



Pelican Theatre

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

The purpose and scope of this policy statement

Pelican Theatre fully recognises the responsibility it has under section 157/175 of the Education Act 2002 to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children, young people, and adults at risk who receive Pelican Theatre's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
- to provide staff and volunteers, as well as adults at risk, children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Pelican Theatre, including directors and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, freelance staff and students.

This policy applies to all Pelican Theatre activity, both online and in person.



Introduction

Dance can be a powerful catalyst for wellbeing, physical health, fitness, and development. Every child who engages in dance should receive these benefits through their participation. Safeguarding enables children to have the best possible outcomes, to be protected from harm, and to grow up with safe and effective care. The power of dance to support health can be maximised by creating healthy and appropriately safeguarded environments.

Safeguarding means protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

The four categories of abuse are:

- a) Physical abuse
- b) Emotional abuse
- c) Sexual abuse
- d) Neglect

Under the Care Act 2014 an adult at risk is an individual aged 18 or over who:

- a) has needs for care and support, AND
- b) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse and neglect, AND
- c) as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse and neglect.

We believe that:

- Children and vulnerable adults should never experience abuse of any kind
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of children and adults at risk is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take all children and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse, as per the Equality Act 2010.
- Some children and adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.
- There are dance-specific risk variables to be considered, which include:

- a) Dance culture: “the pursuit of aesthetic ideals of perfection and virtuosity gives the impression of never being/doing enough”. Teachers may perpetuate unsafe training because that was how they were trained - ‘this method works’.
- b) Dancer vulnerability: among other things, dancers are stoic, afraid of reprisal, may be socially isolated and may be unaware of proper dance ethics and that poor treatment is not normal or appropriate. Dancers may have experienced past trauma or adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and likely have a poor or distanced social network.
- c) Abuser omnipotence: “abusers often exhibit narcissistic tendencies [...] disrespect dancers’ boundaries”.
- d) Abuser-victim dynamics: There is a specific bond between abuser and dancer which could be exploited, by an abusive teacher who resent their students, and dancers who idealise their mentor. Abuser and teacher thus join in perpetuating and hiding/defending the abuse. In dance, there is a significant power imbalance between teachers and students which can cause a safeguarding risk.
- e) “Absent Body”: The teaching that your body is your instrument, that pain is something either not to discuss or to boast about. Dancers may actively suppress body sensations such as fatigue, discomfort, hunger and pain, to attain stellar performance and aesthetic goals. This may eventually lead to distress and serious injury. In addition, endurance valued in the dance world, may reinforce a “warrior-like” attitude towards physical and psychological adversity, as dancers learn to value and privately compare their injuries with other dancers who perform in discomfort or pain.
- f) Other contextual variables: such as travel for performance, lack of institutional guidelines or protective intervention, lacking education and reporting around abuse, lack of guidance about healthy teacher/mentor relationships, silent bystanders (parents/carers, other teachers, peers who feel unable to report/speak up), multiple occasions for intimacy that arise from the ‘sole practise’ of a dancer.



We will seek to keep children, young people, and adults at risk safe by:

- Valuing, listening to, and respecting them.
- Appointing a nominated safeguarding lead.
- Adopting safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Undertaking safeguarding training regularly and remaining up to date on all relevant government policies and legal requirements
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently.
- Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance. Reports will be stored in a locked file by the DSL for 7 years.
- Making sure that adults at risk, children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern.
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know.
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise.
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our participants, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
- Building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, and participants treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

We are members of 'Safer Dance', a Dance School Safeguarding Working Group and will continue to contribute to up-to-date discussion and promotion of Safeguarding in Dance-specific Out of School Settings. <https://www.dsswg.org.uk/>



Procedures

The designated safeguarding lead is

Eleanor Trow (director)

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07572177880

The DSL will:

- Take lead and responsibility for the safeguarding of all children and adults at risk, who come into contact with Pelican Theatre through our work, performance or voluntary activities.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities when working with Pelican Theatre to safeguard children and adults at risk, including passing on their concerns to the DSL.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers have an up-to-date DBS certificate.
- Ensure all staff undergo safeguarding awareness training prior to commencing work with Pelican Theatre
- Keep detailed, clear records of safeguarding concerns and any measures taken, even when there is no need to report to Social Care immediately.
- Ensure this policy is updated annually and in line with best practice.



Reporting a Concern

If you are concerned about a student or anyone working within Pelican Theatre, a specific incident occurs, or a situation arises that causes you concern, then you should report it as soon as is possible. If the incident is serious then after taking appropriate steps to protect the child or adult at risk and/or yourself you should phone the DSL immediately to report your concern.

If the issue is minor or non-urgent, then you should phone the DSL within 24 hours. The DSL can advise you on the details if needed, but it is best to state as clearly as possible what occurred, without 'colouring' or bias, what was said by whom and if possible, verbatim. The DSL will then decide whether this is an issue that requires further escalation, or should simply be logged/added to the record.

If you have a concern regarding the directors of Pelican Theatre, you should report it to Newcastle upon Tyne Council's LADO (contact details below).

Safeguarding Referrals will be made by the DSL as is required in Newcastle upon Tyne:

By phone to Newcastle upon Tyne Council's Children's Social Care Services on 0191 277 2500/0191 278 7878 (out of hours)

Or

By phone to Care and Support for Adult's Direct on 0191 2788377/0796 8474891/0191 278 8156 (out of hours)

Or

By phone to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) Melanie Scott on 0191 2774636

Or

By contacting the police in the event of a serious emergency or life-threatening situation using the 999 service

Where a referral needs to be made, the DSL will discuss this with the parents/guardian beforehand, unless there is a reason why the child would be put in harm's way if this discussion took place.