

THE OPEN WORLDS SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

Our aims are to encourage, promote and develop all aspects of dance in a professional and competitive way using qualified adjudicators. Our objective is to create an awareness of the joy of dance and to stimulate the wider public's interest in talent.

The organisers of 'The Open Worlds and The Open Worlds SUPERSTARS' events are committed to ensuring a safe environment for children, young people and at risk adults, and we believe that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of everyone at our event, through our commitment to understanding best practice and working towards a protective ethos.

To this end we have developed policies which define safe practice for our event. These policies relate to children under the age of 18 years and those deemed to be adults at risk of any age. We require; parents/guardians/carers and or/teachers to take responsibility for children who are in their care under 18yrs of age at all times whilst present at the event. We also ask carers to take responsibility for adults at risk where appropriate.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential to achieving good outcomes.

The purpose of our safeguarding policies:

- To provide protection for the children and young people who participate in our festival, including the children who are not competitors but are also present.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance and training on how they should respond in the event they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of harm.
- To articulate to staff and attendees how to engage in supporting a safe event.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Adopting safeguarding guidelines ensuring our staff and volunteers know what safeguarding practice is, and feel confident of implementing it.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers responsibly, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Sharing information about safeguarding and providing appropriate training to staff and volunteers.
- On a 'need to know' basis sharing relevant information about concerns with agencies, and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision and support.

Keeping safeguarding up to date and relevant.

- We will work with safeguarding experts and advisers (such as 'Safer Dance') to ensure our policies and procedures are practical, positive and relevant to our community.
- The event organisers will review our policies each year (or more often in light of any changes in legislation or guidance).
- Our policies have been developed in accordance with the principles established by The Protection of Children Act 1999, the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, the Childcare Act 2006, The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, The Police Act 1997, The Human Rights Act 1998, The Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000, The General Data Protection Regulation 2018, and in line with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018 and 'Working Together – Safer Working Practice 2022'
- Our policies apply to our event organisers, paid staff, adjudicators, volunteers or anyone working on behalf of the event in an official capacity or anyone participating in the festival.

Our Events Safeguarding Policy.

1. The event environment and the building.
2. Managing allegations and recording of concerns.
3. Safer recruitment.
4. Photography and digital media recording.
5. Changing areas.
6. Bullying.
7. Whistleblowing.
8. A 'Code of Conduct'

The Event Environment and the Building.

- The event takes place at The Tower Ballroom, Blackpool. Health and safety regulations are the responsibility of the buildings owners/managers and their Insurer's. Festival personnel are responsible for monitoring, implementing, maintaining, and abiding by Health and Safety provisions. Where issues are identified event staff will bring these to the attention of the relevant building managers.
- Public, changing and practice areas are not supervised by event personnel however they will circulate through these areas regularly during the event and will highlight to the Dedicated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or organisers any concerns they may have.
- The main changing rooms are separate for competitors identifying as male or female. However the event organisers recognise that gender identity may not be binary, and that parents may have children of a different gender and this could present concerns or potential issues. Therefore the festival organisers may be approached on the day for assistance accommodating alternative arrangements and they will be pleased to assist.
- Mobile phones, camera phones, digital recording and photography are STRICTLY PROHIBITED in private areas of the event such as changing rooms, backstage areas etc.

Managing Allegations and recording of concerns.

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential and therefore the DSL or other event personnel will only disclose information about a child on a 'need to know basis'. However we also recognise our responsibility to share information with other agencies as appropriate.

Any person who notices any signs or symptoms of possible abuse, or who has any other safeguarding concern (however apparently minor), should report this ASAP and ask to speak with the DSL. You may approach any official member of the event team at the Registration or Welcome Desk and request to speak with the DSL.

Anyone receiving a disclosure of abuse from a child, young person or adult at risk, should deal with that person appropriately by:

- Giving them time and space as appropriate in that moment.
- Listening carefully to what is said and ask only open questions such as 'tell me what happened.'
- Making notes during the conversation using the child's words as far as possible.
- Ensuring a formal 'cause for concern' form is completed (supplied by the organisers, with body map if needed), immediately following the disclosure, and before they go on to do anything else. A copy will then be provided to the DSL.
- Ensuring notes made are timed, dated and signed, with name printed alongside the signature.
- Making the DSL aware who is responsible for follow up actions.
- Taking appropriate action or call for appropriate support.
- Ensuring they do not leave that child with matters unresolved or without referring the disclosure to an appropriate person.
- If the alleged offender is a child in attendance at the event, that child's own safeguarding needs must also be considered.
- When a safeguarding concern involves the behaviour of someone working or looking after children on the premises, whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere, appropriate action will be taken in line with guidance received from the DSL.

It is usually good practice to discuss reported concerns with the parents/carer first. However, this is to be avoided if it is believed that any of the following apply:

- Discussion with parents may put the child/an adult at greater risk of harm.
- Evidence may indicate sexual abuse (e.g. a clear disclosure).
- Evidence may indicate that a crime has been committed (e.g. an injury).
- Evidence of Aggravating Factors (domestic abuse, substance misuse or parental mental ill health – the toxic trio).

