



MILLENNIUM PERFORMING ARTS: LEARNER SAFEGUARDING POLICY  
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## INTRODUCTION

Everyone who participates in activities at Millennium Performing Arts is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. Millennium Performing Arts has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, all members of staff and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

Millennium Performing Arts is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone accepts their responsibilities to safeguard learners from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect learners and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing learners with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of Millennium Performing Arts and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific learner protection issues.

## SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE GROUPS ACT 2006

1.1 Policy Statement: Millennium Performing Arts is committed to the following:

- The welfare of the learner is paramount
- All learners, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in performing arts in a secure and safe environment
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect learners from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- All suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All Millennium Performing Arts employees who work with learners will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and learner protection procedures
- Working in partnership with parents and learners is essential for the protection of learners

1.2 Monitor and review the policy and procedures:

- The implementation of procedures should be regularly monitored and reviewed. The person in charge of a group should regularly report progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements gaps and areas where changes are required to the Person in Charge.
- The policy should be reviewed every 3 years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation.
- Designated Persons for safeguarding: Donald McLennan (Director) Sarah Hanson (Executive Administrator) Emma Dewhurst (Admin Staff) all trained and qualified with Child Protection for Designated Persons Course (Level 3).

1.3 Promoting Good Practice:

- To provide learners with the best possible experience and opportunities in performing arts everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework relevant to performing arts training and adhering to the high standards of Millennium Performing Arts.
- It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of employees or participants in performing arts to make judgments about whether

or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the learner, as explained in section 4.

- Any concerns to be reported to the Designated Persons for Safeguarding.
- This section will help you identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.

#### 1.4 Good Practice: All staff and volunteers should adhere to the following principles and action

- Always work in an open environment (e.g. Avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- Make the experience of performing arts fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- Treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity
- Always put the welfare of the young person first
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with students (e.g. It is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a learner or to share a room with them)
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing
- Where possible request parental consent if the students are involved in a performance or activity that takes them outside the confines of the Millennium Performing Arts premises and transport in a car is required
- Where possible gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements as above
- Ensure that if mixed groups are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff
- Where possible gain parental consent if the students are to take part in class photos or video recordings
- Be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people
- Always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of the young person and do not risk sacrificing welfare in a desire for personal achievements. This means avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given.

#### 1.5 Poor Practice: The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel

- Unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others
- Taking young people alone in a car on journeys, however short
- Taking young people to your home where they will be alone with you
- Sharing a room with a young person
- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form that is not part of teaching a dance/singing/acting class
- Allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun
- Reducing a young person to tears as a form of control

- Allow allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature that the young person can do for themselves

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid a certain situation e.g. Transporting a young person in your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/carer and the young person involved.

If during your care you accidentally hurt a young person, the young person seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to the designated person and make a written note of it.

## 2.1 Defining Learner Abuse

Learner abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

There are four main types of abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person. Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood.

Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

## 2.2 Types of Abuse

**Physical Abuse:** where adults physically hurt or injure a young person e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, and drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute young person abuse. This category of abuse can also include when a parent/carer reports non-existent symptoms or illness deliberately causes ill health in a young person they are looking after. This is called Munchausen's syndrome by proxy. In a performing arts situation, physical abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training disregard the capacity of the learner's immature and growing body.

**Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the person's emotional development. It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, and inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of young people that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn.

Emotional abuse in performing arts may occur when the young person is constantly criticised, given negative feedback, expected to perform at levels that are above their capability. Other forms of emotional abuse could take the form of name calling and bullying.

Bullying may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are three main types of bullying.

It may be physical (e.g. Hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. Racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages), emotional (e.g. Tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring,

isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. Unwanted physical contact or abusive comments). In performing arts bullying may arise when a parent or teacher pushes the young person too hard to succeed, or someone from a different group uses bullying behaviour.

Neglect occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the person's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Neglect in performing arts could occur when a teacher does not keep the young person safe, or exposing them to undue cold/heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

Sexual Abuse occurs when adults (male and female) use young people to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing young people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse. In performing arts, activities which might involve physical contact with young people could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed, unless the teacher gives clear verbal instructions regarding situations where physical contact is involved. Also the power of the teacher over young students, if misused, may lead to abusive situations developing.

### 2.3 Indicators of Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- An injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- The young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- Another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a young person
- Unexplained changes in a young person's behaviour e.g. Becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- Distrust of adult's, particularly those whom a close relationship would normally be expected • Difficulty in making friends
- Being prevented from socialising with others
- Displaying variations in eating patterns including over eating or loss of appetite
- Losing weight for no apparent reason • Becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt
- Signs of bullying include:
  - Behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go training.
- An unexplained drop off in performance
- Physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. On food, alcohol or cigarettes
- A shortage of money or frequents loss of possessions
- Internet Bullying: This is a modern day phenomena and hard to detect as it happens outside of the school jurisdiction.
- Drug Abuse: Usually hard to detect, however behavioural changes or sunken eyes can be the first example of the learner in this situation.
- Flat Issues: Dealt with by Safeguarding Officers.

