

Safeguarding Children

All organisations working with children and young people should be committed to promoting their welfare and protecting them from harm. This is everyone's responsibility and everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.

A Safeguarding policy is useful to solve problems and mitigate risks. A well-developed safeguarding policy will ensure that everyone in an entire organisation knows what is expected of their organisation, their management and themselves to keep children safe. Its most important function is to reduce the risk of a child being harmed but it also ensures that organisations are protected from risks: e.g. financial, reputational, litigation and many others.

In short, a policy tells staff how things are done in an organisation, and that is another way of saying 'This is how we expect things to be done'. Once the ground rules are established, the policy should say how the organisation intends to check and assure itself that everyone is doing what they should.

Policy statement

This policy is to be read in conjunction with our Child Protection Policy. Action for Children's Arts will work with children, parents and the community to ensure we support children's rights and create and maintain the safest possible environment for children.

We do this by:

- Recognising that all children have the right to freedom from abuse and harm
- Promoting joint working with parents and carers in the interest of children's welfare
- Following safe recruitment procedures which ensure that staff are carefully selected, vetted and have the relevant qualifications and experience
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are trained in safeguarding to a basic level, with more advanced training where needed
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of and accept responsibility for helping to prevent the abuse of child
- Designating a Child Protection Officer (DCP) who takes specific responsibility for children's protection, safety and well-being
- Supporting all staff in bringing concerns to the Designated Child Protection Officer
- Responding quickly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse
- Providing parents, carers, and children with the opportunity to voice any concerns

they may have. This includes having knowledge of, and ensuring children have access to their preferred methods of communication and that staff are trained in a variety of communication tools.

- Adopting positive behaviour management strategies which are non-violent and do not impose humiliation
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the organisation's Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Working in partnership with external organisations and professionals to ensure that children are protected

In London all organisations use the London Child Protection Procedures:

www.londoncp.co.uk. These set out how agencies and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

Useful resources for voluntary organisations working with children and young people can be found on the NSPCC website: www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/safeguarding/

These include:

- Standards for organisations to implement and a self-assessment tool kit: https://safeguardingtool.nspcc.org.uk/?_ga=1.97694940.219746708.1492612478
- Advice on recruiting and managing staff and volunteers, including pre-employment/engagement checks: <https://safeguardingtool.nspcc.org.uk/resource-library/resources/safer-staff-and-volunteers/>
- Information and resources to support organisations to manage concerns raised about unacceptable or unsafe conduct by staff and volunteers towards other colleagues or children: <https://safeguardingtool.nspcc.org.uk/resource-library/resources/child-protection-/>

The following guidance is also relevant:

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf

Information sharing: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419628/Information_sharing_advice_safeguarding_practitioners.pdf

What to do if you're worried about a child: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf

It is important to emphasise that everybody in whatever role working with children and young people has a duty to safeguard children and to report concerns about their safety and wellbeing.

Action for Children's Arts

Child Protection Policy

Overall Statement

All organisations working with children and young people should be committed to promoting their welfare and protecting them from harm. This is everyone's responsibility and everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.

A Safeguarding policy is useful to solve problems and mitigate risks. A well-developed safeguarding policy will ensure that everyone in an entire organisation knows what is expected of their organisation, their management and themselves to keep children safe. Its most important function is to reduce the risk of a child being harmed but it also ensures that organisations are protected from risks: e.g. financial, reputational, litigation and many others.

In short, a policy tells staff how things are done in an organisation, and that is another way of saying 'This is how we expect things to be done'. Once the ground rules are established, the policy should say how the organisation intends to check and assure itself that everyone is doing what they should.

