



## Safeguarding Policy

### 1. Introduction and policy statement

#### Purpose and scope of policy

- 1.1 Freedom Studios has a 'duty of care' to provide a safe environment for and to promote the health and wellbeing of children under the age of eighteen years and adults at risk. Freedom Studios will take all reasonable steps to ensure that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk is embedded in our contact with them through the training and activities we provide.
- 1.2 The protection of children and adults at risk is important to Freedom Studios. The aim of Freedom's Policy and Procedures on Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk (the "Policy") is to ensure that children and adults at risk with whom Freedom comes into contact are well protected and that there is a system in place to protect their welfare.
- 1.3 Freedom Studios believes that the welfare of the child is paramount, and that all children and adults at risk regardless of age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation or identity, or religious belief have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- 1.4 The purpose of this policy and associated procedures is:
  - To facilitate protection for children under the age of eighteen and adults at risk during any activity provided by Freedom
  - To provide employees with procedures to follow in the event that they suspect a child or adult at risk may be experiencing abuse or be at risk of abuse or harm
  - To protect children and adults at risk where there is a concern about the behaviour of an adult, including a Freedom Studios employee
  - To assist all individuals at Freedom Studios to meet their duty of care to safeguard all children and adults at risk who take part in Freedom activities
  - To uphold our duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people (children, adults at risk and participants) from being drawn into terrorism, known as the Prevent Duty
  - To ensure that where Freedom Studios employees, participants, Faculty, or visitors have concerns about the welfare of children or adults at risk, they are in a position to take appropriate steps to address them

## Statutory and legislative frameworks

1.5 This policy has been drawn up on the basis of UK law and guidance.

1.6 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing the impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

1.7 Under the Children Act 1989, which applies to England and Wales, a child is a person up to the age of eighteen years. For child protection purposes, all four nations use an age band up to eighteen years old. This can also be up to the age of twenty-five years in the case of someone who is receiving help from Social Services or Education.

## Responsibilities

1.8 Freedom Studios will safeguard children and vulnerable adults by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting child protection procedures
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, vulnerable adults, parents, employees and the companies and organisations with which we work
- Working openly and in partnership with parents and guardians in relation to child protection and safeguarding concerns
- Sharing information about concerns with the appropriate agencies
- Implementing and adhering to a Code of behaviour and good practice
- Providing an email address for anyone who is concerned about something or somebody to use, if they prefer to email rather than speak directly to someone. The email address is [freedomdancetraining@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:freedomdancetraining@yahoo.co.uk)
- Ensuring safe recruitment, selection and vetting of employees
- Providing effective management through supervision, appraisal, support, training and development
- Having due regard to the need to prevent people (children, vulnerable adults and participants) from being drawn into terrorism, known as the Prevent Duty
- Ensuring the security of Freedom Studios premises where activities involving children and vulnerable adults take place
- Ensuring that there are appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard the collection of children under eighteen years old from the end of Freedom Studios activities.

1.9 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility. Everyone, including those who work for Freedom Studios and particularly those who come into contact with children and families, has a role to play. All professionals should ensure that their approach considers at all times what is in the best interests of the child or vulnerable adult.

1.10 No single professional, including those at Freedom Studios, can have a full picture of a child or vulnerable adult's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

1.11 All Freedom Studios employees will undergo a disclosure and barring service check before working with participants.

## **2. Responding to incidents, suspicions, and allegations of abuse**

Abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues rarely follow a consistent pattern or can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another and decisions about responses will be nuanced and complex.

### **Overview and responsibilities**

- 2.1 These procedures aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse and the need to protect Freedom Studios employees, participants, members, volunteers and visitors from false allegations.
- 2.2 It is not the responsibility of anyone working at Freedom Studios in a paid or voluntary capacity to decide whether a child or vulnerable adults has been abused in the past, is being abused or might be abused, but there is a responsibility to act on their concerns in order that children and vulnerable adults can be supported and protected in the short term, and that appropriate agencies can make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect them.
- 2.3 It is the remit of the appropriate authority and not anyone connected with Freedom Studios to investigate incidents that require referral.
- 2.4 Abuse of children and vulnerable adults can and does take place outside the family setting, including within organisations, potentially by anyone involved in working with children or vulnerable adults in a paid or voluntary capacity. Evidence indicates that abuse which takes place in an organisation is rarely a one-off event, so it is important that all employees within Freedom Studios are aware of this and take the appropriate action to respond to an allegation or suspicion.
- 2.5 Abuse of children and vulnerable adults can be perpetrated by another child or vulnerable adult and where this occurs the age and understanding of the alleged perpetrator must be taken into consideration. The circumstances of the alleged abuser must be assessed separately from those of the alleged victim and must include exploration of why the behaviour has occurred.
- 2.6 Where Freedom Studios receives reports of concerns about the way that a Freedom Studios teacher is working with children and young people that raises questions about safe dance practice (particularly with respect to the possibility of physical injury or impairment being caused to participants), Freedom Studios will make appropriate investigations as the expert in the dance education field. In the event of the investigation substantiation such concerns, a safeguarding referral may then be made to the appropriate authority.