- Sleep Issues: This could be detected by tutors if they see a learner obviously looking tired and weary.
- Poor Attendance: This would be highlighted at the weekly staff meeting on student support.
- Radicalisation: Staff were informed of the danger of students becoming radicalised in any form. Information placed in the staff-room i.e. Prevent Duty Guidance.

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place. It is NOT the responsibility of those working in Millennium Performing Arts to decide that young person abuse is occurring. It IS their responsibility to act on any concerns. These concerns must be reported to the designated person within MPA.

2.4 Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment in Performing Arts classes or in performance situations. There is evidence that some people have used performance situations as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people. All teachers should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Person in Charge, the designated person at MPA.

### 3.1 Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Millennium Performing Arts in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not young person abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person. This applies BOTH to allegations/suspicions of abuse occurring within Millennium Performing Arts and to allegations/suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere. This section explains how to respond to allegations/suspicions.

### 3.2 Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed in this document, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the young person affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- Stay calm so as not to frighten the young person
- Reassure the young person that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- Listen to the young person, showing that you are taking them seriously
- Keep questions to a minimum so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and young person abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the young person has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify
- Inform the young person that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the young person this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- Safety of the learner is paramount. If the learner needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a young person protection issue
- Record all information
- Report the incident to the Person in Charge, the designated person at MPA.

In all cases if you are not sure what to do you can gain help from the NSPCC 24 hour helpline (Tel No: 0800 800 500).

### 3.3 Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is

your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions. Information should include the following:

- The learners name, age and date of birth.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- The nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- A description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes • Details of witnesses to the incidents
- The learners account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occur
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail.

### 3.4 Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations MUST be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

Millennium Performing Arts expects its members and staff to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a learner immediately with the Designate Person on Safeguarding and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken. If the nominated Person in Charge is not available you should take responsibility and seek advice from the NSPCC helpline, the duty officer at your local social services department or the police. Telephone numbers can be found in your local directory.

Where there is a complaint against an employee or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation.

- Criminal in which case the police are immediately involved
- Young Person protection in which case the social services (and possibly) the police will be involved
- Disciplinary or misconduct in which case Millennium Performing Arts will be involved

As mentioned previously in this document Millennium Performing Arts are not young person protection experts and it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for young person protection.

NB: If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern

Any suspicion that a learner has been abused by a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the designated person for safeguarding who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the learner in question and any other learner who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- Millennium Performing Arts will refer the matter to social services department
- The parent/carer of the learner will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department
- The Directors should be notified to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings
- If the designated person for safeguarding is the subject of the suspicion/allegation the report must be made to the Directors who will refer the matter to social services

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made sometime after the event. Where such allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to social services. This is because other learners in performing arts or outside it may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous

conviction for offences related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children.

### 3.5 Concerns outside the immediate Performing Arts Environment (e.g. a parent or carer)

- Report your concerns to the designated person for safeguarding. If the person is not available, the person being told or discovering the abuse should contact their local social services department or the police immediately.
- Social Services and the designated person for safeguarding will decide how to inform the parents/care.
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis.

### 3.6 Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The parents of the learner
- The person making the allegation

- Social Services/police
- Millennium Performing Arts Direct

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

### 3.7 Internal Inquiries and Suspension

- Millennium Performing Arts Designated person for safeguarding will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries, Millennium Performing Arts Directors will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, Millennium Performing Arts Directors must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the learner should remain of paramount importance throughout.

#### 4.1 Recruiting and Selecting Personnel with learners

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with learners. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers.

To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with learners, the following steps should be taken when recruiting.

#### 4.2 Controlling Access to learners

- All staff and volunteers should complete an interview. All evening school teachers will be personally vetted by the Directors of Millennium Performing Arts.
- Consent should be obtained from the applicant to seek information from the relevant safeguarding register/authority.
- The designated person for safeguarding will seek confidential references on applicants where necessary.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving license with photo)

#### 4.3 Interview and Induction

All employees and volunteers will be required to undertake an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All members of staff and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction during which:

- Their qualifications should be substantiated
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified
- They should sign up to the organization's Code of Ethics and Conduct
- Young person safeguarding procedures are explained and training needs identified e.g. Basic learner protection awareness

#### 4.4 Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse
- Respond to concerns expressed by a learner. Work safely and effectively with learners

Millennium Performing Arts require:

- All new staff and volunteers who have access to learners to undergo a DBS check.
- All members of teaching and admin staff, volunteers and the Person in Charge to undertake relevant learners safeguarding training or undertake a form of home study, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of positive culture towards good practice and learner protection adhering to the high standards of Millennium Performing Arts
- All staff and volunteers to receive advisory information outlining good/bad practice and informing them what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person
- Staff were informed at the safeguarding training about governments' document on radicalisation.
- DM the (SO) encouraged staff to read the document Prevent placed in the staff-room