In these circumstances the DSL will advise festival personnel what information should be shared with the parents/carers, if any, at this stage.

Safer Recruitment Procedures

We are working towards a full safer recruitment process laid out in the guidelines for 'Working with Children in the UK'. It is very important to this organisation that all our adjudicators, scrutineers, photographers or anyone else who might come into contact with children are recruited in such a way that this organisation is sure, and can evidence, that they are fit and proper persons. This applies to our organisers or leaders of this event also. To this end:

- We will require all our employees and those employed in the running of our events (such as adjudicators, scrutineers, photographers etc.) to provide us with an enhanced DBS check and to register with the annual update service for DBS clearance.
- Wherever possible we will check two references for employees and those who will be working directly with children.
- We will ensure we have completed appropriate resume' checks.
- As part of our fit and proper person checks, we will require self declarations as laid out in the safeguarding recommendations guidelines.
- For international employees, we will work with them to put in place their local country equivalents for fit and proper person checks.
- All our employees will have been made aware of their safeguarding obligations and our policies.
- We will ensure our event personnel will be easily identifiable by their ID badges which they will display at all times during the festival.

We strongly advise parents to ensure their children are appropriately supervised and cared for at all times. In circumstances where parents/guardians/carers are not personally attending with their children, our policies require them to be satisfied that their children will be accompanied to the festival and adequately supervised by responsible adults acting on their behalf. If a parent would like to discuss this please contact us.

Photography and Digital Media Recordings

- It is strictly prohibited to record videos or take picture images in the private areas of the event ie changing areas or backstage.
- Only the appointed professional photographers who have the prerequisite enhanced DBS checks are permitted to photograph or film competitors in the performance areas where consent has been provided.
- Our official photographers will be wearing easily identifying event I.D.badges.
- We will rely on the support of all attendees in adhering to our protective ethos as well as our policies to keep this event safe. If an attendee does not adhere to the policies or behaves in an unsafe manner we reserve the right to ask you to leave the festival.
- Public Spaces: Photography by competitors/friends/family/teachers is permitted subject to mutual consent* and agreement of distribution.
- *Mutual consent is an agreement between the individuals concerned (in this case between the photographer and the person being photographed) This maybe a verbal agreement and this is a private matter between the individuals and the festival organisers are not involved.
- Public spaces are defined as; outside areas, the foyer, corridors or other practice areas that are not changing areas.
- The performance area is not classed as a public space and as such taking photographs or filming children in this area is not permitted by anyone other than official photographers.
- We ask that people taking photos act responsibly and with respect for the privacy of the individuals being photographed. If you are photographing children please speak to the parents however; if you receive consent from a parent but not the child, you should respect the wishes of the child.

- Prior to images being captured a clear understanding of how those images are intended to be used or distributed must be in place.

Changing areas (Communal)

Changing rooms are single gender communal areas, we provide the following segregated changing facilities; male, female, adult, and family (one in one out). This is in line with current safeguarding guidelines so as to not discriminate against parents/legal guardians/carers/teachers of differing genders to that of the child they are responsible for during the event.

- There will be parents and other responsible adults present across all changing room facilities who have not been enhanced DBS checked for work with children. Therefore all responsible adults should ensure their children are cared for appropriately and their behaviour sets a good example.
- Parents/legal guardians/carers/teachers must be aware that at times event organisers or others nominated by them, may be present in the changing rooms to promote good safeguarding practice. These people will be easily identifiable by a event badge and you may approach them if you have any concerns.
- Taking photographs or videos is **STRICTLY PROHIBITED** in the changing room areas.
- No competitors are allowed to change in a public area under any circumstances whether their legal guardian has allowed this or not.
- Anyone doing so will be approached and asked to go to the appropriate official changing areas. If they refuse event staff may take further action as deemed necessary in line with our safeguarding policies.
- The removal of some outer clothing such as jackets or tops, normally worn over another garment, is allowed as by definition this is not considered 'changing'.

Anti bullying.

We take bullying very seriously. It is detrimental to the wellbeing of everyone involved and is directly contrary to our protective ethos. Bullying may be in the form of physical, emotional or cyber bullying and may be very subtle.

Bullying is also an abuse of power where one person can seek to intimidate another. Please remember that:

- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Everyone has a role to play in preventing all forms of bullying (including online) and putting a stop to bullying.

The organisers of the event will do all we can to prevent children, young people and adults at risk being subjected to any form of bullying, whether that be physical, emotional or cyber bullying.

We are committed to prevent bullying through;

- Developing a code of behaviour that sets out how everyone involved in our organisation is expected to behave, in face-to-face contact and online, and within and outside of our activities.
- Where an allegation of bullying is made, we will take this seriously and follow our safeguarding processes including getting advice from external agencies as needed.
- Bullying can happen between peers as well as between children and adults or between adults wherever there is a misuse of a relationship power dynamic.