Policy statement

Action for Children's Arts (ACA) will work with children, parents and the community to ensure we support children's rights and create and maintain the safest possible environment for children. We will do this by:

- Recognising that all children have the right to freedom from abuse and harm
- Promoting joint working with parents and carers in the interest of children's welfare
- Following safe recruitment procedures which ensure that staff and volunteers are carefully selected, vetted and have the relevant qualifications and experience.
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of and accept responsibility for helping to prevent the abuse of child
- Designating a Child Protection Officer (CPO) who takes specific responsibility for children's protection, safety and well-being

- Supporting all staff in bringing concerns to the Designated Child Protection Officer
- Responding quickly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse.
- Providing parents, carers, and children with the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have. This includes having knowledge of, and ensuring children have access to their preferred methods of communication and that staff are trained in a variety of communication tools.
- Adopting positive behaviour management strategies which are non-violent and do not impose humiliation
- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- Developing and implementing guidance on photography and how we share images
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the organisation's Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Ensuring that we have effective whistleblowing procedures in place
- Working in partnership with external organisations and professionals to ensure that children are protected

ACA is based in London and uses the [London Child Protection Procedures](#). These set out how agencies and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

As a national organisation we work together with UK schools and member organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

Useful resources for voluntary organisations working with children and young people can be found on the NSPCC website: www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/safeguarding/

These include:

- Standards for organisations to implement and a self-assessment tool kit:
https://safeguardingtool.nspcc.org.uk/?_ga=1.97694940.219746708.1492612478
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- What to do if you're worried about a child: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf

It is important to emphasize that everybody in whatever role working with children and young people has a duty to safeguard children and to report concerns about their safety and wellbeing.

Contact Details

Nominated Child Protection Officer

Janna Balham

janna.balham@childrensarts.org.uk

07961 510346

Deputy Child Protection Lead

Vicky Ireland

vicky.ireland@childrensarts.org.uk

0208 994 7674

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually. This policy document was last updated in April 2020 and reviewed in January 2021

Signed Janna Balham

Dated: 12 January 2021

This policy should be read alongside our policies and procedures on:

1. [Safer recruitment](#)
2. [Role of the Child Protection Officer](#)
3. [Responding to disclosures and concerns about a child or young person](#)
4. [Reporting Procedure, Whistleblowing and Responsibilities](#)
5. [Storage of personal information](#)
6. [Code of conduct](#)
7. [E-safety](#)
8. [Photographic permission, sharing and social media](#)
9. [Anti-bullying policy](#)
10. [Safer activities](#)
11. [Key contacts](#)

Appendix: [Definitions of abuse](#)

Support Services

Our offices are based in London, to report a concern about a child or young person in Westminster please contact:

Westminster Access Team: 020 7641 4000
(Out of hours – 020 7641 6000)
AccesstoChildrensServices@westminster.gov.uk

In an emergency call the police: 999

Policies and Procedures

1. Safer Recruitment

- As appropriate all Action for Children's Arts (ACA) trustees, staff and volunteers undergo Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. The level of check undertaken is decided depending upon whether or not the person works directly with and has regular activity with children, young people and vulnerable adults. These checks are renewed every three years.
- ACA adopts safer recruitment procedures for employees and volunteers.
- ACA provides a clear person specification for each role and advertises posts alongside safeguarding and child protection statements when roles pertain to working with children. Information packs and standardised application forms as well as separate self disclosure forms for applicants are part of the application pack.
- Where possible and when appropriate ACA will endeavour to consult and involve children, young people and the wider community when specifically creating new roles and projects that involve working with and representing children, young people and the community.



- When shortlisting applicants ACA follows a structured process which involves at least two members of staff. Interviews are conducted with at least two members of ACA staff or a panel depending on the role and the level of responsibility required and applicants are scored transparently.
- Appropriate checks and references are undertaken for each applicant. All applicants have to provide two references, one from a recent employer as well as proof of identity and their qualifications.
- The successful candidate will undergo a probation period subject to review before being offered a permanent position with ACA.
- ACA follows an induction process for all new staff and volunteers.
- Trustees, staff and volunteers receive appropriate Child Protection Training as part of their induction.
- All staff are alerted to their individual responsibility to protect children both directly in the context of their duties and to the extent they encounter children whether on a planned or unplanned basis in the context of working for ACA.
- When undertaking partnership work with other organisations in the UK, contracts are issued between the organisations, outlining each organisation's individual responsibilities towards Safeguarding and Child Protection. ACA will recognise and review potential risks with regard to safeguarding when working in partnership and ensure policies and procedures are regularly updated when undertaking joint work.

2. Role description for designated CPO

Purpose of the role:

- To take the lead in ensuring that appropriate arrangements for keeping children and young people safe are in place within the charity.
- To promote the safety and welfare of children and young people who come into contact with the work of Action for Children's Arts.

