



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Showtime Circus is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people up to the age of 18. A 'child' is anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday.

We recognise our responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation and our legal duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014, the Children Act 1989 and 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

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. We believe all children, whatever their age, gender, sexuality, race, disability, educational attainment or economic circumstance have the right to protection from abuse. We recognise some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.

This policy applies to our paid staff, guest teachers, volunteers, dancers or anyone working on behalf of Showtime Circus. All staff and volunteers have a

strict obligation to never subject a child or young person to harm or abuse. If this is not followed, any allegations or suspicions of abuse will be taken very seriously and treated as gross misconduct. Our policy can be viewed by parents of children who attend Showtime Circus and there will always be a copy kept on site.

The purpose of this policy:

To protect children and young people who come to Showtime Circus including in regular classes, performances, workshops or any other activities linked to the circus school.

To provide parents, staff and volunteers guidance for our approach to child protection and what they should do if they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or is at risk of, harm.

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Showtime Circus has a designated Safeguarding lead (DSL) who is in charge of ensuring that the child protection policy is adhered to. They will also track and record any safeguarding concerns and ensure that any concerns are shared with the correct authorities.

The DSL is Mark Hill who can be contacted on: 07938778610

Policy updated on: Jan 2025

Showtime Circus Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

All teachers and volunteers at Showtime Circus will read and have access to this policy. They must also understand their legal and moral responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation and be able to confirm how they will safeguard the children in their care. This includes how to report concerns that arise about a child or young person, or a worker's conduct towards a child or young person to the DSL or appropriate authorities.

The DSL will provide this information through trainings and regular meetings. Any updates will be communicated with staff.

Our duties and responsibilities:

- It is our requirement that all staff (teachers & volunteers over 16) have a clear and up-to-date enhanced DBS check and that they have up-to-date safeguarding training. These are checked annually to ensure they are in date.
- Our teachers and volunteers have a duty to report anything concerning that has happened in class or any other concerns to the DSL at the next available opportunity. This must also be confirmed in writing as soon as possible if the initial conversation is verbal.
- Our teachers must take practical steps to keep our children safe from harm and abuse, including no disclosing of sensitive/personal information, keeping children safe from hazards in class and responding appropriately in the event of an accident.

Showtime Circus will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- Ensuring everybody has the right to do circus,
- Providing a safe space for our pupils where their views are valued and they are treated with respect and dignity,
- Focussing on the benefits of circus helping individuals personally and socially as well as physically,
- Building an environment of trust and providing space to talk, communicate and be listened to.
- Making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern.

Consent to share information:

At Showtime Circus, there are certain circumstances where we ask for consent from our parents such as photo/video permissions and performance permissions.

If a teacher discloses information to the DSL (see Appendix A) and we have concerns about the safety of a child and which must be referred to the Worcestershire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, we will seek consent from the parents/carers involved who will be informed that we are referring a case and why.

If parents, carers or children refuse consent to information being shared, we are still able to refer to Worcestershire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub but it must be reported why consent is not given and this must be recorded. There are some instances where consent may not be sought:

- In the event of seeking medical attention (child is in immediate danger)
- If obtaining consent from the parent/carer could place the child or another family member at risk

- If having a discussion with parents/carers will put you or a staff member at risk

It is our legal duty to disclose necessary information to relevant authorities as part of our responsibility for child protection. Any decisions to share information to protect a child from harm must be recorded with the reasons for the disclosure and whether or not the information has been shared. If the information is shared, you must record what has been shared and who with.

Child Protection:

Child Protection is part of safeguarding and focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Significant harm is when someone may abuse or neglect a child when harm is inflicted or if there has been failure to act to prevent harm.

Children may be abused by those known to them (e.g. family members or in a school/community setting) or by those unknown to them (e.g. on the internet). Abuse can be inflicted by an adult(s) or other children. Please see Appendix B for definitions of types of abuse.

All teachers and volunteers must be able to recognise and know how to act upon evidence of harm or abuse where a child's health or development is impaired. Any concerns must be recorded and shared with the DSL.

What we do at Showtime Circus Factory to protect our children:

- Treat all dancers and parents with respect and dignity,
- Put the welfare of each child first,
- Ensure all paid staff and volunteers (aged 16+) who will be working with children will have an Enhanced DBS Check,
- Ensure all paid staff are fully insured,
- Never accepting bullying of any form,
- Ensure all adult members will provide a positive role model (including those helping in classes),
- Take action to stop any inappropriate behaviour,
- Keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children,
- Undertake relevant professional development and training,

- Ensure all contact and medical details for every child is up to date and available at the place of teaching or performance,
- Ensure all staff receive safeguarding training
- Ensure good reporting to our DSL and onwards to children's social care if we ever suspect harm.
- Foster an environment of good communication, transparency and trust

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 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.

The member of staff who reports the allegation or the member of staff alleged against must not have any part of any further investigation including questioning the children.

The LADO for Hertfordshire is: 0300 123 4043

Safer Recruitment Policy:

When recruiting teachers and volunteers, we will follow the following process to ensure that any new staff are suitable to work with children.

We will:

- Advertise vacancies widely
- Ask for identification
- Ask for original copies of any qualifications
- Conduct interviews with at least two people present
- Ask for two references (one must be an employer)
- Ask for evidence of a clean, enhanced DBS check or apply for one (teachers will not be able to start their position until this has come through)
- Ensure new staff are knowledgeable of our policies and safeguarding procedures
- Seek relevant written and telephone references.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Appendix A:

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.

Appendix B Types of abuse

Neglect is “the ongoing failure to meet a child’s basic physical and psychological needs” (Department for Education, 2018)”. This is a form of abuse that can happen at any age; sometimes before a child is born due to maternal substance abuse. There are four main types: physical neglect (not meeting basic needs such as food, clothing or shelter and not providing for safety), educational neglect (not ensuring a child receives an education), emotional neglect (ignoring, humiliating, intimidating or isolating a child), medical neglect (not providing appropriate health care or refusing care).

Sexual abuse is when a child is forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities whether or not they are aware what is happening. This can be physical contact (including assault by penetration or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, touching outside of clothing) or non-contact activities (flashing at a child, encouraging or forcing a child to watch/hear sexual acts, making, viewing or distributing child abuse images) and can be online and offline (Department for Education, 2018). Children may also be groomed with the intent of abuse or sexually exploiting a child for money, power or status.

Emotional abuse is emotional maltreatment of a child which has a severe and persistent negative effect on the child’s emotional development (Department for Education, 2017). Children can be emotionally abused by anyone (e.g. parents/carers, family members, other adults, other children). It may include ignoring the child and not showing affection or rejection such as verbal humiliation, criticism or excluding a child from activities. Children may also have their social interactions restricted causing isolation. It may also include exploitation of children by encouraging or forcing them to take part in criminal activities or activities that are not appropriate for their stage of development or threatening violence, bullying or deliberately frightening a child. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all other types of maltreatment but can also occur alone.

Physical abuse is defined as deliberately hurting a child and causing physical harm (Department of Health, 2017; Department for Education, 2018). Injuries may be inflicted such as: bruises, broken bones, burns, cuts and may involve hitting, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning and any other method of causing non-accidental harm to a child. Physical abuse may also occur when a parent/carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Please note: this is not a complete list but contains examples. It is not your responsibility to determine whether abuse has taken place but simply share your concerns with your DSL.

For more information about types of abuse and how to recognise them please visit the NSPCC website (<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect>) for detailed information

Date: Jan 2025