### **Responding to a safeguarding incident or concern involving a child or vulnerable adult**

- 2.7 If an incident, allegation or suspicion of abuse or any other matter which calls the wellbeing of a child or vulnerable adult into question (hereinafter referred to as 'incident') is disclosed, seen, heard or suspected, the person receiving the information, whether a Freedom Studios employee, staff member, participant, or member of another organisation with which Freedom Studios is working, or a visitor to Freedom Studios, should follow the procedure below:
  - Stop other activity and focus on what you are being told or seeing – responding to the incident being reported should take immediate priority
  - React in a calm and considered way but show concern
  - Tell the child, vulnerable adult or third party that it is right for them to share this information
  - Take what the child, vulnerable adult or third party has said seriously and allow extra time where there is a speech or language difficulty

- Keep questions to an absolute minimum necessary to gain a clear and accurate understanding of what is being said, and do not interrogate the child, vulnerable adult or third party
- Listen and do not interrupt if they are recounting significant events
- Offer reassurance
- Do not give assurances of confidentiality, but explain you will need to pass on this information to those that need to know
- Consider whether immediate action is needed to protect a child or vulnerable adult who may have been harmed or be at risk of harm – think about the child or vulnerable adult who is the immediate concern and any others who may have been harmed or be at risk of harm, in light of what you have been told or seen.

2.8 In cases where there is immediate risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult and it is unsafe to wait until the next working day, either the person raising the concern or a member of staff should immediately call upon the Dance School Manager who has access to contact telephone numbers of local social services and the Police.

2.9 If the Dance School Manager is not immediately available and a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, you should alert the appropriate authority and stay with those you think are at immediate risk until they can be transferred to safe care, where practical.

2.10 When there are serious concerns about immediate risks to a child or if a child has suffered significant harm and continues to be at risk and an immediate referral is made to appropriate local authorities. You should be prepared to give clear details of the concern, the child's name, date of birth, address and contact details for parents and carers. A referral in urgent circumstances can be made by telephone, but a completed incident form is required as soon as possible (even if some details need to be supplied at a later date.)

### **Responding to a safeguarding incident or concern involving a Freedom Studios employee, participant, member, volunteer, or visitor**

2.11 If anyone has a concern about the behaviour of a Freedom Studios employee, participant, member, volunteer, or visitor, they should discuss this with the Dance School Manager.

2.12 The majority of allegations against employees, participants, members, or volunteers will relate to their behaviour whilst working or participating. However, some concerns may relate to their personal life or the care of their own children. In some cases, there may have been an allegation of abuse regarding someone strongly associated to them and this person may pose a risk of harm to the children, the employee, participant, member, volunteer or visitor is responsible for.

2.13 The members of staff who are notified of such concerns will be expected to report this to the Dance School Manager as soon as possible and ideally within the same working day.

2.14 All employees, participants, members, volunteers, and visitors should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and know that these concerns will be taken seriously and will be dealt with sensitively and appropriately. It is not necessary for safeguarding concerns to be in writing (other than the incident report form) in order for them to be acted upon.

2.15 Teachers, cover teachers and any other member of Freedom Studios staff should ensure that they are aware of the designated person for safeguarding (the Dance School Manager) and familiarise themselves with this safeguarding policy as soon as they commence work.

2.16 Where it is known that a Freedom Studios employee, participant, member, volunteer or visitor is under investigation by a third party or an appropriate authority, for actions that may have occurred either as a result of their work with Freedom Studios or in their private life and which might give cause for concern about their suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults, this must be reported to the Dance School Manager.

## Reporting a safeguarding incident or concern

2.17 Make a comprehensive record of what is said or seen, and actions taken at the earliest possible opportunity. Report this using an incident report form within the timescales stated. Incident report forms are available at Reception and if you have any concerns or need any advice or guidance completing the form, contact the Dance School Manager.