Duties and responsibilities

- To ensure that all safeguarding issues concerning children and young people are responded to appropriately through policies, procedures and administrative systems.
- To ensure that everyone working or volunteering with or for children and young people at ACA, understands the procedures and knows what to do if they have concerns about a child's welfare.
- To ensure children and young people who are involved in activities through ACA and their parents or carers know who they can talk to if they have a welfare concern

and understand what action the organisation will take in response.

- To receive and record information from anyone who has concerns about a child.
- To take the lead on responding to information that may constitute a child protection concern. This includes assessing and clarifying the information and making referrals to statutory organisations as appropriate, consulting with and informing the relevant members of the organisation - in line with the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures.
- To store and retain child protection records according to legal requirements and the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures.
- To liaise with, pass on information to, and receive information from statutory child protection agencies, such as the local authority children's social care department and the police. This includes making formal referrals to these agencies when necessary.
- To consult the NSPCC Helpline when support is needed.
- To report regularly to the Trustees on issues relating to safeguarding to ensure that safeguarding is seen as a priority issue for the charity.
- Be familiar with and work within inter-agency child protection procedures developed by the local safeguarding children's board.
- Be familiar with issues relating to child protection and abuse and keep up to-date with new developments in this area.
- Attend regular training in issues relevant to child protection and share knowledge from that training with everyone who works or volunteers with or for children and young people at ACA.
- Work flexibly as may be required and carry out any other reasonable duties.
- Appointment to this role is subject to satisfactory vetting and barring checks.

3. Responding to disclosures and concerns about a child or young person

In the event that a child or young person discloses something to you, or you have cause for concern for their welfare; you must follow ACA's reporting procedure. Treat any allegations extremely seriously and report any concerns to the Child Protection Officer immediately.

Follow these steps if a child or young person discloses to you:

1. Listen

2. Reassure and Record

3. Don't confront

4. Explain

5. Report

1. **Listen** and accept what they are saying as the truth. Do not express your own views and do not ask leading questions. Do not promise to keep secrets if the child asks you to. Do not say anything that makes the child feel responsible for the abuse. Do not interrupt the child, change the subject or interrogate the child. It is the job of the police and social services to investigate the situation.
2. **Reassure and record.** Tell them they are doing the right thing by telling you but let them know, you need to pass the information on to keep them safe and you need to take some notes about what they are saying. It is important to use the child's own words and record everything that they say as clearly as possible.
3. **Do not confront** the alleged or suspected abuser. This could make the situation much worse for the child.
4. **Explain** what you are going to do next. Tell the child that you must pass this information on to someone who can help. If you feel the child is in immediate danger or at risk of significant harm, keep them with you and inform the Child Protection Officer immediately.
5. **Report** the disclosure or concern immediately to the Child Protection Officer.

If working through a partnership organisation, including a national partner, ACA staff know to familiarise themselves with the organisation's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and the organisation's Designated Child Protection Officer and follow the above steps..

4. Reporting Procedure, Whistleblowing and Responsibilities

Information for staff

Report suspicions or disclosures immediately to the Child Protection Officer. If the Child Protection Officer is unavailable please contact the deputy. The Child Protection Officer is aware that it is vitally important that any disclosure made in confidence is recorded factually as soon as possible and that an accurate account should be made of:

- The date and time of what has occurred

- The names of people involved
- What was said or done by whom
- Any action taken to gather information and what steps have been taken to refer the matter to other agencies
- Any further action
- Where relevant, reasons why there is no referral to a statutory agency
- Names of person reporting and to whom reported

Responsibilities

The Child Protection Officer will use appropriate reporting systems for the situation. This may be reporting the matter to the Westminster LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer).

