

# Safeguarding Policy for Children and Adults

## Body Politic



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*Although most are freelance, for the purpose of this policy, all teachers, managers, assistants, or other people occupying the studio in a professional capacity, representing Body Politic, will be referred to as "staff".*

Body Politic believes that children have the right to be completely secure from both the fear and reality of abuse and neglect, and we are committed to safeguarding all the children in our care from harm.

It is essential that every staff member in our companies understands their safeguarding responsibilities. Everyone who comes into contact with others has a role to play in ensuring people are safe from abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm. Body Politic is committed to safeguarding children and aims to create a culture of vigilance. All staff should make sure that any decisions made are in the best interests of the individual.

Individuals using Body Politic services' welfare is our paramount concern. We will ensure that our organisation will safeguard and promote the welfare of individuals and work together with relevant agencies to ensure that our company has adequate arrangements to identify, assess and support those who are suffering or where significant harm is suggested.

This policy provides the basis for good practice within the company for Safeguarding work. This policy applies to all members of staff in our company.

## What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is a comprehensive approach aimed at ensuring the well-being, safety, and protection of individuals, particularly those who may be vulnerable or at risk of harm. This policy outlines the principles, responsibilities, and procedures that our organisation adheres to in order to create a safe and secure environment for all involved parties.

This policy covers Safeguarding of both adults and children, and where there is a difference in procedures or processes, this will be clearly stated.

### **Definition of Safeguarding:**

Safeguarding is the proactive and preventative action taken to protect individuals from abuse, harm, neglect, or exploitation. It encompasses a broad range of measures designed to promote the welfare of individuals, prevent risks, and respond effectively to concerns or incidents that may compromise their safety.

### **Key Principles of Safeguarding:**

- Empowerment
  - Encouraging individuals to make their own choices, express their preferences, and have control over their lives, while ensuring their rights and dignity are respected.
- Prevention
  - Identifying and addressing potential risks and concerns before they escalate, through education, awareness, and proactive measures.
- Proportionality
  - Balancing the response to safeguarding concerns with the level of risk involved, ensuring that interventions are proportionate and necessary to protect the individual's well-being.
- Partnership
  - Collaborating with relevant agencies, professionals, and stakeholders to share information and coordinate efforts in safeguarding individuals effectively.
- Accountability
  - Clearly defining roles, responsibilities, and accountability for all individuals involved in the safeguarding process, ensuring transparency and effective communication.

### **Understanding Vulnerability:**

Safeguarding recognises that certain individuals may be more vulnerable to abuse, neglect, or harm due to factors such as age, disability, illness, mental health, socio-economic status, or other circumstances. It is essential to identify and address these vulnerabilities to provide tailored support and protection.

### **Types of Abuse:**

Safeguarding encompasses various forms of abuse, including but not limited to:

- Physical Abuse
  - Inflicting physical harm or injury on an individual.

- Emotional or Psychological Abuse
  - Causing emotional distress, intimidation, or psychological harm.
- Sexual Abuse
  - Inappropriate or non-consensual sexual conduct.
- Neglect
  - Failure to provide adequate care, attention, or support.
- Financial Exploitation
  - Misuse or misappropriation of an individual's financial resources.

## Legal Framework

In the United Kingdom, safeguarding of both adults and children is supported by legal frameworks and legislation. This policy has been written in accordance to the following frameworks and legislations:

### Adult Safeguarding

- Care Act 2014
  - The Care Act 2014 is the primary legislation for adult social care in England. It sets out the legal framework for the protection and well-being of adults at risk of abuse or neglect. The Act emphasises the importance of collaboration between different agencies and organisations to prevent, identify, and respond to cases of abuse or neglect of adults.
- Human Rights Act 1998
  - The Human Rights Act incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law. It plays a crucial role in safeguarding adults by ensuring their fundamental human rights are protected.
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
  - The Mental Capacity Act provides a legal framework for making decisions on behalf of individuals who may lack capacity. It includes provisions to safeguard individuals who are unable to make decisions about their care and support.
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
  - This Act establishes the legal framework for vetting individuals working with vulnerable adults, including checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