2.18 The comprehensive and confidential record and incident report should include the following:

- A detailed record of the incident in the child or vulnerable adult's own words or the words of the third party reporting it. You should note that there may be occasions when this record may be used later in a criminal trial and therefore needs to be as full and as accurate as possible
- Details of the nature of the incident
- A description of any injury (please note that you must not remove the clothing of a child or vulnerable adult to inspect an injury)
- Dates, times or places and any other information that may be useful such as the names and addresses of potential witnesses
- Written records including emails and letters

2.19 The incident report form should be submitted to a staff member as soon as possible, preferably immediately, and certainly within 24 hours. If the concerns relate to a teacher, staff member, cover teacher, volunteer, or visitor, then it should be reported to the Dance School Manager.

2.20 For security and confidentiality reasons, communications via email should be avoided wherever possible. Keep all original notes as they may be needed as evidence.

2.21 If the incident being reported is considered of low-level concern, in these circumstances a referral to an appropriate authority will probably not be made, but the situation will be monitored.

2.22 In the event of an allegation related to an employee or volunteer a local authority will be informed within 24 hours or the allegation being known. The criteria for making a referral to a local authority is that an employee or volunteer may have

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

2.23 All employees handling cases involving allegations against employees, volunteers, participants, or visitors will recognise the need for absolute confidentiality in these circumstances.

2.24 There may be occasions when it is appropriate for the child(ren)'s main school to be contacted, where these details are known.

## Early intervention and help

2.25 When a child, vulnerable adult or family is or may be experiencing difficulties, support is most effective when it is provided as early as possible and early intervention can sometimes be appropriate.

2.26 When emerging problems are identified employees, participants, members, volunteers and visitors should liaise with the Dance School Manager so that information can be shared with the local authority so that where necessary an early help assessment can be conducted to identify the child or vulnerable adult's needs and enable professional support to be provided by local authorities.

2.27 When early help is provided and Freedom Studios is made aware, they will monitor the situation and refer to the local authorities if any further concerns arise or the child or vulnerable adult's situation does not improve.

2.28 Any child may benefit from early help, but employees will be particularly alert to the potential need for support for any child or young person who:

- Is disabled and has specific additional needs
- Has special educational needs
- Is known to be a young carer
- Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour including involvement in gangs
- Is frequently missing
- Appears to be misusing drugs or alcohol
- Appears to be at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, or child exploitation
- Is in a family circumstance which presents challenges for the child such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse
- Has returned to their family from care
- Is showing early signs of abuse and/ or neglect
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- Is a privately fostered child

#### **After a safeguarding incident or concern has been reported**

2.29 The Dance School Manager will decide on any action to be taken, including whether to contact the parent, carer or guardian and/ or refer the matter to an appropriate authority, and will ensure that Freedom Studios complies in full of any resulting investigation.

2.30 Where an allegation, suspicion, or incident, in the opinion of the Dance School Manager, is of low-level concern, does not require immediate referral to the relevant authorities but requires monitoring, no further immediate action will be taken.

2.31 Whether or not any referral is made, the Dance School Manager will monitor the situation and refer again if it appears that any concerns remain.

2.32 The local authorities have a specific role within children's services and should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child
- Committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child
- Behaved toward a child or children in a way that indicates they are unsuited to be working with children

2.33 Depending on the outcome of any referral and where applicable, Freedom Studios will refer a named individual for consideration for barring and will contact the Disclosure and Barring Service.

2.34 A Freedom Studios employee, participant, member or volunteer under investigation will be prevented from working or otherwise interacting with children and vulnerable adults at Freedom Studios and where applicable will have their Freedom Studios employment and/ or Freedom Studios membership suspended, until the outcome of the investigation is known and a decision made.

2.35 A visitor to Freedom Studios under investigation will not be permitted to enter Freedom Studios premises until the outcome of the investigation is known and a decision made.

2.36 A further course of action will be considered under the relevant code of conduct.

2.37 There may be occasions where it is appropriate for information to be shared with other dancer schools and organisations, when a referral is made related to an individual or may not be a Freedom Studios member.

### **Further advice and guidance**

2.28 Remember, safeguarding is everyone's business and if anyone tells you, or if you see mistreatment or abuse or have concerns about a child, young person or vulnerable adult being harmed or at risk, it is your role to respond sensitively and share information by alerting others who have a designated role at Freedom Studios.

2.29 Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to prevent the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults at risk of abuse. No one should assume that someone else will pass on information which may be critical to keeping a child or vulnerable adult safe.

