

Kercher Theatre School

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

As a thriving school that has many children on its register, we recognise the need for the welfare and safeguarding of children to be a main priority for all staff employed by the school. We recognise that it is a priority for all adults working with children to maintain a safe environment and appropriately refer any concerns or incidents of a child protection nature to children's services.

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a statutory duty on key people and bodies to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. In addition, this guidance should be considered alongside the Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education Guidance (ref: DFES – 04217-2006), issued to support educational organisations in meeting their responsibilities under sections 175 and 157 of the Education Act 2002.

As an independent supplementary school, Kercher Theatre School is led by the statutory guidance and implements appropriate processes to ensure that children on the schools' register are subject to a safe environment.

Children within the school are provided with an environment where they are able to approach any member of staff should they have a concern or they are feeling anxious about something that has happened to them.

The school places a high importance upon the emotional welfare of children who attend and believe that a healthy and supportive environment encourages maximisation of potential as the child develops.

There is a designated section in the school that is known to all the children and can be easily accessed should assistance be required. A confidential place to speak is provided to any child or adult who may wish to discuss something in confidence.

All children within the school are encouraged to speak with an adult about their concerns, with the designated officer identified to children upon registration. If the welfare officer is unavailable or not on the premises there is an assistant officer who has received the appropriate training and guidance around child protection procedures.

Kercher Theatre School is committed to the welfare of all pupils and prioritises a child friendly safe and secure environment within the classroom/studio in which children feel able to enjoy the time spent there.

This is particularly noted through the importance placed upon response to any concerns that may arise around bullying of pupils. The designated officer would speak to the victim in the first instance and their parent(s) or guardian to gain a deeper understanding of the issues that may have arisen, teaching staff would be made aware of the situation so that monitoring can take place and a mentor offered to the victim in the form of an old student.

The alleged perpetrator and their parent(s) or guardian would also be spoken to with clear guidelines around appropriate behaviour and these expectations then put in writing.

If appropriate a mentor would also be provided to the perpetrator so that appropriate forms of behaviour can be modelled. If there is a continuance of the situation without resolution, the perpetrator may be asked to leave the school.

On Site & General Safety

Kercher Theatre School dance class timetable is run out of studios and spaces that are rented and not privately owned thus making them available to the public during hours of the school operation. We cannot be held responsible for any incident that occurs outside of the classroom/studio as these are public areas. We insist all children are accompanied to and from the buildings due to them being open to the public and also being near

a busy main road in some cases. When onsite and not in the classroom, we also require children to be accompanied by an adult when waiting classes. The venues have many functions and we cannot guarantee that all the users have DBS checks or what their individual circumstances are as the buildings/venues are used for a variety of different community projects. We understand children come after school for activities during the week and encourage parents to stay with their children especially up to at least secondary school age. If parents leave their children (under the age of 18 years) unattended, that is their individual decision but we cannot be held responsible for this choice as our “loci parentis” responsibility is in the classroom situation as that’s where our staff are during their timetabled hours. If children should find themselves on their own outside, then we do allow children to sit in the classroom quietly doing homework or other quiet activities that do not distract from the class in session. If those waiting in the classroom become a distraction to the lesson in progress, then the teacher does have the right to request they leave should disruption become detrimental to those in the lesson and parents will then be contacted at this point for pick up. Should any situation arise where the teacher feels uncomfortable or a situation occurs that could escalate and require further attention and help, each member of staff has the appropriate phone numbers and emergency details in their registers to use when/if needed.

Safer Recruitment

We have a designated welfare officer who has received regular child protection training and is fully aware of the appropriate actions to be taken should a child protection concern arise. This training is renewed on an annual basis.

The designated officer is fully aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and the appropriate manner in which children should be treated should these circumstances arise.

Any child protection concern will be referred immediately to the Buckinghamshire County Council by telephone on the day that the incident occurs, this will be followed up in writing within 24 hours, in accordance with the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 or any subsequent updated guidance.

If an incident arises where it is believed that a child is at immediate risk of harm, the designated welfare officer will ensure that the police are notified.

All staff and their assistants have received training on their responsibilities around the need to inform the designated child protection welfare officer of any concerns that may arise of a child protection nature and that this should happen within a timely manner.

If it should come to the attention of the school that any child enrolled is on a child protection plan, the appropriate liaison will take place with children’s services to ensure that effective working together takes place.

The school will also work in liaison with children’s services if they receive notification that any child on the register is subject to looked after child procedures and ensure that the relevant local authority is notified of any incident that may have occurred.

Any concern that may arise of a child protection nature will be appropriately recorded with this sent to the identified local authority and kept in a secure environment that is only accessible to the designated welfare officer.

All staff and volunteers have regular DBS checks, with details of these held in the schools’ central register.

Any staff member or volunteer who assists with performances or school trips has a minimum of a DBS with the majority of these holding a current chaperone license that has been obtained from the local authority in which they reside; copies are held within the schools’ central register.

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, this will be managed in accordance with the Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education guidelines with a copy of this kept on the school’s premises.



Designated Welfare Officer:

Johnny Schwerzmann

Assistant Welfare Officers:

**Inma Vicent-Perez
Stephanie McMillin
Kenton Brigden
Grace Hardy**