### Children Safeguarding

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
  - The Children Act 1989 and its amendment in 2004 are fundamental pieces of legislation for children's welfare and protection. They set out the legal framework for the care and upbringing of children, emphasizing the paramountcy of the child's best interests.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
  - This is a government guidance document that outlines the responsibilities of different agencies and professionals in safeguarding children. It sets out the processes for cooperation and information sharing.

- The Education Act 2002
  - This Act includes provisions for the protection and well-being of children in educational settings. It requires schools to have policies and procedures in place for safeguarding children.
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
  - This Act introduces reforms to the child protection system, including the establishment of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and the transfer of responsibility for child death reviews to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

## Signs of Harm

Although there can be similarities, signs of harm can look different for adults and children. This is why this policy separates the signs below.

### Signs of Harm in Children

- Physical Abuse:
  - Unexplained bruises, burns, or injuries
  - Frequent injuries or injuries in unusual patterns
  - Fearful or flinching response to physical contact
- Emotional or Psychological Abuse:
  - Withdrawn behaviour, depression, or anxiety
  - Sudden changes in behaviour, mood swings, or aggression
  - Low self-esteem or excessive need for approval
- Sexual Abuse:
  - Inappropriate knowledge or behaviour related to sexual matters
  - Fear of a specific person or reluctance to be alone with someone
  - Sexualised play or drawings that are developmentally inappropriate
- Neglect:
  - Poor hygiene, unwashed clothes, or persistent body odour
  - Consistent hunger or inappropriate weight loss
  - Frequent absence from school or lack of necessary medical care
- Child Exploitation:
  - Involvement in criminal activities, including theft or drug abuse
  - Evidence of self-harm or suicidal ideation
  - Frequent association with older individuals involved in exploitative behaviours
- Bullying or Peer Abuse:
  - Unexplained injuries or missing personal belongings
  - Reluctance to attend school or social events
  - Changes in academic performance or engagement
- Online Risks:
  - Excessive secrecy about online activities
  - Inappropriate or explicit online content
  - Sudden withdrawal from social interactions or online platforms

- Domestic Violence Exposure:
  - Behavioural regression or fear of specific family members
  - Frequent disruptions to family life, including police involvement
  - Aggressive or violent behaviour modelled at home
- Exploitation by Others:
  - Unexplained gifts, money, or possessions
  - Involvement in criminal activities or gangs
  - Sudden change in friendships or social circles
- Educational Neglect:
  - Persistent absenteeism or truancy
  - Lack of necessary educational resources (e.g., books, uniforms)
  - Regression in academic performance or developmental milestones.

### **Signs of Harm in Adults:**

- Physical Abuse:
  - Unexplained injuries, bruises, or fractures
  - Frequent visits to healthcare providers for injuries
  - Fearful or hesitant behaviour in the presence of certain individuals
- Emotional or Psychological Abuse:
  - Signs of distress, anxiety, or depression
  - Withdrawn behaviour or social isolation
  - Changes in mood or personality, such as sudden aggression or agitation
- Financial Exploitation:
  - Unexplained withdrawals or changes in financial patterns
  - Sudden transfers of assets or changes in financial decision-making
  - Dependence on others for basic needs despite adequate resources
- Neglect:
  - Poor personal hygiene or living conditions
  - Unattended medical needs or untreated health issues
  - Social isolation and lack of meaningful social interactions
- Sexual Abuse:
  - Signs of physical discomfort or pain
  - Unexplained sexually transmitted infections
  - Changes in sexual behaviour or preferences
- Discrimination and Hate Crime:
  - Experiences of discrimination based on race, gender, religion, or other factors
  - Fear of leaving home or engaging in community activities
  - Physical injuries or property damage related to hate crimes
- Isolation or Coercion:
  - Restricted access to family, friends, or support networks
  - Controlling or coercive behaviour by a caregiver or family member
  - Fearful or hesitant behaviour in the presence of certain individuals
- Healthcare Neglect:
  - Lack of access to necessary medical care or medications
  - Malnutrition or dehydration
  - Decline in overall health without apparent medical explanation