2.30 Anyone who wishes to seek guidance from external agency may contact the Police or social services department. Guidance and advice are also available from the NSPCC Adult Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000, or Childline for children and young people on 0800 1111.

2.31 If you believe an incident has not been dealt with in accordance with these procedures, it should be reported to the Dance School Manager in writing immediately.

## **3. Code of Behaviour and Good Practice**

3.1 Freedom believes that the Code of Behaviour and Good Practice will assist everyone in protecting children and vulnerable adults and help with identifying practices which could be misinterpreted or lead to false allegations. Anyone organising activities on behalf of Freedom Studios, involving children and/or vulnerable adults, must adhere to this code as set out below:

3.1.1 All children and vulnerable adults should be treated with respect.

3.1.2 All children and vulnerable adults (including those with special educational needs) should be provided an environment in which they feel confident and able to discuss their concerns and have support with communication difficulties where needed.

3.1.3 All activities (including exams/courses) involving children and vulnerable adults take place within sight or hearing of other adults.

3.1.4 Respect should be given to a child's or vulnerable adult's rights to personal privacy.

3.1.5 Physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted and should be avoided. Where any physical touching is required for purposes of instruction, it should be provided openly in front of other participants. Parents, guardians and participants are warned in advance via our Code of Conduct Information Pack that physical touching may be required for correctional purposes or injury prevention purposes only.

3.1.6 Feedback should always be constructive rather than negative, and language used should never be threatening or upsetting.

3.1.7 Private or unobserved contact with a young person or vulnerable adult should be avoided wherever possible unless authorised by a parent or guardian and recorded (e.g. for a 1:1 private dance lesson.)

- 3.1.8 Children with special educational needs/disabilities may be especially vulnerable to abuse (including from their peer group) and extra care should be taken to interpret apparent signs of abuse or neglect. They may be disproportionately impacted by behaviour such as abuse or bullying without outwardly showing any signs through communication barriers.
- 3.1.9 Assumptions should not be made that indicators of abuse (e.g. behaviour, mood, or injury) relate to a child's disability or learning difficulty without further exploration.
- 3.1.10 If first aid is required, where possible, it should be administered by a trained first aider in presence of another adult. Amongst the team of first aiders there are six first aiders trained in Paediatric First Aid available on Freedom Studios premises. A First Aider will complete an Incident Report Form if they have any safeguarding concerns as a result of administering the first aid.
- 3.1.11 Freedom Studios has Changing Room Guidelines which are designed to provide a safe environment in which children and vulnerable adults can use Freedom Studios facilities. Employees should encourage children, young people, parents, guardians and carers to follow this guidance, which is available at [www.freedomdancestudios.co.uk/important-documents](http://www.freedomdancestudios.co.uk/important-documents).
- 3.1.12 The Changing Room Guidelines prohibit the use of telephones, cameras or other photographic or filming devices being used in changing rooms or toilet facilities.
- 3.1.13 Freedom Studios employees, staff members, participants, volunteers, and visitors to Freedom Studios where appropriate, should challenge unacceptable behaviour in accordance with the provisions of this code of conduct and good practice.
- 3.1.14 Any incidents, allegations or suspicions of abuse should be reported immediately to The Dance School Manager.
- 3.1.15 In all dealings with children and vulnerable adults, Freedom Studios employees, staff members, participants, volunteers, and visitors to Freedom Studios where appropriate, should never:
- Leave children who are in their care unsupervised on Freedom Studios premises.
  - Play rough, physical, or sexually provocative games, involving or observed by children or vulnerable adults whether based on talking or touching
  - Share a room overnight with a child or vulnerable adult
  - Enter a private room of a child or vulnerable adult unless it is absolutely necessary and, wherever possible, accompanied by another adult
  - Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate physical activity involving children or vulnerable adults, or any bullying of a child by an adult or another child
  - Form or seek to form relationships of sexual nature which may lead to sexual activity (i.e. 'grooming')
  - Allow children or vulnerable adults to use inappropriate language (e.g. of a derogatory or sexually explicit nature) without challenging it
  - Make sexually suggestive or discriminatory comments even in jest
  - Intentionally reduce a child or vulnerable adult to tears as a form of control
  - Use any physical punishment as part of disciplining a child or vulnerable adult
  - Shout or use harsh criticism
  - Consume alcohol or drugs during the working day (including breaks) or when involved in activities with children or vulnerable adults
  - Give their personal contact details to a child or vulnerable adult whom they have met through work



