



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Revised November 2020

The Brook Theatre, Chatham, Kent ME4 4SE

✉ info@loopdancecompany.co.uk ☎ 01634 831531

Loop Dance Company is a registered company in England number 4847257 & as a Charity number 1112763

Safeguarding Policy last updated: 25/11/2020

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

STATEMENT

Loop Dance Company is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all people it works with, particularly children and vulnerable people and has established this policy and a staff code of practice.

DEFINITIONS

The law defines someone as a child until they are 18 years old.

Safeguarding involves excluding known child offenders, preventing abuse in our care and recognising and responding to the signs of abuse.

When referring to Loop Dance Company staff this includes: company dancers/teachers, contracted freelance teachers and volunteers.

PROCEDURE

Loop Dance Company aim to:

- Ensure that all staff who have access to young people undergo a DBS check, and references will be sought from previous employers.
- All staff will be given clear established roles for education work.
- All workshops conducted with young people will be in the presence of a teacher, youth and/or community leader etc.
- Teach in teams of at least two people, where possible or another member of staff will be present.
- Ensure all staff undergo a child protection briefing and safe touch training
- Ensure all staff undergo an element of basic training to identify signs and symptoms of abuse and to deal with any concerns or disclosures, record information and pass onto the relevant body.
- Request information regarding special needs of children before the workshop commences.
- Carry out evaluations after all work involving young people, completed by teachers/staff members, to ensure that any problems are identified and addressed in the future.
- Ensure that all staff understand and have access to Loop Dance Company's policy, procedures and guidelines on Child Protection and that all staff understand the principles and procedures including our different roles and responsibilities.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

Concerns for a child may come to the attention of staff in a variety of ways through observation of behaviour, injuries or through disclosure. Any member of staff who has a concern should discuss this with the Loop Dance Company Safeguarding Monitor (Nina Atkinson) as soon as is practically possible.

The Loop Dance Company Safeguarding Monitor will report all incidences relating to children and vulnerable adults to the host organisation and will assist in decisions as to whether the child or vulnerable adult should be referred to Social Services. This may lead to consultation with Social Services for advice as soon as is practically possible.

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Concerns will in most cases be discussed with parents of the child/carers of vulnerable adults concerned by the member of staff with the concern (after the member of staff has spoken with the Loop Dance Company Child Protection Monitor). The exception to this is when it is inappropriate to do so for reasons of possible increased risk to the child/person or staff member, or because doing so might undermine a subsequent investigation process.

RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES

If a person makes a disclosure of abuse to a member of staff they will:

- NEVER promise to keep it a secret
- Allow the person to make the disclosure at their own pace in their own way
- Avoid interrupting except to clarify what the child is saying
- Not ask leading questions or probe for information that the person does not volunteer
- Reassure the person that they have been heard and explain what you will do next and to whom you report to
- Record the conversation as soon as possible

The **agreement of a child's parents** should be obtained in writing before a referral of a child is made to Social Services, including where the child is in need of protection, providing this will not put the child at an increased risk of harm. Advice should be sought from Social Services if it is unclear whether parents should be informed of the referral before it is made.

GENERAL CODE OF CONDUCT

Members of staff who work with children must ensure that he/she:

- Acknowledges the age group and capabilities they are working with and match their working style accordingly.
- Does not use any foul or abusive language or untoward behaviour.
- Does not bully any children and that there is no bullying going on within the group (if there is, this must be reported at once to the supervisor in charge at that time).
- Shows respect and courtesy to the children at all times.
- Is always punctual and on time.
- Does not go into the toilet alone with the children.
- Only undertakes meetings with individual children if they are in as open a venue as possible, and part of the organised activity taking place.
- Does not meet with children outside organised activities, unless it is with the full knowledge and consent of the supervisory adult (s) and/or the parents and that Loop as an organisation is fully aware of the meeting.
- If on occasion privacy is required, a supervisory adult should be informed and at least one should be within earshot of the conversation. The door should be left open.
- Avoids unnecessary physical contact with children. When physical touch is required during dance teaching, or when an injury occurs or the children are distressed, the involved adult should explain to the children exactly what he or she is doing but only with the consent of the child and in full view of as many persons as possible.
- Be careful of extending hugs and celebrations where bodily contact is involved. This is important not only for the protection of the children but of Loop volunteers, workshop leaders, facilitators and trainees also.