- Domestic Violence Exposure:
  - Signs of physical harm, such as bruises or injuries
  - Emotional distress or fear related to a partner or family member
  - Attempts to conceal or downplay incidents of violence
- Institutional Abuse:
  - Lack of privacy or dignity in care settings
  - Inadequate care, nutrition, or living conditions in institutional settings
  - Fearful or hesitant behaviour in the presence of caregivers or staff

## **Commitment of Body Politic and staff**

Body Politic, staff and partners recognises their role in protecting children and young people who attend Body Politic services from harm. We are committed to providing a setting where children and young people feel listened to, safe, secure, valued and respected.

To ensure a secure and nurturing environment, all staff members are expected to uphold the principles of safeguarding. This section outlines the roles and responsibilities that staff members must adhere to in order to contribute to the effective safeguarding of both adults and children.

All individuals in a position of trust must:

- Understand the different types of abuse and recognise the possible risks and indicators
- Understand their responsibility to report any concerns that a child is being, or is at risk of being, abused or neglected. This includes reporting any concern they may have regarding another person's behaviour towards a child or children
- If appropriate; liaise with other agencies, contribute to safeguarding assessments and attend child protection meetings / core groups / conferences
- Record and store information legally, professionally and securely in line with organisational policies and procedures
- Understand the line of accountability for reporting safeguarding concerns and be fully aware of the organisation's safeguarding lead and their role within the organisation.
- Safeguard the confidentiality of all participants by only sharing information on a need-to-know basis and in adherence to data protection regulations.
- Collaborate with other staff members, external agencies, and professionals to ensure a coordinated approach to safeguarding.

### **Safer Recruitment**

Safe recruitment is central to the safeguarding of children and young people. Body Politic employs freelance sessional staff to work with children in a position of trust and therefore have a duty to safeguard and promote their welfare. This includes ensuring that the organisation adopts safe recruitment and selection procedures which prevent unsuitable

persons from gaining access to children. Please see our *Staff Recruitment Policy* for more information on how we ensure safe recruitment in our organisation.

### **Partnership with Parents & Carers**

We will always endeavour to ensure to have excellent communication with parents and carers. This informs the quality of our work and is a major part of ensuring children are kept safe. This communication is also vital in ensuring staff identify any signs of abuse or neglect. Body Politic staff should strive to be open with parents/carers about their concerns. Every effort will be made to include the family in constructive discussions about concerns and any action taken, unless this is not in the best interests of the child or young person.

### **Staff Training**

Body Politic will ensure that all staff have the correct training to be able to fulfil their safeguarding duties to their full potential. This includes helping staff understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and ensuring they undertake the required level of training for their role in line with Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board standards - every 3 years for Generalist L2 and Advanced Safeguarding and every 2 years for Designated Leads.

### **External Visitors**

The term 'external visitor' is defined as anyone who is not employed by Body Politic who enters our premises on any given day. External visitors must never be left unsupervised or alone with children or young people unless these visitors have undergone the appropriate safer recruitment checks for this to be approved.

For example, Body Politic hires 'Specialists' who regularly attend Body Politic sessions and have been vetted to ensure they have the appropriate documentation including DBS certification and level of safeguarding training.

### **Social Media**

Body Politic recognises the benefits of social media for children, young people and adults however are also aware of the risks that our service users can encounter online. Exposure to upsetting and/or inappropriate content, grooming or sharing personal information online are just some examples of these potential dangers. Sessional staff are instructed to follow Safeguarding procedures if a child, young person or adults is showing any indicators that they are experiencing exposure to any of these risks.

