



Newton Croft, Thorpe Lane, Fylingthorpe,  
Whitby, North Yorkshire, YO22 4TN  
T: 07968 273468 E: su@meshballet.co.uk



## Safeguarding Children Policy

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## Policy and Procedure

### 1.0 Purpose and Scope

#### **MESH** *verb*

- Be in or bring in to harmony
- To fit in, to come together

At MESH we offer a range of physical activities to children and adults. Our aim is to provide high quality services that meet the need of our customers, our community and our own family life. We want to be able to work hard in jobs that we are passionate about and inspire others to achieve their goals alongside us.

Our separate MESH entities allow all our interests to come together and work in harmony with our aims for the future.

#### Meet Us

We founded MESH Ballet, along with its sister MESH businesses with the intention of helping people change their lives for the better.

Dance, in all its forms, is a physical expression of joy and taking part in dance classes helps to spread this feeling across all age ranges, genders and abilities.

We believe that MESH classes allow all students to progress not only with their chosen skills but also with their physical fitness, balance and coordination as well with their interpersonal skills, teamworking and resilience.

At MESH we aim to bring people together who share a common interest. In doing this we hope to forge lifelong friendships and networks for students who can then develop their interests as they grow. Classes should be fun for all involved as well as providing high quality education and development. We are continuously working with our respective associations to further our own knowledge and understanding of our craft as well as looking for innovative ideas for teaching.

MESH Ballet provides regular dance classes, examination sessions, stage performances, workshops and other events where young children can be involved and sometimes their families or carers. Registered teachers, volunteers and student helpers can be involved in these as and when required. Where the child is not a registered student, they are usually under the supervision of a responsible adult such as a parent, carer or school teacher. Registered students may be under the sole care of a qualified teacher for the duration of a pre-booked class, workshop or event.

MESH Ballet recognises that many children and young people can be the victim of abuse or neglect and that all children and young people have the right to be protected from abuse or neglect. MESH Ballet is aware of and understands its utmost responsibility to safeguard the children and young people participating in classes or events of which MESH Ballet is the organiser or is involved and will use this policy and procedure to guide its action.

This policy and procedure will be adhered to by all paid staff, volunteers and student helpers and anyone else who works with or on behalf of MESH Ballet at any event.

### 2.0 Principles, Rights and Responsibilities

At MESH dance we commit to ensuring no child is harmed by any member of staff. To harm a child is illegal and will be treated as gross misconduct. All staff and volunteers have a strict duty never to subject a child to any form of harm or abuse. Failure to adhere to these procedures will be treated as gross misconduct.

The principles of safeguarding children are:

- 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 life chances.

(Taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015)

All children, regardless of their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity, have the right to:

- Life, survival and development
- Freedom from violence, abuse and neglect
- Express their views in matters affecting them, including in legal proceedings
- Education
- An adequate standard of living

(Taken from the Convention of the Rights of the Child, 1989)

MESH Ballet has the responsibility to:

- Be aware of potential signs of abuse or neglect
- Be aware of the risks that abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children and young people
- Provide children, young people and their parents with the opportunity to voice their concerns
- Respond quickly and appropriately to any suspicion or allegation of abuse by following the appropriate procedure
- Record and share information with the appropriate agencies
- Take whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the child's or young person's welfare
- Work co-operatively with parents/carers unless this is inconsistent with ensuring the child's or young person's safety

### 2.1 Safer Recruitment

MESH Ballet is committed to ensuring all staff, volunteers and helpers are suitably qualified to work with children and young people or will be supervised by someone who is. In order to do this, we will ensure that:

- Teaching staff are fully qualified for the role they are undertaking
- Teaching staff have the appropriate current training and background checks
- Licensed chaperones are fully trained and hold current background checks
- Volunteers and helpers are supported and supervised by qualified staff

## 3.0 Procedure

### 3.1 Guidelines on Photographs and Videos

Registered students of MESH Ballet will agree or disagree to photograph and video consent during classes and events for all purposes, including media, during registration.

Non-registered students attending events will not be photographed or videoed without specific written consent stating the purposes the images could be used for.

Photographs and videos of performances will not be allowed except by MESH Ballet's official photographer / videographer who will adhere to this policy and procedure.

### 3.2 Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

Any member of staff, volunteer or helper that suspects abuse or has abuse reported to them shall discuss this with the school Principal or Welfare Officer (Carolyn Watkinson) at the earliest opportunity, who will then support that person to contact the appropriate authorities if required. If the child or young person in question is in immediate danger then the member of staff, volunteer or helper should call 999 in addition contacting the Principal or Welfare Officer.

If the member of staff, volunteer or helper is unable to contact the school Principal or Welfare Officer they should seek further advice from the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, the NSPCC helpline, or the police (see Appendix E: Useful Contacts for telephone numbers).

MESH Ballet staff, volunteers or helpers do not have the responsibility or authority to decide if abuse has taken place, their responsibility is to report concerns to the relevant authorities so that appropriate investigation and action can be taken under the relevant legislation by qualified persons. This applies to suspected or reported abuse both during and outside of MESH Ballet classes or events.

If the person raising concerns does not feel comfortable discussing these with either the Principal or the Welfare Officer, for example, the concerns are about one of these people, then they should contact North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership to discuss this further.