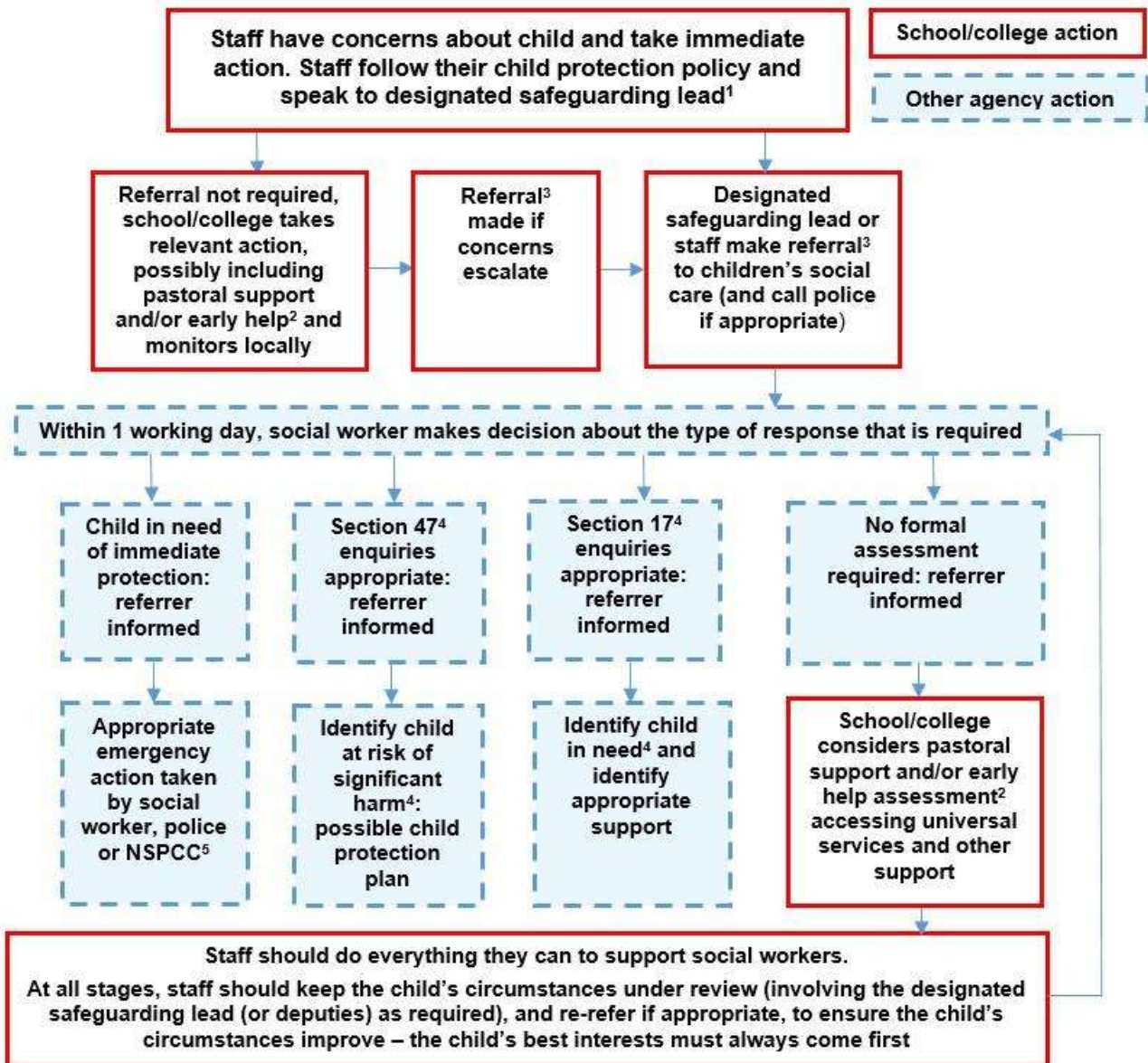
If it is thought that returning the child home would put the child in immediate danger, advice will be sought from the LADO or in their absence, other appropriate agencies.

If you require any further information or have any complaints or concerns about your child's safety, please contact Janna Balham janna.balham@childrensarts.org.uk or in her absence Vicky Ireland vicky.ireland@childrensarts.org.uk

If an incident occurs when working on a national project the Child Protection Officer will follow advice and guidance from our regional partners and authorities in the local area where the incident occurs.

The following flow chart is taken from page 13 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 as the key education safeguarding document.

ACA and ACA staff will take the same actions as 'the school'.



What to do if you suspect a member of ACA staff or a volunteer.

