



SAFEGUARDING POLICY – SHOWTIME CIRCUS (UPDATED JANUARY 2025)

1. Policy Statement 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 yet reached their 18th birthday. We recognise our duty to promote safe practice and protect children from harm, abuse, and exploitation, and to respond appropriately to any allegations, reports, or suspicions of abuse.

This policy reflects our obligations under:

- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children Acts 1989 & 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)

2. Scope This policy applies to all Showtime Circus staff, including paid employees, guest teachers, volunteers, and anyone acting on behalf of the organisation.

3. Aims

- To protect children and young people involved in all activities run by Showtime Circus.
- To provide staff, volunteers, and parents/carers with guidance on our approach to safeguarding.

4. Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) Each Showtime Circus centre will appoint a designated DSL and Deputy DSL who will ensure the safeguarding policy is implemented locally and that any safeguarding concerns are addressed appropriately. Please contact your local centre for details of these.

- STC HQ DSL: Mark Hill - 07938778610
- STC HQ Deputy DSL: Jessica Wesson - 07956050925

The DSL ensures compliance with this policy, provides training, records and reports concerns, and liaises with the appropriate statutory agencies in the relevant local authority area.

5. Commitment to Equality and Inclusion We believe all children, regardless of age, gender, race, disability, sexuality, or background, have a right to protection. We recognise that some children are particularly vulnerable due to previous experiences, communication needs, or other factors.

6. Responsibilities of Staff and Volunteers All personnel must:

- Hold a current enhanced DBS certificate (renewed or checked annually).
- Complete Level 1 safeguarding training annually (Level 3 for DSL/Deputy DSL).
- Be familiar with this policy and understand their responsibilities.
- Report safeguarding concerns promptly to the DSL and confirm in writing.
- Treat children with respect and dignity and act as positive role models.

7. Creating a Safe Environment Showtime Circus will:

- Ensure all activities and environments are risk-assessed.
- Respect and value the voice of every child.
- Make safeguarding information easily accessible.
- Provide safe online and offline environments.

8. Information Sharing and Consent Information will be shared without consent where there is risk of significant harm. While we aim to work in partnership with parents/carers, consent is not a prerequisite when referring concerns to statutory services.

We may not seek consent when:

- Seeking urgent medical help.
- It may place a child or another person at risk.
- It may endanger a staff member.

All information sharing decisions will be documented, including whether consent was sought and the reasons.

9. Child Protection Child protection is part of safeguarding and focuses on individual children at risk. Abuse may be physical, emotional, sexual, or due to neglect. Children may be abused by adults or peers. (See Appendix B for definitions.)

Staff must:

- Recognise signs of harm and abuse.
- Record disclosures verbatim.
- Report concerns immediately to the DSL.
- Never promise to keep secrets or investigate concerns themselves.

10. Online Safety We recognise the risks posed by digital environments. Staff must:

- Promote safe digital use.
- Be alert to signs of online abuse, including grooming, cyberbullying, or exploitation.
- Encourage open discussions about online safety.

11. Child-on-Child Abuse We do not tolerate any form of child-on-child abuse. Staff are trained to:

- Identify harmful behaviour between children.
- Act swiftly and appropriately.
- Provide support to all affected children.

12. Allegations Against Staff Allegations must be reported immediately to the DSL. The DSL will:

- Refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) relevant to the centre's local authority area if a child may have been harmed.
- Ensure the staff member does not participate in the investigation.

LADO Contact: Each centre will maintain up-to-date contact information for their local LADO.

13. Safer Recruitment Our safer recruitment process includes:

- Wide advertisement of roles.
- Interviews with at least two people present.
- Verification of identity, qualifications, and enhanced DBS.
- Two references, one from a recent employer.
- Policy induction and safeguarding briefing before commencing work.

14. Record Keeping All safeguarding records are:

- Stored securely and confidentially.

- Retained for a minimum of 6 years (or until the child reaches 25).
- Accessible only to authorised individuals.

15. Whistleblowing Staff are encouraged to report poor practice or concerns internally or externally without fear of retribution. Reports may be made to the DSL, Deputy DSL, or external whistleblowing authorities.

16. Monitoring and Review

- The policy will be reviewed annually or after a significant safeguarding incident.
 - Annual audits and spot checks will be carried out.
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Appendix A: Disclosure Guidance If a child discloses abuse:

- Stay calm and listen.
- Don't make promises of secrecy.
- Reassure the child.
- Report to the DSL immediately.
- Write a record of the disclosure in the child's own words, signed and dated.

Appendix B: Definitions of Abuse Refer to NSPCC guidance:

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect>

- **Physical Abuse**
- **Sexual Abuse**
- **Emotional Abuse**
- **Neglect**
- **Child-on-child Abuse**
- **Online Abuse**