Whistleblowing.

Raising a concern about a colleague or any other member of our organisation is termed as 'whistleblowing'.

As an organisation committed to living our protected ethos, every member of our festival team should feel they are able to raise a concern about anyone else in the organisation. All our team, should they feel it necessary to raise a concern, can have confidence they will be listened to with respect and taken seriously, and supported throughout the process. If an allegation is made against a member of our team that person should feel they also will be respected and supported through the process.

Whistleblowing concerns should be raised with the DSL in the first instance. Should anyone have concerns about the DSL, this should be raised with the person who is in charge of organising the event.

To raise a concern consider the following:

- Whether you wish to raise this verbally or in writing in the first instance.
- Provide as much factual information as possible.
- The timeliness of the concern.
- What you wish to see happen.

When a whistleblowing complaint is raised the DSL will:

- Consider very carefully the nature of the concern raised and may act in a number of ways appropriate to the concern at hand.
- This will include speaking to the person to whom the concern has been raised and may include a moderated discussion escalating the situation into a formal complaint/grievance. This could also result in a removal from role of one or more individuals.
- The DSL will ensure that all stages of the process will be recorded appropriately and if appropriate take advice from the local safeguarding board as needed.
- The confidentiality of the individuals involved will be maintained.
- No final decision will be made solely by the DSL who will always engage with the event organiser.

The 'Code of Conduct'

The 'Code of Conduct' applies to all our staff, volunteers, adjudicators or others employed in an official capacity at the event.

It is in line with our protective ethos and helps us to protect children, young people and at risk adults from abuse. It has been informed by the views of children and young people. Festival organisers are responsible for making sure everyone taking part in our activities has seen, understood and agreed to follow the code of conduct, and that they understand there will be consequences for inappropriate behaviour.

Event organisers and anyone acting in an official capacity on behalf of the festival will adhere to:

- Prioritising the welfare of children and young people.
- Providing a safe environment for children and young people.
- Having a good awareness of issues to do with safeguarding and child protection and taking action when appropriate.
- Following our principles, policies and procedures.
- Staying within the law at all times.
- Modelling good behaviour for children and young people to follow.
- Challenging all inappropriate behaviour and reporting any breaches of the code of conduct to the event organiser or the DSL.
- Reporting all concerns about abusive behaviour, in line with our safeguarding and child protection policy. This includes inappropriate behaviour displayed by an adult or child and directed at anybody of any age.

Respecting children and young people.

You should:

- Listen to, and respect children at all times.
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy as far as possible.

Diversity and inclusion

You should:

- Treat children and young people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination.
- Understand that children and young people are individuals with individual needs.
- Respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems, and appreciate that all participants bring something valuable and different to the festival.
- Challenge discrimination and prejudices.
- Encourage young people and adults to speak out about attitudes or behaviour that makes them uncomfortable.

Appropriate relationships.

You should:

- Promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect.
- Avoid showing favouritism.
- Be patient with others and exercise caution if you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people.
- Ensure your contact with children and young people is appropriate and relevant to the nature of the activity you are involved in.
- Ensure that whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during interaction with children and young people.
- If a situation arises where you are alone with a child or young person, ensure that you are within sight or can be heard by other adults.
- If a child specifically asks for or needs some individual time with you, ensure other staff or volunteers know where you and the child are.
- Only provide personal care in an emergency and make sure there is more than one adult present if possible unless it has been agreed that the provision of personal care is part of your role and you have been trained to do this safely.

Inappropriate Behaviour

When working with children and young people, you must not:

- Allow concerns or allegations to go unreported.
- Take unnecessary risks.
- Smoke, consume alcohol or use illegal substances.
- Develop inappropriate relationships with children and young people.
- Make inappropriate promises to children and young people.
- Engage in behaviour that is in any way abusive including having any form of sexual contact with a child or young person.
- Let children and young people have your personal contact details (mobile number, email or postal address) or have contact with them via a personal social media account.
- Act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive.
- Patronise or belittle children and young people.
- Make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures too, or in front of children and young people.

The NSPCC is a registered charity established to prevent cruelty to children. Helpline for concerns about a child's welfare. 0808 800 5000 (24 hours) Website <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/england/reporting-your-concerns/> email- help@nspcc.org.uk

The NSPCC has a written document which outlines the requirements for professionals reporting child abuse in the United Kingdom. To read this information, please follow the link below:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/>

Links to specific information about Children and Vulnerable Adult Policy can be found by visiting:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-prot>

CHILDLINE is a free service for children and young adults needing support.

Helpline (24 hours) 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk

The Department of Health website www.doh.gov.uk contains a practical guide to the law relating to child protection, particularly The Protection of Children Act 1999. The site also provides a publication entitled: "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused". This publication has been developed to assist practitioners to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It sets out the process for safeguarding children. It is aimed at those who come into contact with children and families in their everyday work.