## What to do if I receive a disclosure, or perceive a safeguarding concern

If/when an adult or child reports they are suffering or have suffered significant harm through abuse or neglect, or have caused or are causing physical or sexual harm to others, the initial response from all professionals should be to listen carefully to what they say and to observe the child/adult's behaviour and circumstances to:

1. Clarify the concerns;
2. Offer re-assurance about how they will be kept safe;
3. Explain what action will be taken and within what timeframe. Adults/Mental capacity/empowerment/proportionality

Children or adults at risk must not be pressed for information, led or cross-examined or given false assurances of absolute confidentiality, as this could prejudice police investigations, especially in cases of sexual abuse.

If the child or adult at risk can understand the significance and consequences of making a referral to social care, they should be asked for their views.

It should be explained to the child or adult that whilst their view will be taken into account, the professional has a responsibility to take whatever action is required to ensure their safety and the safety of other children/adults at risk.

### **Confidentiality**

We all have a right to confidentiality under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. It's important to respect the wishes of a child or any person who doesn't consent to share confidential information. If you're not given consent to share information, you may still lawfully go ahead if the child or adult at risk is experiencing, or is at risk of, significant harm.

Child protection concerns, disclosures or safeguarding allegations made against a person in a position of trust must not be discussed across the workforce as a whole. This information should be shared solely with Designated Safeguarding Leads, Social Care and/or the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) as appropriate. Furthermore, personal information which is shared by the child or young person on a 1:1 level, such as sexual orientation or gender identification, should not be disclosed to the workforce as a whole.



If staff and volunteers wish to discuss situations with colleagues to gain a wider perspective, this should be done on an anonymous basis with names and other identifying information relating to the child or adult and their family remaining strictly confidential. For more information, please see our *Confidentiality policy*.

### **Information sharing**

Staff are encouraged to follow 'The seven golden rules to sharing information' which can be found [in this link](#):

In summary, one should:

- Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate)
- Seek advice from other practitioners if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.
- Share with informed consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information unless this is seen as necessary to safeguard the individual effectively.
- Consider safety and well-being
- Ensure all information shared is necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure
- Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it.

### **Reporting concerns**

The referrer should provide information about their concerns and any information they may have gathered prior to referral. Body Politic will support the member of staff making the referral to provide this information accurately as they are asked for the following:

- Full names, dates of birth and gender of all child(ren) and adults at risk in the household;
- Home address and (where relevant) school/nursery/care provision attended;
- Identity of those with parental responsibility and any other significant adults who may be involved in caring for the individual such as grandparents;
- Names and date of birth of all household members, if available;
- Ethnicity, first language and religion of individual and parents/carers;
- Any special needs of individual or parents/carers;
- Any significant/important recent or historical events/incidents;
- Cause for concern including details of any allegations, their sources, timing and location;
- Individual's current location and emotional and physical condition;
- Whether the individual needs immediate protection;
- Details of alleged perpetrator, if relevant;
- Referrer's relationship and knowledge of individual and family;
- Known involvement of other agencies / professionals (e.g. GP);

- Information regarding individual / parental knowledge of, and agreement to, the referral;
- The individual's views and wishes, if known.

Other information may be relevant, and some information may not be available at the time of making the referral. However, the report should not be delayed, in order to collect information, if the delay may place the child/adult at risk of significant harm.

**Parents/carers must be informed about any referral unless to do so would place the individual at an increased risk of harm.**

## Reporting an immediate concern

All staff members must immediately talk to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or onsite Manager if they have an immediate concern about a child or adult. All relevant information must be recorded on a 'Safeguarding Concern Form'. The DSL or onsite manager will then support the staff member in taking the appropriate next steps.