- ACA employees are able to share in confidence concerns they may have about a Trustee, member of staff or a volunteer. Staff members who in good faith report their concerns that a colleague may be or is abusing a child, will be fully supported.
- Any allegations of abuse will be fully recorded and reported appropriately and every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality for all concerned. Appropriate support will be offered to the child, parents and members of staff.
- We will follow guidance provided by ACAS when undertaking staff investigations and suspension.
- Suspension of the member of staff, against whom an allegation has been made, needs careful consideration, and ACA will seek advice before deciding on the course of action to be taken.
- Suspension of a staff member does not indicate guilt in their part. It is a step taken to protect children while any investigation is taking place and while ACA is seeking to establish the facts of the situation.

5. Storage of personal information

- Personal information that is acquired or held in the course of working with children should be treated as confidential. Particular care should be taken with sensitive information.
- Consideration should also be given to the Data Protection Act 1998 which requires that information is obtained and processed fairly and lawfully; that it is accurate, relevant and not held for longer than is necessary; and kept securely.
- ACA uses the Disclosure and Barring Service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust. ACA complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure Information. ACA uses an umbrella organisation to process checks.
- Disclosure information will never be kept in an applicant's personnel file and is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it.
- We recognise that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Sharing Information with other Agencies

- ACA will always seek consent from a child or young person before sharing any information about them to other agencies. However if consent has not been given and the child is at risk of significant harm, ACA will need to pass on the information to the relevant agency.



- ACA will always make children, young people and families aware of their reasons to share information with outside agencies and will always seek consent if required to do so.
- ACA staff and volunteers are made aware in training about how to identify families who might benefit from early help and support from local agencies and must alert the Child Protection officer to these families.
- ACA staff are made aware of the importance of multi-agency working and are provided with up to date information for local services as well as key organisations and charities that can provide additional support for staff, volunteers, children and families.

6. Code of conduct for staff and volunteers

Purpose

This behaviour code outlines the conduct we expect of our staff and volunteers. This includes anyone who is subcontracted to undertake specific duties. The behaviour code aims to help us protect children and young people from abuse and reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations being made.

The role of staff and volunteers

When working with or for children and young people, you are acting in a position of trust. You are likely to be seen as a role model and must act appropriately.

Responsibility

You are responsible for:

- prioritising the welfare of children and young people
- providing a safe environment for children and young people. This includes:
 - ensuring equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose
 - having good awareness of issues to do with safeguarding and child protection and taking action when appropriate
- following our principles, policies and procedures
 - This includes policies and procedures for child protection/safeguarding, whistleblowing and e-safety
- staying within the law at all times
- modelling good behaviour for children and young people to follow
- challenging all unacceptable behaviour and reporting any breaches of the behaviour

code to the Child Protection Officer

- reporting all allegations/suspicions of abuse following our reporting procedures. This includes abusive behaviour being displayed by an adult or child and directed at anybody of any age.

Rights

You should:

- treat children and young people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination
- understand that children and young people are individuals with individual needs
- respect differences in gender identity, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems between yourself and others, and appreciate that all participants bring something valuable and different to the group/organisation
- challenge discrimination and prejudice
- encourage young people and adults to speak out about attitudes or behaviour that makes them uncomfortable.

Relationships

You should:

- promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect
- avoid favouritism
- be patient with others
- use special caution when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- ensure your contact with children and young people is appropriate and relevant to the work of the project you are involved in
- ensure there is always more than one adult present during activities with children and young people
 - if this isn't possible, ensure that you are within sight or hearing of other adults
- only provide personal care in an emergency and make sure there is more than one adult present if possible.

Respect

You should:

- listen to and respect children at all times
- value and take children's contributions seriously, actively involving them in planning activities wherever possible
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy as far as possible
 - in some cases it may be necessary to break confidentiality in order to follow child protection procedures; if this is the case it is important to explain this to the child or young person at the earliest opportunity.

Unacceptable behaviour

When working with children and young people, you must not:

- allow concerns or allegations to go unreported
- take unnecessary risks
- smoke, consume alcohol or use illegal substances
- develop inappropriate relationships with children and young people
- make inappropriate promises to children and young people
- engage in behaviour that is in any way abusive
 - this includes having any form of sexual contact with a child or young person
- let children and young people have your personal contact details (mobile number, email or address) or have contact with them via a personal social media account
- act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- patronise or belittle children and young people
- make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and young people.