- Allow themselves to get into a situation where an abuse of trust may occur – this means not forming a close personal relationship (sexual or otherwise with a child or vulnerable adult, even if they are seeking and are consenting to such a relationship)
- Transport a child or vulnerable adult in a person vehicle unless consent has been given by a parent or guardian – where this is necessary in an emergency, the Dance School Manager must be informed
- Allow allegations made by a child or vulnerable adult to go unrecorded or not acted upon in accordance with these or other Freedom Studios procedures
- You must not undertake personal activities (such as washing or dressing) for a child or vulnerable adult which they can do themselves. If a child has a disability, such tasks should only be performed with full understanding and consent of and, where appropriate, assistance from the parents or carers. A vulnerable adult may be able to give their own consent

3.1.16 Any incidents which cause concern in respect of a child or vulnerable adult must be reported immediately to the Dance School Manager. Below are examples of incidents which are to be reported. When:

- A child has been left unsupervised on Freedom Studios premises
- A child or vulnerable adult is hurt accidentally
- There is a concern that a relationship is developing which may be an abuse of trust
- You are worried that a child or vulnerable adult is becoming attracted to a colleague who cares for them
- You think a child or vulnerable adult has misunderstood or misinterprets something you have done
- You have been required to take action to prevent a child or vulnerable adult from harming themselves or another, or from causing significant damage to property. Unless you have received specific training on how to restrain a child or vulnerable adult, this should only be done as a last resort. Do not do it alone, call for assistance, write up what happened and pass the information to the Dance School Manager
- You see any suspicious marks on a child or vulnerable adult
- You hear of any allegations made by a child or vulnerable adult or any other person relating to events giving rise to safeguarding concern either inside or outside of Freedom Studios which have happened recently or in the past
- A child, vulnerable adult, or participant under the age of eighteen discloses that they have a victim of female genital mutilation or are going to be in the future
- You are concerned that a child, vulnerable adult, or older participant is being drawn, or may be at risk of being drawn, into terrorism or extremism
- You are concerned that a child or vulnerable adult is being subjected to honour base violence

3.2 All personnel referred to in 3.1 will be briefed as part of staff induction or before any such activities take place.

3.3 Any external hirer or contractors must adhere to Freedom Studios Code of Behaviour and Good Practice as part of their contractual agreement.

#### **4. Recruitment, selection and vetting**

4.1 As part of its commitment to safeguarding, Freedom Studios will ensure that safe practice is integrated into all recruitments, selection, vetting and induction processes.

4.2 Freedom Studios vets all employees, making sure we complete a Disclosure & Barring Service check and contact referencing.

4.3 Young people under the age of eighteen will not be employed in positions where they are responsible for teaching or supervising children or participants under the age of eighteen years without direct supervision of a trained teacher.

## **5. Photography and filming children and/ or vulnerable adults**

5.1 Photography or filming may take place within classes, workshops, and events. These photos may be used on our social media platforms and website. However, **you can choose to opt** of photographic consent, details of this can be found **in our terms and conditions (Clause 20)**.

5.2 Photographs and videos will never be taken with the intention to use them inappropriately or manipulate them.

## **6. Review of policy and procedures**

6.1 The policy will be reviews annually or more frequently in response to new legislation or where an incident has occurred that requires an adjustment to processes within. We want to ensure that the policy continues to meet the safeguarding legislation and best practice.

# Appendix

## 1. Types and definitions of abuse

**Abuse:** A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them, or more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

**Physical abuse:** A form of abuse that may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse:** The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's development capability, as well as over-protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone. It is important to recognise that many children will be living (or may have lived) in families where domestic abuse is a factor and that these situations have a harmful impact on children emotionally, as well as placing them at risk of physical harm.

**Sexual abuse:** This involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration, or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual images, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Neglect:** The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## 2. Vulnerable adults

The core definition of a 'vulnerable adult' is a person "who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness; and is or may be unable to take care or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation." This definition covers all people over the age of eighteen years.

Consideration, however, needs to be given to a number of factors:

- Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts
- It may be physical, verbal, or psychological
- It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent
- Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

Abuse can happen anywhere:

- In a person's own home
- In a residential or nursing home
- In a hospital
- In the workplace
- At a day centre or educational establishment
- In supported housing
- In the street.

Who can abuse? The person responsible for the abuse is often well known to the victim, and could be:

- A paid carer in a residential establishment or from a home care service
- A social care worker, health worker, nurse, doctor, or therapist
- A relative, friend or neighbour

The following are the main different forms of abuse in relation to a vulnerable adult:

**Physical abuse:** includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, scratching, biting, burning, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions

**Sexual abuse:** including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting

**Psychological abuse:** including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks

**Financial or material abuse:** including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits

**Neglect and acts of omission:** including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition, and heating

**Discriminatory abuse:** including racist, sexist, based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs, or similar treatment.

Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence, or ignorance.

Incidents of abuse may be multiple, either to one person in a continuing relationship or service context or to more than one person at a time. This makes it important to look beyond the single incident or breach in standards to underlying dynamics and patterns of harm. Some instances of abuse will constitute a criminal offence. In this respect vulnerable adults are entitled to the protection of the law in the same way as any other member of the public.

In addition, statutory offences have been created which specifically protect those who may be incapacitated in various ways. Examples of actions which may constitute criminal offences are assault, whether physical or psychological, sexual assault and rape, theft, fraud or other forms of financial exploitation, and certain forms of discrimination, whether on racial or gender grounds.

**Criminal offences:** These offences differ from all other non-criminal forms of abuse in that the responsibility for initiating action rests with the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service. Also, when complaints about alleged abuse suggest that a criminal offence may have been committed, it is imperative that reference should be made to the police as a matter of urgency.

### 3. Bullying

Bullying behaviour is as follows:

- Deliberately causes hurt (either physically or emotionally)
- Repetitive (though one-off incidents such as the posting of an image on the internet, or the sending of a text or sexting (sexually explicit photographs or messages) which is then forwarded to a group, can quickly become repetitive and spiral into bullying behaviour)
- Involves an imbalance of power (the person on the receiving end feels like they cannot defend themselves).

Bullying is not:

- Teasing and banter between friends without intention to cause hurt
- Falling out between friends after a quarrel or disagreement
- Behaviour that all parties have consented to and enjoy (though this needs to be carefully monitored as coercion can be very subtle)

Bullying can take the following forms:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, ignoring someone, not involving them in activities, sending hurtful or tormenting texts, humiliating, or ridiculing someone
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, or pinching or any use of violence
- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, or gestures
- Related to a disability – because of how somebody looks or presents related to their disabilities (children with disabilities are more likely than their non-disabled peers to be excluded from activities)

- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments (sexual bullying can also relate to gender and gender identity and includes those who do not fit with the gender role prescribed to them)
- Homophobic – because of, or focusing, on the issue of a young person’s actual or perceived sexual orientation
- Verbal (in the case of children with hearing disabilities this can take place in sign language) – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours or teasing.

Bullying behaviour should not be passed off as “banter” or as “part of growing up”.

**It is important to be conscious that a child who is engaging in bullying or abusive behaviour towards others may have been subject to abuse from other children or adults. There is significant research evidence which indicates that abuse is likely to be repeated without appropriate intervention and treatment. This should be kept in mind when dealing with and managing case of abuse perpetrated by children.**

#### 4. Self-harm

Self-harm is where a person hurts themselves intentionally. This can occur in a range of ways:

- Cutting (usually with a knife or razor)
- Burning their body
- Banging their head (not to be confused in situations when working with a young person who may have additional (special) needs, but this could be an indicator)
- Throwing their body against something hard
- Punching themselves
- Sticking things in their body
- Swallowing inappropriate objects or tablets

#### 5. Eating disorders

Eating disorders are not just about food – they are a way of coping with emotional distress. They can affect both sexes, people of any background and any age.

Eating disorders can be recognised by a persistent pattern of unhealthy eating or dieting behaviour that can cause health problems and/or emotional and social distress.

There are three official categories of eating disorders:

- Anorexia nervosa
- Bulimia nervosa
- Eating disorder not otherwise specified (EDNOS).

People with EDNOS do not have the full set of symptoms for either anorexia or bulimia but may have aspects of both. EDNOS is as serious as other eating disorders and as potentially damaging to health.

Anorexia nervosa:

- The rarest – typically affects young people aged 12-20 years
- Individuals with anorexia nervosa do not maintain or have a body weight that is normal or expected for their age and height – they are usually less than 86% of their expected weight

- Even when underweight, individuals with anorexia continue to be fearful of weight gain. Their thoughts and feelings about their size and shape have a profound impact on their sense of self-esteem as well as their relationships
- Women with anorexia often stop having their periods
- They often do not recognise or admit the seriousness of their weight loss and deny that it may have permanent adverse health consequences.