If a crime has been committed and it is urgent, the police must be notified by calling **999**. If this concern is regarded as urgent (regarded as a Level 4 on the Oxfordshire Threshold of Needs), an urgent response is needed. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) must be contacted immediately on **0333 014 3325** – ensure the referrer has the completed Safeguarding Concern form and other relevant details with them in order to provide accurate information.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead may feel it is appropriate to refer a service user to social services if the concern is seen as a level 3/4 on Oxfordshire's Threshold of Needs. In this case, the DSL will complete:

*For children:* an Oxfordshire MASH Referral Form (MASH Enquiry online referral form). Or they can email a report to MASH on the secure email on: [mash-childrens@oxfordshire.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:mash-childrens@oxfordshire.gcsx.gov.uk). If it is a Level 4 concern, then the referrer is then encouraged to call **0345 050 7666** to follow up the details in the form.

*For adults at risk:* an Oxfordshire County Council Adult Safeguarding referral form which can be accessed via this link: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/social-and-health-care/keeping-safe/raising-safeguarding-concern>.

## Reporting non-immediate concerns

**If there is a concern about a child (under 18)/family but it is not an immediate safeguarding concern**

The Threshold of Needs matrix needs to be consulted which can be found at: [https://www.oscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/6-Oxfordshire\\_Threshold\\_of\\_Needs-2019.pdf](https://www.oscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/6-Oxfordshire_Threshold_of_Needs-2019.pdf) This tool is designed to support professionals to make decisions as to whether contact should be made with Children's Social Care.

If after consulting the Threshold of Need, there are still concerns that do not require an immediate safeguarding response (a Level 2 or low 3), the Locality and Community Support Service (LCSS) should be contacted and a 'no names' consultation (meaning you don't give the child's name) should be requested. The situation can then be discussed with them, and they will advise about what to do next. If a referral needs to be made, they will advise so.

- LCSS Central: **0345 241 2705**
- LCSS North (including Banbury, Witney, Bicester, Carterton and Woodstock): **0345 241 2703**
- LCSS South (including Abingdon, Faringdon, Wantage, Thame, Didcot and Henley): **0345 241 2608**

If a concern arises out of office hours, the Emergency Duty Team can be contacted on **0800 833 408**

## Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is a term that is used when staff want to report a concern within their organisation that involves their manager or a person senior to them in the organisation which may prevent them from following the normal reporting systems.

You should raise your whistleblowing concern as soon as possible. This will make it easier to act and enable any problems to be reported or resolved quickly.

1. You should always look to raise the matter with your line manager in the first instance. For all Body Politic staff and volunteers this will be the Artistic Director.
2. Where this is not appropriate because both of these people may be involved in the alleged malpractice, wrongdoing or illegal acts or omissions in some way, raise your concern with the Chairperson of Body Politic's Board of Trustees.
3. In circumstances where it would be inappropriate for you to approach your line manager or the Chair of the Board of Trustees, you should raise the matter directly with the appropriate agencies.

## Contact details and more information

Emma-Jane Greig's contact details are:  
Email address: [emj@bodypoliticdance.com](mailto:emj@bodypoliticdance.com)

Rajpal Pardesi's (Chair) contact details are:  
Email - [artsrajuk@gmail.com](mailto:artsrajuk@gmail.com)

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This document will be given to every staff member, and made available on the Body Politic Website.

This document was last reviewed on: 24/6/2024 by Emma-Jane Greig, Artistic Director & CEO

If you have any comments or would like to speak to us regarding this policy please email [info@bodypoliticdance.com](mailto:info@bodypoliticdance.com)

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## Appendix 1

### Legal Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the following legislation and guidance:

- Children Act (1989)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991)
- Human Rights Act (1998)
- Children Act (2004)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- The Care Act (2014)
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0 to 25 years (2015)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- What to do if you are worried a Child is being Abused (2015)
- Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board guidelines

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers, committee members/board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone in a

position of trust. A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children's Act 1989).