More guidance on how to deal with suspected or reported abuse can be found in appendix D: What to Do if You Have Concerns

Useful information on who to contact can be found in appendix E: Useful Contacts

### **3.3 Responding to Physical Injury or Harm**

If a child or young person has an injury that could be non-accidental or shows signs of neglect or sexual abuse then the member of staff, volunteer or helper should:

- Report this to the Principal or Welfare Officer as soon as possible so that the relevant authorities can be informed
- If medical attention is required the attending healthcare professional should be informed of the suspected abuse
- Call 999 in addition to the Principal or Welfare Officer if they believe the child or young person in immediate danger

### **3.4 Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is important and MESH Ballet will never share details with anyone without consent unless required by law to prevent a crime or harm to another person. With respect to safeguarding, information will only be shared with the relevant authorities for the purpose of reporting suspected or actual abuse.

### **3.5 Training**

MESH Ballet staff and volunteers will all be supported and encouraged to complete training appropriate to their role including, but not limited to: first aid, safeguarding children, safeguarding adults, mental health recognition / first aid.

Where specific training is required for a role then staff members or volunteers must show evidence of completion of that training before taking on the role.

### **3.6 Reviewing the Policy and Procedure**

This policy and procedure will be updated in line with current legislation and relevant contact details no later than every 2 years.

## Appendices

### **A Definitions of Child Abuse**

There are four types of child abuse. These are listed below with examples of what could constitute abuse under that category; these lists are not exhaustive.

#### Emotional Abuse

- Name calling
- Being threatened
- Being made fun of or made to feel small
- Seeing violence between people who care for you

#### Neglect

- Not having enough food to eat
- Not having enough clothes that keep you warm
- Having nowhere to stay

#### Sexual Abuse

- Being touched in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable
- Being forced to have sex
- Being made to look at sexual pictures or videos

#### Physical Abuse

- Hitting
- Squeezing
- Biting
- Burning
- Bruising

(Taken from <https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/children-young-people/what-is-child-abuse/>)

For more information on specific types of abuse please see <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1188/definitions-signs-child-abuse.pdf>

### **B Indicators for Abuse**

Some common signs that there may be something concerning happening in a child's life include:

- Unexplained changes in behavior or personality
- Becoming withdrawn
- Seeming anxious
- Becoming uncharacteristically aggressive
- Lacks social skills and has few friends, if any
- Poor bond or relationship with a parent
- Knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age
- Running away or going missing
- Always choosing to wear clothes which cover their body

(Taken from <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/spotting-signs-child-abuse/>)

For more information on recognising abuse please see <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1188/definitions-signs-child-abuse.pdf>

### **C Guidelines for Working with Children**

We believe in mutual respect for all and request that this is demonstrated by all students, parents, carers and visitors to the school. To this end we expect the following:

**Achieving our best together**

[www.MESHBallet.co.uk](http://www.MESHBallet.co.uk)

- For each individual to be treated with kindness and courtesy at all times
- For classes and events to be fun, engaging and educational
- Bullying is not tolerated at MESH Ballet and we ask that any concerns regarding this are brought to the principal's attention as soon as possible

We also encourage this ethos within class by discussing any unwanted behaviour as it arises and how this could change to be more positive. We also enable students to provide constructive feedback to their peers during class to encourage a supportive and accepting environment.

#### D **What to Do if You Have Concerns**

If a member of staff, volunteer or helper suspects abuse they must:

- Contact the Principal or Welfare Officer as soon as possible
- Write down anything specific they saw or heard so they can remember it as accurately as possible – use direct quotes where possible
- Call 999 if they believe the child or young person to be in immediate danger or require urgent medical attention
- Build a rapport with the child or young person so they know they have someone to talk to should they wish to
- Remember that they do not have to be certain that a child is being abused to raise concerns
- **Not** confront any suspected abuser
- **Not** push the child or young person to give information if they do not want to
- **Not** ask to see any injuries they believe may be non-accidental

If a child discloses abuse to a member of staff, volunteer or helper that person must:

- Listen to the child so they know that you are taking it seriously
- Take notes on what the child says as soon as possible after the disclosure
- Reassure them they have done the right thing in telling you
- Explain what you will do next (if age appropriate)
- Report the abuse without delay

(Taken from DfE Keeping Children Safe Code of Practice, 2020)

- **Do not** promise to keep the information a secret and explain you may need to tell someone else
- **Do not** ask leading questions (eg: did they touch you there?) but use open question instead (eg: do you want to tell me what happened?)
- **Do not** attempt to investigate the allegation yourself

Following contact from a concerned member of staff, volunteer or helper the school Principal or Welfare Officer must:

- Discuss the concerns with the person raising them in an open and non-judgmental way
- Support the person to contact the relevant authority where appropriate or will contact the relevant authority on their behalf
- If it is still unclear whether the issues need to be raised as a safeguarding concern then the Principal or Welfare Officer will contact North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership for advice
- Following any reports of safeguarding concern from a member of staff, volunteer or helper, the Principal or Welfare Officer will meet with them for a debrief to ensure their own mental wellbeing is supported

If you have concerns regarding a member of staff, volunteer or helper then please contact the school Principal or Welfare Officer as appropriate and follow the guidelines above or contact the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership for advice.

**E Useful Contacts**

School Principal – Su Crossland

- Tel: 07968273468

Welfare Officer – Carolyn Watkinson

- Tel: 07816287878

NY Safeguarding Children Partnership

- Tel: 01609 780780 (24/7)

NSPCC

- Tel: 0808 800 5000 (Monday to Friday 8am – 10pm or 9am – 6pm at the weekends)
- Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)
- Online: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/report/report-abuse-online/>

Policy Date: 19 March 2021	Signature: 	Name: Su Crossland	Designation: Principal
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Review Date: DUE MARCH 2022	Signature:	Name:	Designation:
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