Bulimia nervosa:

- Mainly affects individuals between the ages of 18-25 years
- Individuals with bulimia nervosa experience binge-eating episodes which are marked by eating an unusually large amount of food within a couple of hours, feeling compelled to eat and find it difficult if not 'impossible' to stop eating
- This is then followed by attempts to 'undo' the consequences of the binge by using unhealthy behaviour such as self-induced vomiting, misuse of laxatives, enemas, diuretics, severe caloric restriction, or excessive exercising
- Individuals are obsessed and preoccupied with their shape and weight and often feel their self-worth is dependent on their weight or shape.

Binge-eating disorder:

- Individuals with binge-eating disorder (BED) engage in binge eating, but do not extensively use inappropriate or unhealthy weight control behaviour such as fasting or purging to counteract the binges
- BED is more common amongst individuals who are overweight or obese, terms used to describe these problems include: compulsive overeating, emotional eating, or food addiction
- BED is not an officially recognised disorder, but is included in the EDNOS category

Eating problems never exist in isolation; they are usually a symptom of other problems e.g. coping with painful feelings and/or situations, boredom, anxiety, anger, shame, sadness, loneliness. Adolescence can be a key time. Stressful or traumatic events can trigger an eating problem (e.g. bullying, bereavement, family tensions, school problems, self-harm, low self-esteem, sexual, physical, emotional abuse or neglect, negative criticism, fragile sense of self) and it can be more about control than about food itself.

More information is available on: [www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk)

## 6. Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long lasting harmful consequences.

People working with children and vulnerable adults should be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM or already having suffered FGM and **must** report all suspicions or known cases to the relevant authorities.

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted in the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory mandatory duty upon teachers (along with other social workers and healthcare professionals) to report to the police where they discover through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under eighteen years old. Employees should also follow normal safeguarding procedures including completing an incident form, referring to the Dance School Manager or local authority as applicable.

## **7. Child sexual exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation involves exploitative situations, contexts, and relationships where young people receive something (for example, food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities.

Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly consensual relationship where sex is exchanged for gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs or groups. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops.

Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation, or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyber-bullying and grooming. However, it is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

## **8. Radicalisation**

Freedom Studios is committed to safeguarding the welfare of its students and employees and to meeting its duty under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 and the UK Government's associated Prevent strategy. Where possible Freedom will intervene to support children, students, vulnerable adults, and employees from being radicalised.

Whilst there is a low risk of extremist activity at Freedom Studios our duty of care to children, students and employees is of the utmost importance.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person or group of people come to adopt increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideals. The outcome of radicalisation can be both violent and non-violent and is reflected in vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values (including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs). The definition of extremism also includes calls for the death of members of British armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

The process of radicalisation has multiple pathways. Identification of individuals who are likely to be susceptible to extremism can happen in many different ways. Background factors, which are often, reinforced by family, friends or online, and/or combined with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer, may contribute to vulnerability. The internet and use of social media in particular have become a major factor in radicalisation of young people.

Employees should be alert to changes in children, students, vulnerable adults and colleagues' behaviour which could indicate that they may need help or protection. If you have any concerns regarding children and participants who might be at risk of radicalisation, please report the concern using the normal safeguarding Incident Report Form and associated procedure. The Dance School Manager may then make a referral to the appropriate authorities where applicable.

## **9. Violence in the name of honour**

Violence in the name of honour is a violent crime or incident which may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community.



It is often linked to family members or acquaintances who mistakenly believe someone has brought shame to their family or community by doing something that is not in keeping with the traditional beliefs of their culture. For example, violence in the name of honour might be committed against people who:

- Become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion
  - Want to get out of an arranged or forced marriage
  - Wear clothes or take part in activities that might not be considered traditional within a particular culture.
- Girls are the most common victims of violence in the name of honour; however, it can also affect boys. Crimes of 'honour' do not always include violence.

Crimes committed might include:

- Domestic abuse
- Threats of violence
- Sexual or psychological abuse
- Forced marriage
- Being held against your will or taken somewhere you do not want to go
- Assault

A forced marriage is one that is carried out without the consent of both people. This is quite different to an arranged marriage, which both people will have agreed to.

## **10. Sexual violence and sexual harassment**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. It will undoubtedly affect their attainment and performance.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and the two things may overlap. They can occur online and offline (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

This type of behaviour is not an inevitable part of growing up, or just banter, "having a laugh" or "boys being boys"

Incidents will be taken seriously and responded to robustly. Victims will be offered appropriate support and criminal activity will be reported to the police.