Upholding this code of behaviour

You should always follow this code of behaviour and never rely on your reputation or that of ACA to protect you. If you have behaved inappropriately you will be subject to our disciplinary procedures. We may also make a referral to statutory agencies such as the police and/or the local authority children's social care department.

If you become aware of any breaches of this code, you must report them to the Child Protection Officer.

7. E-Safety

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect children and young people who engage with ACA and who make use of information technology such as mobile phones, games, apps, social media and the internet, as part of their involvement with us. It is also to provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to e-safety and to ensure that we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use information technology and behave online.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- incorporating statements about safe and appropriate ICT use and online behaviour into the codes of conduct for both staff and volunteers and for children and young people
- using our procedures to deal firmly, fairly and decisively with any examples of inappropriate ICT use or behaviour, complaints or allegations, whether by an adult or a child/young person (these may include breaches of filtering, illegal use, downloading or creating indecent images of children, cyberbullying, or use of ICT to groom a child or to perpetrate abuse)
- informing parents and carers of incidents of concern as appropriate
- reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly
- using only official email accounts and monitoring these as necessary
- ensuring that personal information is not published on our website
- ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their appropriate permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given
- ensuring that any instance of cyberbullying is recorded and reported in line with ACA's Anti-bullying policy

8. Photographic permission and social media

- Staff and volunteers must not take photos of children and young people on personal devices including phones and cameras. ACA will always use photographers for events, content will be stored safely and securely and images/footage will only be captured of children who have provided consent.
- Staff must not use images of children and young people participating in ACA events for

personal use or promotion i.e. on social media.

- Staff must not interact with children or young people outside of ACA activities, including via social media. This includes being “followed by” or “friends with” children and young people on social media platforms.
- Staff must not exchange personal phone numbers or email addresses with children and young people.
- If a photographer has been employed by ACA to take pictures of groups of children at an event, ACA are only able to share images with parents/carers if written permission has been obtained for all children.
- If an event is being photographed or video recorded, ACA will fully endeavour to ensure that all subjects of photos/filming are made appropriately aware that this is taking place – methods include written consent, signage, verbal consent, announcements made.

9. Anti-bullying policy

ACA acknowledges that bullying behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We endeavour to ensure that a secure environment is provided for children, staff and volunteers. ACA acknowledges that bullying behaviour can take place and may need to be addressed amongst any combination of people.

Definition

The Anti Bullying Alliance defines bullying as the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional – being deliberately unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding possessions, using threatening gestures)
- Physical – pushing, hitting, kicking or any use of violence
- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Disability related – ridiculing a person because of their disability
- Homophobic – because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Religious – because of or focusing on the issue of faith

- Verbal – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours , shouting or swearing
- Cyber – all areas of internet, such as e-mail and internet chat rooms, social media platform misuse, mobile phone threats by text messaging and calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities

Implementation

It is the responsibility of ACA's Board of Trustees, employees and volunteers to ensure the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy to minimise occurrences of bullying. Staff are mindful and aware of the need to guard against any unwanted behaviour and should report any instances of bullying to the Child Protection Officer. The seriousness of the situation will be determined where bullying has been established, a written record will be made and appropriate action taken.

Procedures

- Staff are mindful and aware of behaviour and know to report any unwanted behaviour to the Child Protection Officer (CPO).
- When participating in an ACA event or activity children and young people should be made aware that they should report bullying behaviour (both against them and against others). Staff informed about bullying by a child should alert the CPO.
- In serious cases, parents will be informed and will be invited to meet to discuss the problem.
- In extreme cases, if necessary and appropriate, including in relation to 'cyber- bullying', police will be consulted
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour and the bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise and other consequences may take place.
- In serious cases, the bully will be asked to leave.
- If possible, the participants will be reconciled
- After the incident(s) have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored in striving to ensure repeated bullying does not take place

Record keeping and Monitoring

- It is important that a record is kept.
- All incidents should, ideally, be written up within 24 hours.

- Reports should be signed by the CPO.
- The CPO will take responsibility for the safe storage and processing of this information.
- All information gathered should be treated with strict confidentiality

Evaluation

Records of incidents are kept and used to inform future practice. Evaluation and review will ensure that ACA remains responsible to changing needs whilst striving to protect children and young people from bullying.

