



# DAVID STINSON THEATRE SCHOOL

## Safeguarding Policy

### 1. Introduction

Everyone who participates in David Stinson Theatre School is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. David Stinson Theatre School have a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, coaches, teachers, staff and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

This policy applies to all activities of David Stinson Theatre School, including, but not limited to: David Stinson Theatre School (Saturday School), David Stinson Holiday Clubs, and David Stinson Theatre School (Extended Day Provision).

This policy applies to all staff; including managers, directors, paid staff, volunteers, advisers, sessional workers, agency staff, students, and anyone else working on behalf of David Stinson Theatre School.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of David Stinson Theatre School and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children's Act 1989)

#### 1.1 Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- protect children and young people who receive David Stinson Theatre School services. This includes the children of adults who use our services;
- provide staff, volunteers and anyone who works on behalf of David Stinson Theatre School, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

#### 1.2 Guiding Principles

The principles below will guide all elements of safeguarding activity delivered by those at all levels within David Stinson Theatre School:

- child care which is respectful and informed
- timely safeguarding action

- the involvement of others on a need to know basis only
- the early identification and management of actual or potential risks
- the discharging of duties to the highest level of professional behaviour
- the active commitment of all in promoting and keeping our community safe

### **1.3 Legal Framework**

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- General Data Protection Regulations 2018
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedom Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014

### **1.4 The definition of safeguarding**

In relation to children and young people, David Stinson Theatre School adopts the definition used in the Children Act 2004 and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance document: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013, which define safeguarding and promoting children and young people's welfare as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

## **2. Good Practice**

### **2.1 Introduction**

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities in David Stinson Theatre School where everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of employees or participants of David Stinson Theatre School to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child, as explained in section 4.

This section will help you identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.

### **2.2 Good Practice**

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and action:

- always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no commitment to secrets)
- if care for children requires personal support such as toilet, wherever possible ensure that there is at least another responsible person present, speak through what you will do with the child; and providing an account of your actions with the parent/carer of the child
- make the experience of David Stinson Theatre School Ltd fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity
- always put the welfare of the young person first
- maintain a safe and appropriate distance with children (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have a sexual relationship with a child or to share a room with them)
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given
- request written parental consent if employees/helpers are required to transport young people in their cars
- gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements e.g. overnight stays
- ensure that if mixed gender groups are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff
- ensure that at away events adults should not enter a young person's room or invite young people to their rooms
- be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people
- always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback for student's performance
- recognising the developmental needs and capacity of the young person and do not risk sacrificing welfare in a desire for company or personal achievements
- secure written parental consent for the company to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given, and keeping a record of near misses
- treat all children, young people and adults with respect and dignity, keeping your own language, attitude and body language respectful
- actively communicate with children, young people and vulnerable adults and involve them in planning and running activities where possible
- never use illicit drugs, abuse prescription medication, or use alcohol when responsible for a child or vulnerable adult
- avoid showing favouritism to any one child, adult or group or doing anything to reinforce their possible infatuations towards you.

If anything that you encounter during the execution of your duties or and in relation to David Stinson Theatre School operation causes concern this should be escalated immediately.

## 3. Defining Child Abuse

### 3.1 Introduction

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

There are four main types of abuse: **physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect**. The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person.

Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

### 3.2 Types of Abuse

**Physical Abuse:** where adults physically hurt or injure a young person e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute child abuse.

This includes when a parent/guardian reports non-existent symptoms or illness deliberately causes ill health in a young person they are looking after. This is called Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

**Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of young people that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn.

Emotional abuse in performance may occur when the young person is constant criticised, given negative feedback, expected to perform at levels that are above their capability. Other forms of emotional abuse could take the form of name calling and bullying.

**Neglect** occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.

Neglect in performance could occur when a teacher/director does not keep the young person safe, or exposing them to undue cold/heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

**Sexual Abuse** Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Child Sexual Exploitation** is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

In performance, activities which might involve physical contact with young people could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Also, the power of the teacher/director/helper over young performers, if misused, may lead to abusive situations developing.

**Bullying whilst not a form of abuse in its own right is a serious issue and is founded on one or more types of abuse.** It may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are three main types of bullying.

It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

### 3.3 Indicators of Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- the young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a young person
- unexplained changes in a young person's behaviour e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- inappropriate sexual awareness
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- mistrust of adults, particularly those whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- difficulty in making friends
- being prevented from socialising with others
- displaying variations in eating patterns including over eating or loss of appetite
- losing weight for no apparent reason
- becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt
- behaviour changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to rehearse
- an unexplained drop in performance
- physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. on food, alcohol or cigarettes
- inappropriate relationship with an adult
- unexplained sudden boost in gifts and money
- written work includes inappropriate or distressing material
- signs of substance abuse
- a shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place. For a more comprehensive list of possible indicators the Designated Safeguarding Officer should be consulted. It is **NOT** the responsibility of those working in David Stinson Theatre School to decide if child abuse is occurring. It **IS** responsibility of those working for David Stinson Theatre School to act on any concerns by passing these on to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

## 4. Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

### 4.1 Introduction

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for David Stinson Theatre School in any capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make enquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person.

This section explains how to respond to allegations/suspicions.

