?

General allegations

Any further investigations will be governed by the child protection procedures established by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. These are available from the Richmond Local Authority website (http://www.richmond.gov.uk/child_protection) from the designated CPC and in the Nelson Room at White Lodge. The school's Child Protection Coordinator will take any allegations to the Director of the school and, together, they will decide whether it should be referred to the Initial Response Team* and if not, what further action is needed.

*Teams are called Initial Response Teams in Richmond (for White Lodge), Contact and Assessment Service in Hammersmith (Wolf House) and Social Services assessment teams in Westminster (Floral Street)

Allegations made against the Director or another member of staff

In the event of an allegation being made against the Director of the School, the School's Child Protection Coordinator will seek the advice of the local Initial Response Team and/or the local police and will also inform the Governor with responsibility for child protection and the Chairman of Governors.

In the event of an allegation against a member of staff, the CPC will liaise with the Director and will seek the advice of the local Initial Response Team and/or the local police. Suspension pending further investigation by these authorities will be considered and a risk assessment will be put in place.

Child Protection 'Whistleblowing Policy'.

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of the CPC, or a member of the SMT, or their Line Manager and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Contacting outside agencies.

Should a decision be made to refer a case to the Initial Response Team the parents of those involved will be informed. However should the CPC and



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Director decide that to inform parents would increase the risk to the child no contact will be made and further legal and CP advice will be taken.

If the Child Protection Coordinator has any doubts about the case before them they should take the advice of the Richmond (in the case of the lower school) or Hammersmith (Upper school) Social Services Department and their respective child protection coordinators.

Should a referral be made, the CPC should ask to be informed of the timing of the strategy discussions between the statutory agencies which will decide whether and how to investigate. The CPC should clarify with the investigating agencies when, how and by whom the parents and the child will be told that a referral has been made.

Recruitment and Training

The CPCs will undertake inter agency training provided by the Safeguarding Children Board with refresher courses being taken every two years

All staff, including the Director will undertake training that equips them with the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their responsibilities for child protection. This training must be refreshed at a minimum of once every 3 years.

New members of staff and volunteers will be made aware of the schools arrangements for CP and their responsibilities as part of their induction process.

The School will operate safe recruitment procedures and make sure that all appropriate checks and references are completed (including CRB and list 99 checks)

The Head of the Lower school will attend Independent Schools multi agency child protection conferences and seminars and ensure that literature such as DfES and LEA guidelines, 'Every Child Matters' and 'Safeguarding Children in Education' is made available to all staff.

Role of Governors

One Governor will be assigned specific responsibility for child protection in the school. The Governor will undertake interagency training provided by the Safeguarding Children Board and refresher training to the same level as the CPCs. The nominated Governor is Mr Nicolas Chisholm.

Ofsted

Any incidences involving child protection must also be communicated by the CPC to Ofsted

Tel. 08456 404040

Review



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The Child Protection Policy will be reviewed annually and brought before the Academic and Pastoral committee for approval. This review will include looking at how the duties of child protection have been discharged.

Contacts for Richmond (White Lodge)

What should I do if I think a child is being abused?

If you or a child is in immediate danger you should always phone **999**. If you are concerned that a child is being abused you can phone Social Services Initial Response Team on **020 8891 7969**.

Outside of office hours you can phone the Emergency Out-of-Hours team on **020 8744 2442**.

We also work closely with the local police. They have a specialist team who deal with Child Protection. You can contact them on **020 8247 6331**.

If you do not know whether to report your concerns you can phone the NSPCC where you can speak in confidence to someone who will advise you what would be the best thing to do. Their helpline number is **0808 800 5000**.

Contacts for Hammersmith and Chelsea (Wolf House)

Children, Young People (under 18 years old) and Families

The Contact & Assessment Service

Tel: 020 8753 5392
Fax: 020 8753 5880

The Hammersmith and Kensington Police Child Protection Unit

Tel. 020 8246 0830

What happens if I need help outside office hours? Our Emergency Duty Team provides a service outside office opening hours, including weekends and public holidays. The team will respond to any crises or emergency which cannot wait until the next working day. They can be contacted on 020 8748 8588.



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Contacts for Westminster (Floral Street)

Westminster Child protection unit

Telephone 0207 641 7668

Fax 0207 641 7672

Social services assessment team 0207 641 7525

Head of Commissioning, Child Protection and Quality 0207 641 7665

Child protection advisers 0207 641 7675 and 7673

Address:

1st Floor

215 – 219 Lisson Grove, London NW8 8AE

Metropolitan Child Protection Unit

Tel. 0208 246 0830 Fax 0208 246 0817

Address:

Whitlock House, 6 Earls Court Road, W9 6EG

8am-6pm Monday to Friday (Officer on call outside these hours)

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M Fosten- Child Protection Coordinator