

Mid Wales Dance Academy (Seniors)

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

1. Policy Statement

The safety, welfare and wellbeing of all children and young people attending Mid Wales Dance Academy (MWDA) is our highest priority.

All children and young people, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or background, have the right to protection from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

MWDA is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, supportive and inclusive environment where children and young people can enjoy dance, develop confidence and achieve their potential.

We believe that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that all adults working with children have a duty to promote their welfare and protect them from harm.

2. Purpose of the Organisation

Mid Wales Dance Academy provides dance classes, workshops, rehearsals and performance opportunities for children and young people.

The Academy aims to deliver high-quality dance training within a positive, nurturing and professional environment.

3. Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to:

- All staff and freelance teachers.
- Volunteers and helpers.
- Guest teachers and workshop leaders.
- Contractors working on behalf of MWDA.
- Anyone acting in a role that brings them into contact with children and young people through MWDA activities.

The policy applies to all MWDA activities, including classes, rehearsals, workshops, performances, trips, events and online activities.

4. Designated Safeguarding Leads

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for coordinating safeguarding and child protection arrangements within MWDA.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Lesley Walker

Email: info@mwda.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Karen Stevens

Email: karenstevens74@hotmail.co.uk

The DSL and Deputy DSL will ensure that safeguarding concerns are managed appropriately and referred to external agencies where necessary.

5. Responsibilities of Staff and Volunteers

All staff, volunteers and freelancers working with children must:

- Read, understand and comply with this policy.
- Prioritise the welfare of children and young people.
- Report any safeguarding concerns immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Act as positive role models at all times.
- Participate in safeguarding training appropriate to their role.
- Cooperate fully with safeguarding investigations and procedures.

Safeguarding concerns should never be ignored, delayed or investigated independently by staff or volunteers.

6. Safer Recruitment

MWDA is committed to safer recruitment practices.

Where appropriate, individuals working with children will be required to complete:

- Identity verification checks.
- Enhanced DBS checks.
- Reference checks.
- Safeguarding training.

No individual will undertake regulated activity with children unless the appropriate safeguarding requirements have been satisfied.

7. Recognising Abuse

Abuse may take many forms and can occur in any family, community or organisation.

Staff and volunteers should remain vigilant to signs that a child may be experiencing:

- Physical abuse.
- Emotional abuse.
- Sexual abuse.
- Neglect.

Concerns may arise from a child's behaviour, appearance, comments, disclosures, attendance patterns or interactions with others.

Staff are not expected to determine whether abuse has occurred, but they are expected to report concerns promptly.

8. Responding to Disclosures

If a child or young person discloses information that raises a safeguarding concern, staff should:

- Listen carefully and remain calm.
- Take what the child says seriously.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking up.
- Avoid asking leading questions.
- Never promise confidentiality.
- Explain that the information may need to be shared with people who can help keep them safe.
- Record the disclosure as accurately as possible.
- Report the concern immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

Staff should not investigate concerns themselves.

9. Code of Conduct

All adults working with children through MWDA are expected to maintain high standards of professional behaviour.

Staff and volunteers must:

- Use respectful and appropriate language.

- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Ensure any physical contact is appropriate, necessary and relevant to dance instruction.
- Avoid situations where they are alone with a child in an isolated environment.
- Avoid private communication with children through personal social media accounts, messaging services or personal email addresses.
- Treat all children fairly and with respect.

10. Parents and Supervision

Parents and carers remain responsible for children outside scheduled classes and rehearsals.

MWDA expects that:

- Children under 18 are supervised by a parent or carer when not participating in an organised activity.
- Reception, changing areas and toilets are not supervised by MWDA staff and remain the responsibility of parents and carers outside class times.
- Children are collected promptly following classes and rehearsals.
- Staff remain with children awaiting collection wherever reasonably practicable.
- Parents notify MWDA in advance if someone different will be collecting their child.

11. Online Safety

MWDA recognises the importance of safeguarding children in digital environments.

Where online communication, classes or activities take place:

- Appropriate safeguarding procedures will be followed.
- Parents and carers should be aware of children's participation.
- Online interactions must remain professional and relevant to MWDA activities.
- Personal contact between staff and students through private social media channels is prohibited.

12. Photography and Filming

Photography and filming may be undertaken by MWDA staff, authorised photographers or approved media representatives for educational, promotional or archival purposes.

Written consent will be sought through the registration process. If you choose not to agree to photographs we will ensure all staff and the photographer are made aware. This will not affect your child's involvement in the class / workshop.

MWDA will take reasonable steps to ensure that images are used responsibly and appropriately.

13. Reporting Concerns

Any concern regarding the welfare or safety of a child must be reported immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

The DSL will determine whether referral to external agencies is required.

In an emergency, or where a child is at immediate risk of harm, contact:

- Emergency Services (999)
- Children's Social Services
- Police

All safeguarding concerns will be treated seriously and handled in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.

14. Allegations Against Staff, Volunteers or Contractors

Any allegation or concern regarding the behaviour of a member of staff, volunteer, freelancer or contractor towards a child must be reported immediately to the DSL.

Where appropriate, the DSL will seek advice from or refer the matter to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

If the allegation concerns the DSL, the concern should be reported directly to the Deputy DSL and/or the LADO.

All allegations will be managed fairly, promptly and confidentially.

15. Whistleblowing

MWDA encourages staff, volunteers and freelancers to raise concerns about unsafe, unethical or inappropriate behaviour.

Anyone who has concerns about the conduct of an adult involved with MWDA may report the matter to:

- The DSL.
- The Deputy DSL.
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

- The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line.
- Other appropriate authorities.

Individuals raising concerns in good faith will be supported and protected from retaliation.

16. Record Keeping and Confidentiality

Safeguarding concerns, disclosures, referrals and outcomes will be recorded accurately and stored securely.

Information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to safeguard a child or fulfil legal responsibilities.

Records will be managed in accordance with data protection legislation and safeguarding requirements.

17. Partnership Working

MWDA works collaboratively with parents, carers, local safeguarding agencies and venue partners to promote the welfare of children.

When operating within facilities managed by Theatr Brycheiniog, MWDA will work alongside the venue's safeguarding, health and safety and operational procedures where appropriate.

18. Legal Framework

This policy is informed by the following legislation and guidance:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (current version)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current version)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014
- Welsh Safeguarding Procedures 2019
- Keeping Learners Safe 2022
- Keeping Young Performers safe 2015

19. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes to legislation, guidance or organisational requirements.

Date Approved: _____

Review Date: _____

Approved By: _____

Contact for Safeguarding Concerns

Mid Wales Dance Academy (Seniors)

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Lesley Walker

Email: info@mwda.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Karen Stevens

Email: karenstevens74@hotmail.co.uk

Please mark any safeguarding correspondence **CONFIDENTIAL**.