10. Safer Activities

- When holding an event or activity ACA undertakes a risk assessment of the premises and works alongside the venue to record and manage any potential risks.
- Risks are identified and recorded in a written risk assessment and suitable actions are put in place to manage these.
- Children and young people attending an ACA event, do so with a parent/carer who takes responsibility for the child or young person while they are at the event.
- All staff are made aware of ACA's Health and Safety policy.
- First aid and accident books will be provided by the Operations Teams on duty at the premises and the specifics and responsibilities of how the event is to be managed safely will be outlined in a contract between ACA and the venue before ACA undertakes any work.

11. Key Contacts

Child Protection Officer: Janna Balham

janna.balham@childrensarts.org.uk

Deputy Child Protection Officer: Vicky Ireland

vicky.ireland@childrensarts.org.uk

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

To report a concern about a child or young person in Westminster please contact:

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(Out of hours – 020 7641 6000)

AccesstoChildrensServices@westminster.gov.uk

In an emergency call the police: 999

Appendix 1 (Source NSPCC website)

Definitions and types of abuse:

1. Physical abuse

Physical abuse 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 feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to, a child whom they are looking after. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through having a sick child.

Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act of commission can also be caused through the failure to act to protect.

Possible signs of abuse (look for clusters of these signs):

- *Unexplained burns, broken bones, bite marks, cuts, bruises, or welts in the shape of an object.*
- *Resistance to going home.*
- *Fear of adults.*

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the **parent or other adult caregiver:**

- *Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child's injury.*
- *Describes the child as "evil," or in some other very negative way.*
- *Uses harsh physical discipline with the child.*
- *Has a history of abuse as a child.*
- *Speaks to the child in an intimidating manner*

2. Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making a child feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person.

Possible signs of abuse:

- *Apathy, depression.*
- *Hostility*
- *Difficulty concentrating*
- *Overly compliant or demanding behaviour, extreme passivity, or aggression.*
- *Extremes in behaviour, such as being either inappropriately adult (parenting other children, for example) or inappropriately infantile (frequently rocking or head-banging,*

for example).

- *Delayed in physical or emotional development.*
- *Has attempted suicide.*
- *Reports a lack of attachment to the parent.*

Consider the possibility of emotional abuse when the **parent or other adult caregiver:**

- *Constantly blames, belittles, or berates the child.*
- *Is unconcerned about the child and refuses to consider offers of help for the child's problems.*
- *Overtly rejects the child.*

3. Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as rape, buggery or oral sex or non- penetrative acts such as fondling. Sexual abuse may include non- contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes people from all walks of life. Possible signs of abuse:

- *Inappropriate interest in or knowledge of sexual acts.*
- *Seductiveness.*
- *Avoidance of things related to sexuality, or rejection of own genitals or body.*
- *Either over compliance or excessive aggression.*
- *Fear of a particular person or family member.*
- *Difficulty walking or sitting.*
- *Suddenly refuses to participate in physical activities.*

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the **parent or other adult caregiver:**

- *Is unduly protective of the child or severely limits the child's contact with other children, especially of the opposite sex.*
- *Is secretive and isolated.*
- *Is jealous or controlling with family members.*

4. Neglect

Neglect is 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 and development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Possible signs of neglect:

- *Clothing unsuited to the weather.*
- *Child dirty or unbathed.*
- *Extreme hunger.*
- *Apparent lack of supervision.*
- *Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents' attention.*
- *Has learning problems (or difficulty concentrating) that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes.*
- *Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen.*
- *Lacks adult supervision.*
- *Is overly compliant, passive, or withdrawn.*
- *Comes to activities early, stays late, and does not want to go home.*
- *Is frequently absent from school.*
- *Begs or steals food or money.*
- *Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses.*
- *States that there is no one at home to provide care.*

Consider the possibility of neglect when the **parent or other adult caregiver:**

- *Rarely touches or looks at the child.*
- *Shows little concern for the child.*
- *Denies the existence of—or blames the child for—the child's problems in school or at home.*
- *Asks teachers or other caretakers to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves.*
- *Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome.*
- *Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve.*
- *Looks primarily to the child for care, attention, and satisfaction of emotional needs.*

Please visit <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse> for more examples and information.