### 4.2 Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

One may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. One may see it happening, suspect it happening because of the signs of abuse, it may be reported to the company or employee by someone else or directly by the young person affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- stay calm so as not to frighten the young person/person
- reassure the child that they are not to blame and that they are doing the right thing
- listen to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously
- keep questions to a minimum so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. Only ask questions for clarification
- tell the child/person that you have to inform other people about what they have told you; in order to protect them
- safety of the child is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, if they are in danger, phone the police
- record all information
- report the incident immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer

In all cases if you are not sure what to do you can gain help from the NSPCC help line. Tel No: 0808 800 5000

### 4.3 Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is one's knowledge and what others have said. Do not include one's own opinions.

Information should include the following:

- the child's name, age and date of birth
- the child's home address and telephone number
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. 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/injuries occurred
- have the parents been contacted? If so what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so record details
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail

#### 4.4 Reporting the Concern

Concerns about a child or young person may present themselves in several ways. The core actions that should always be taken are:

- take any emergency action needed to alleviate any immediate risk to life or limb (call 999)
- discuss your concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Officer
- make a brief factual note of what you have seen, heard or become concerned about (within an hour, when possible, as above)
- listen, don't ask any leading questions and treat all information confidentially
- ensure safeguarding action is taken.

All situations of actual or suspected child abuse should be reported without delay (within 24 hours) to the appropriate agencies.

All suspicions and allegations MUST be reported. It is recognised that strong emotions can be caused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to recognise these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

If the nominated Designated Safeguarding Officer or Deputy is not available you should take responsibility and seek advice from the NSPCC helpline, the duty officer at the local social services department or the police.

Where there is a complaint against an employee or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation.

- Criminal in which case the police are immediately involved
- Child protection in which case the social services (and possibly the police) will be involved
- Disciplinary or misconduct in which case David Stinson Theatre School Ltd will be involved

All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for child protection.

Social services have a legal responsibility under The Children Act 1989 to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the child and family (where appropriate), gathering information from others who know the child and making inquiries jointly with the police.

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by an employee or a volunteer should be reported to David Stinson Theatre School Ltd who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child/ren who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- David Stinson Theatre School will refer the matter to social services
- the parent/carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services
- the Director(s) of David Stinson Theatre School should be notified to deal with any media enquiries and implement any disciplinary proceedings

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made after the event. Where allegations are made, you should follow the same procedures. This is because other children may be at risk from the alleged abuser.

#### 4.5 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:

- Designated Safeguarding Officer (and/or their Deputy)
- The parents of the child (if safe to do so)
- Relevant safeguarding agencies (including Social Services/Police)
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)
- Head of School/Principal of School (where appropriate)

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

All information will be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people only, in line with data protection legislation meeting General Data Protection Regulations.

#### **4.6 Internal Inquiries and Suspension**

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries David Stinson Theatre School will assess each individual case to determine whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases David Stinson Theatre School will reach a decision based upon the available facts which could suggest that it is more likely than not that the allegation is valid. The welfare of the child/ren should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Reinstatement of a member of staff or volunteer will only be granted if the person has been cleared of the allegations. Termination or revision of duties may also be appropriate. This will be determined by the Executive Director(s), whose decision is final.

## **5 Safer Recruitment and Working**

### **5.1 Introduction**

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers, both full and part time. To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children we follow a safer recruitment process.

### **5.2 Controlling Access to Children**

Our safeguards prior to employment:

- All staff and volunteers complete a staff profile form. The form requires information about the person's past and a self-disclosure about criminal records
- Applicants working with or able to access personal data are required to undergo or hold an enhanced DBS check within the last 5 years
- Two references, including one regarding previous work with children are to be obtained. These references MUST be taken up, where the applicant is external to David Stinson Theatre School.
- Proof of identity (passport or driving licence with photo)

### **5.3 Interview and Induction**

All employees and volunteers will be required to undertake a face-to-face interview, as determined by the Director(s). All employees and volunteers should have an induction during which:

- verification that the application form has been completed in full, including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures (and any required action required)
- qualifications should be substantiated
- job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified
- aware of the expected professional conduct, policies, and procedures of the company
- Safeguarding procedures are explained and training needs identified e.g. basic child protection awareness



## 5.4 Training

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

- analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them and others
- recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse
- respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns
- work safely and effectively with children

David Stinson Theatre School requires:

- All staff and volunteers who have access to children or personal information are required to undergo a DBS check, with a renewal every five years
- All employees, volunteers, teachers, helpers to undertake relevant safeguarding training and undertake approved home study, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of positive culture towards good practice and child protection
- All staff and volunteers should receive advisory information outlining good/bad practice and informing them what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person
- Staff to engage with the Designated Safeguarding Officer if they require further training or would like to discuss the options of further safeguarding training.

## 6. Contact Details

**Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)**

**Name:** David Stinson

**Telephone:** 07955288303

**Email:** [david@davidstinsontheatreschool.com](mailto:david@davidstinsontheatreschool.com)

**School Safeguarding & Health & Safety Inspector**

**Name:** Karen Gandhorkia

**Email:** [info@davidstinsontheatreschool.com](mailto:info@davidstinsontheatreschool.com)

**CEOP** – [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

**NSPCC Helpline** – 0808 800 5000

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually. This policy was reviewed on **21<sup>st</sup> December 2022**, and it is next due for review in **21<sup>st</sup> December 2023**.