

Safeguarding Policy

The Vocational Day School

Policy Statement

The Vocational Day School recognizes its duty to safeguard and protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults from harm and abuse. We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing environment for all and to ensuring that safeguarding is central to everything we do.

We adhere to national safeguarding legislation and guidance, ensuring that all actions prioritize the welfare, protection, and development of every individual involved in our school.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is underpinned by the Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004 and is informed by:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) – adopted as best-practice guidance
- After-school clubs, community activities and tuition: safeguarding guidance for providers (DfE, 2025)
- Keeping Children Safe in Out-of-School Settings: Code of Practice (DfE)
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)

As an extracurricular provider, The Vocational Day School has regard to the above guidance and applies relevant safeguarding frameworks for dance and performing arts education.

Our Safeguarding Principles

We are dedicated to creating a space where:

- The welfare of children and young people is paramount, as enshrined in legislation.
- Equality and non-discrimination are upheld: all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity, have a right to protection from harm.
- Inclusion and individual respect are central: we acknowledge that some children may be more vulnerable due to past experiences or individual circumstances.

- Collaboration with families and agencies is essential: safeguarding relies on effective partnership with children, parents, carers, and external professionals.

Our Safeguarding Objectives

To ensure the safety and well-being of every student, we commit to:

1. Providing a Secure Environment: Maintaining safe, inclusive spaces across all studios where pupils, parents, and staff feel respected and protected.
2. Recognising and Responding to Vulnerabilities: Identifying pupils who may require additional support or protection and acting swiftly and appropriately.
3. Encouraging Development and Confidence: Supporting children in ways that promote independence, self-esteem, and confidence so they feel valued and heard.
4. Maintaining Professional Record-Keeping Standards: Ensuring safeguarding concerns are recorded accurately, securely, and confidentially.
5. Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO): The DSO leads safeguarding practice, provides guidance to staff, and ensures appropriate action is taken when concerns arise.

Designated Safeguarding Roles

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Jessica Lee – jess@vds-school.co.uk

Deputy DSL: Lorna White – info@hebdendance.co.uk

Telephone: 01733 305 407

If either contact is unavailable and a child is believed to be at immediate risk, staff, parents, or volunteers should contact Children's Social Care or the Police directly using the emergency contact numbers listed at the end of this document.

Our Commitment to Safety and Welfare

We uphold a culture of safety and vigilance through the following measures:

1. Safer Recruitment: All staff, volunteers, and contractors are subject to Enhanced DBS checks. References are verified and gaps in employment explored. Qualifications and identity are checked before employment. Where appropriate, barred list checks are completed.
2. Staff Training and Development: All staff receive safeguarding induction and refresher training at least every two years. The DSO completes advanced safeguarding and safer recruitment training.
3. Creating an Open Environment: Students are encouraged to speak openly about worries or concerns. Staff promote trust and respect, ensuring children feel safe to share.

4. Health, Safety, and Risk Management: Safeguarding aligns with health and safety policies. Risk assessments are completed for all activities, venues, and trips.
5. Abuse Prevention and Early Help: We take every measure to prevent abuse and neglect. We engage early help where concerns arise before issues escalate.
6. Reporting and Responding to Concerns: Any safeguarding concern must be reported immediately to the DSO. The DSO will liaise with external agencies as needed, including social care, the police, or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). If the DSO is unavailable and a child is at risk, staff must contact social care or emergency services directly.

Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

Any allegation that a staff member or volunteer has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may harm, a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk to children;

...must be reported immediately to the DSO. The DSO will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay and follow their guidance.

All allegations are treated seriously, confidentially, and in accordance with local safeguarding partnership procedures.

Whistleblowing and Low-Level Concerns

All staff have a duty to raise concerns about poor practice or behavior that may indicate a safeguarding risk, even if it does not meet the threshold of harm.

Concerns can be raised with the DSO, a senior leader, or directly with external authorities if necessary.

Staff will not face reprisals for doing so in good faith.

Low-level concerns about adults working with children are logged, reviewed, and monitored in line with national best practice.

Online Safety, Images and Social Media

- The use of personal mobile phones, cameras, or recording devices is prohibited during classes, rehearsals, and in changing areas.
- Parental consent is required for any photography or filming of students.
- Images are stored securely and only used for authorized school purposes.
- Staff are not permitted to contact students via personal social media accounts.

Prevent Duty

The Vocational Day School recognizes its responsibilities under the Prevent Duty to protect students from radicalization and extremism. Staff are trained to identify and report

concerns through the DSO, who will refer to local Prevent partners when appropriate. Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults For students aged 18 and over who may have additional support or care needs, safeguarding concerns will be referred to Adult Social Care following the Care Act 2014 and local safeguarding procedures. Policy Implementation We ensure that:

- This policy is shared with and understood by all staff, volunteers, and stakeholders.
- A robust anti-bullying environment is maintained and any cases are managed sensitively.
- Staff uphold professionalism, confidentiality, and respect in all safeguarding matters.
- Safeguarding is reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or circumstances change.

Types of Abuse and Neglect

All staff must be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and can overlap with one another. Staff should report any concern immediately to the DSO/DSL, even if they are unsure whether the threshold for referral has been met.