**It is the responsibility of individual employees and volunteers to ensure that the relationship they develop with children or students cannot be misinterpreted or developed beyond the professional. It is an offence for anyone in a position of trust and authority in relation to a young person to have a sexual relationship with a child or young person up to the age of eighteen.**

## **11. Physical abuse**

The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury
- Several different explanations provided for an injury

- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment
- Parents / carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or an injury
- Parents are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a 'cry for help' and if ignored could lead to a more serious injury)
- Family use of different doctors and A&E departments
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries.

### **Bruising**

Children can have accidental bruising, but the following must be considered as non-accidental unless there is evidence, or an adequate explanation is provided:

- Bruising in or around the mouth, which may indicate force-feeding
- Two simultaneous bruised eyes, without bruising to the forehead (rarely accidental, though a single bruised eye can be accidental or abusive)
- Repeated or multiple bruising on the head or in places unlikely to be injured accidentally
- Variation in colour possibly indicating injuries caused at different times
- The outline of an object used e.g. belt marks, handprints, or a hairbrush
- Bruising or tears around, or behind, the earlobe/s indicating injury by pulling or twisting
- Bruising around the face
- Grasp marks on small children
- Bruising on the arms, buttocks, and thighs (may be an indicator of sexual abuse).

### **Bite marks**

Bite marks can leave clear impressions of the teeth. Human bite marks are oval or crescent in shape. Those over 3 cm in diameter are more likely to have been caused by an adult or an older child.

A medical opinion should be sought where there is any doubt over the origin of the bite.

### **Burns and scalds**

It can be difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns and scalds, and this will always require experienced medical opinion. Any burn with a clear outline may be suspicious, e.g.:

- Circular burns from cigarettes (but may be friction burns if along the bony protuberance of the spine)
- Linear burns from hot metal rods or electrical fire elements
- Burns of uniform depth over a large area
- Scalds that have a line indicating immersion or poured liquid (a child getting into hot water of its own accord will struggle to get out and cause splash marks)
- Old scars indicating previous burns / scalds which did not have appropriate treatment or adequate explanation
- Scalds to the buttocks of a small child, particularly in the absence of burns to the feet (indicative of dipping into a hot liquid or bath)

### **Fractures**

Fractures may cause pain, swelling and discoloration over a bone or a joint. Non-mobile children rarely sustain fractures. There are grounds for concern if:

- The history provided is vague, non-existent, or inconsistent with the fracture type

- There are associated old fractures
- Medical attention is sought after a period of delay when the fracture has caused symptoms such as swelling, pain or loss of movement
- There is an unexplained fracture in the first year of life. Scars A large number of scars, or scars of different sizes or ages, or on different parts of body, may suggest abuse

### **Behavioural indications**

Some children may behave in ways that alert you to the possibility of physical injury, for example:

- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Fear of returning home
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others

## **12. Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. The indicators of emotional abuse are often also associated with other forms of abuse.

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Developmental delay
- Abnormal attachment between a child and parent / carer e.g. anxious, indiscriminate or no attachment
- Aggressive behaviour towards others
- Scape-goated within the family
- Frozen watchfulness, particularly in pre-school children
- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence
- Withdrawn or seen as a 'loner' – difficulty relating to others
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate responses to painful situations
- Neurotic behaviours
- Self-harming
- Running away

### **Neglect**

Evidence of neglect is built up over a period of time and can cover different aspects of parenting. Indicators include:

- Failure by parents or carers to meet basic essential needs e.g. adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene, and medical care
- Listless, apathetic, and unresponsive with no apparent medical cause
- Failure to grow within normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss
- Thrives away from home environment
- Frequently absent or late
- Left with adults who are intoxicated or violent
- Abandoned or left alone for excessive periods
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging

## Sexual abuse

Boys and girls of all ages may be sexually abused and are frequently scared to say anything due to guilt and/or fear. This is particularly difficult for a child to talk about and full account should be taken of the cultural sensitivities of any individual child / family.

Recognition can be difficult unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional / behavioural.

Some behavioural indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Inappropriate sexualised conduct
- Sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate for the child's age
- Continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation
- Self-harm (including eating disorder, self-mutilation, and suicide attempts)
- Involvement in prostitution or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes for e.g. sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties)
- Concerning changes in behaviour or general presentation
- Regressive behaviour
- Distrust of a particular adult
- Unexplained gifts of money
- Sleep disturbances or nightmares
- Phobias or panic attacks

Some physical indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Pain or itching of genital area
- Blood on underclothes
- Pregnancy in a younger girl where the identity of the father is not disclosed
- Physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal areas, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted disease, presence of semen in vagina, anus, external genitalia, or clothing
- Wetting or soiling