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- Records and reports the incident to another adult if a child touches them in an inappropriate place. While an incident could be purely innocent or horseplay, efforts should be made to inform the offending child that this behaviour is not acceptable – but in a manner that does not intimidate the child.
- Car journeys, however short should be with the full knowledge and consent of the parents and someone in charge of the venue or location. It is not a good practice to be alone with the child in the car and if possible it is suggested that any pickup point or drop-off point should occur with at least two children.
- Never keeps suspicions of abuse by a colleague to themselves. If there is an attempt to cover up they could be implicated by their silence. It is vital to inform the appropriate person at Loop Dance Company at once, of their suspicions.
- Should never engage in sexually provocative manner or indulge in horseplay, which may be construed by children or adults in the wrong manner.
- Should never allow children to use foul language unchallenged.
- Never makes sexually suggestive comments about, or to the children, even in fun.
- Never lets allegations made by the children to go un-addressed and un-recorded.
- If a complaint is made a Loop Dance Company member (in this case Nina Atkinson, Artistic Director) should be informed immediately and a record of that meeting logged.

ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING MEMBERS OF STAFF

Any proven allegation of misconduct may result in the dismissal of the member of staff or appropriate alternative disciplinary action.

TRAINING

All staff will be trained to preserve safeguarding and through Loop Dance Company's ongoing professional development programme. Issues covered will include: company policy and procedure, allegations, reporting lines, "safe touch" and legislation.

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

The Loop Dance Company Child Protection Monitor

Nina Atkinson

Tel: 01634 831 531 Mob: 07798 605 336

Social Services

If you think that a child or young person under the age of 18 years is being abused or neglected, you should inform the local office of your Social Services Department or the police. The telephone numbers of the Kent County Council and the Medway Council Social Services Department offices are:

- Ashford 0845 330 2967
- Canterbury 01227 698 500
- Dartford 01322 277 744
- Dover 01304 204 915

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- Gravesend 01474 328 664
- Sevenoaks & Swanley 01322 611 000
- Shepway 01303 253 476
- Swale 01795 473 333
- Thanet 01843 860 000
- Tonbridge & Malling 01732 362 442
- Medway Council 01634 331 640/1/2/3
- Tunbridge Wells 01892 515 045

These offices are open from Monday to Friday from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm.

Outside of office hours and at weekends and public holidays, the emergency service should be contacted by telephoning 08457 626 777.

If you are a member of the public, you will be asked for your name and address and details of the child and the concerns you have. These are to help Social Services to make further enquiries and to contact you again if necessary. Information about your name and address will be treated as confidential. You will be informed if it is necessary to identify you if court proceedings are required to protect the child or to prosecute an abuser.

If you are a professional worker with information or concerns about a child or young person, you should inform your local Social Services office as above. In addition, you should also confirm your referral in writing as quickly as possible. If you are in doubt about making a referral to Social Services, you should consult, within your agency, with the manager or practitioner with designated responsibility for child protection. If this is not possible or if you need further advice, you should consult with your local Social Services office.

NSPCC

Child Protection Helpline

Tel: 0808 800 5000

Textphone: 0800 056 0566

Police

You should **dial 999** when **immediate** help is needed and:

- life is threatened
- people are injured
- crime is in progress
- offenders are nearby

You should **call your local police station** when:

- there is no immediate danger to life

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- the crime isn't in progress and the offender isn't nearby

Examples of non-urgent incidents are:

- 'my bike has been stolen'
- 'my car has been vandalised'
- 'I think I've found some stolen property'
- 'I was in a minor traffic accident yesterday'

Report a non-urgent incident:

By phone

Call the main switchboard on **01622 690 690**

*These calls are answered by the Kent Police Force Communications Centre in Maidstone. You will be diverted to the person best able to respond to your call.

By letter

Kent Police Headquarters, Sutton Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 9BZ

Signed by Loop Dance Company's nominated Safeguarding person:



Nina Atkinson
Artistic Director
Loop Dance Company

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