- Physical Abuse: May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Possible signs may include unexplained injuries, bruising, burns, fear of physical contact, flinching, reluctance to change for class, or inconsistent explanations for injuries.
- Emotional Abuse: The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on their emotional development. Possible signs may include low self-esteem, withdrawal, anxiety, fearfulness, extreme behaviour, developmental delay, or excessive need for approval.
- Sexual Abuse: Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Possible signs may include age-inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour, unexplained fear of a person or place, sudden changes in mood, physical discomfort, or disclosure from the child.
- Neglect: The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. Possible signs may include consistently poor hygiene, unsuitable clothing, untreated medical needs, frequent hunger, tiredness, poor attendance, or being left without appropriate supervision.

Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for leading safeguarding practice across The Vocational Day School. This includes:

- acting as the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns;
- ensuring concerns are recorded clearly, accurately and securely;
- making decisions about referrals to Children's Social Care, Early Help, the Police, Prevent or the LADO;
- providing advice and support to staff;
- ensuring safeguarding information is shared appropriately and confidentially;
- maintaining safeguarding records and chronologies;

- monitoring patterns of concern and ensuring action is followed up;
- ensuring staff understand the safeguarding policy and reporting procedures;
- liaising with parents, carers, social workers, schools, local authority services and other agencies where appropriate;
- reviewing safeguarding arrangements annually, or sooner if legislation, guidance or circumstances change.

Reporting and Recording Concerns

All safeguarding concerns must be recorded as soon as possible on the appropriate concern form or safeguarding record. Records should be factual, dated, timed and signed by the person making the record. Staff should record what they have seen, heard or been told, using the child's own words where possible. Staff must not investigate concerns themselves or ask leading questions.

Safeguarding records should include:

- the child's name and date of birth;
- the date, time and location of the concern or disclosure;
- the exact concern, disclosure or observation;
- any visible injury or relevant body map, where appropriate;
- action taken and who was informed;
- any referral made or advice sought;
- the outcome or agreed next steps.

Safeguarding records are stored securely and separately from general pupil records. Access is limited to those who need the information in order to safeguard the child. If there is an immediate risk of harm, staff must contact emergency services or Children's Social Care without delay if the DSO/DSL is unavailable.

Teaching Pupils About Safeguarding

The Vocational Day School supports pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe in an age-appropriate way. This may be covered through class expectations, pastoral conversations, induction, assemblies, tutorials or individual support. Pupils are encouraged to speak to a trusted adult if they feel worried, unsafe, uncomfortable or unsure.

Pupils are supported to understand:

- safe and respectful behaviour;
- personal boundaries and consent;
- appropriate physical contact in dance and performing arts training;
- online safety, including social media, images and messaging;
- how to raise a worry or concern;

- who the DSL and Deputy DSL are;
- that they will be listened to and taken seriously.

Early Help

Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. The Vocational Day School will consider Early Help where a child or family may need additional support but the concern does not appear to meet the threshold for statutory social care intervention.

Reasons for considering Early Help may include:

- changes in behaviour, mood, attendance or engagement;
- emerging emotional wellbeing concerns;
- family difficulties affecting the child;
- concerns around neglect, routines, supervision or basic care;
- additional needs, disability or vulnerability;
- concerns around online safety, peer relationships or bullying;
- any situation where coordinated support may prevent concerns escalating.

In Peterborough, partner agencies can seek advice about whether to complete an Early Help Assessment by contacting Targeted Support: targetedsupport@peterborough.gov.uk or 01733 863649. Where there is a safeguarding concern requiring Children's Social Care advice or referral, the DSO/DSL will contact Peterborough MASH / Children's Social Care. If a child is at immediate risk of harm, staff must call 999.

Safeguarding Training by Role

The Vocational Day School ensures safeguarding training is appropriate to each person's role and level of responsibility.

- All staff receive safeguarding induction, read the safeguarding policy and code of conduct, and are made aware of reporting procedures.
- Teaching staff receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role, including recognising abuse and neglect, responding to disclosures, professional boundaries, online safety and reporting concerns.
- The DSL and Deputy DSL complete enhanced safeguarding training suitable for their role and keep their knowledge updated.
- Staff involved in recruitment receive safer recruitment guidance or training appropriate to their responsibilities.
- Guest teachers and visiting professionals are made aware of relevant safeguarding expectations, reporting routes and conduct requirements before working with pupils.
- Refresher training and updates are provided when guidance changes, when a safeguarding theme needs reinforcing, or at least in line with the review cycle set by the school.

Policy Availability and Review

This policy is made available to staff, parents, carers, pupils and relevant partner organisations. It may be shared through the setting website, parent information, staff induction and the safeguarding folder. The policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if statutory guidance, local procedures or the needs of the setting change.

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Anyone can report a safeguarding concern

Internal Contacts:

- Designated Safeguarding Officer: Miss Jessica Lee - jess@vds-school.co.uk
- Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Ms Lorna White – info@hebdendance.co.uk
- Telephone: 01733 305407

External Contacts:

- Children's Social Care (Peterborough City Council): 01733 864180
 - Out of Hours Duty Team: 01733 234724
 - Local Authority Designated Officer LADO - LADO@cambridgeshire.gov.uk - 01223 727967
LADO@peterborough.gov.uk - 01733 864038
 - Police (Emergency): 999
 - NSPCC Helpline: 0800 800 5000
- Policy Review This policy will be reviewed annually by the Designated Safeguarding Officer and approved by the Principal.

Peterborough <https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/children-and-families/childrens-social-care/safeguarding-children>

Current review date: 1st April 2026

Next scheduled review: 1st April 2027