

# Mayes School of Performing Arts

*Inspiring performing arts training for children and young adults, building confidence, forging friendships and learning to shine in the spotlight*



## **Child Protection Policy**

Mayes School of Performing Arts is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people up to the age of 18. We recognise our responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation.

Mayes School of Performing Arts acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. All staff and volunteers will work together to encourage the development of an ethos which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children, young people and adults.

Mayes School of Performing Arts works with children and families as part of its activities.

### **The purpose of this policy statement is:**

- To protect children and young people who receive Mayes School of Performing Arts services
- To provide parents, staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection

### **We believe that:**

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

### **We recognise that:**

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children 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.

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

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them
- Appointing a nominated Child Protection Lead and a Deputy Child Protection lead.
- 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
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers
- Recording and storing appropriate information professionally and securely.

## **WHAT IS ABUSE?**

Government guidelines in Working Together to Safeguard Children categorises abuse as:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

What is physical abuse?

Physical abuse includes hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning or misuse of medications, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

What is emotional abuse?

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on that person's emotional development. It may involve making the individual feel or believe that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate. It may also involve causing the person to feel often frightened or in danger. It may involve exploitation or corruption.

What is sexual abuse?

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child or young person is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. Sexual abuse also includes noncontact activities such as involving children or young people in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Sexual abuse may be same sex or opposite sex, may be by other children, young people or adults. People from all walks of life may be sexual abusers.

What is neglect?

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's or young person's basic physical and or/psychological needs, likely to result in the severe impairment of the person's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failure to protect a child or young person from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

## **Disclosure of abuse**

Children and young people may disclose abuse in a variety of ways, including:

- Directly— making specific verbal statements about what's happened to them
- Indirectly – making ambiguous verbal statements which suggest something is wrong
- Behaviourally – displaying behaviour that signals something is wrong (this may or may not be deliberate)
- Non-verbally – writing letters, drawing pictures or trying to communicate in other ways.

If a child confides in a member of staff that abuse has taken place, they will:

- Remain calm and in control, but do not delay in taking action
- Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Don't promise to keep it a secret. Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the Child Protection lead. Make it clear to the child that you will need to share the information with others and that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help

- Reassure the child that they 'did the right thing' in telling someone.
- Tell the child what you will do next
- Speak immediately to the designated Child Protection Lead (the person with responsibility for child protection). It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually Children's Social Care or the Police
- Never investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where a child makes a disclosure
- As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was said, using the child's own words on the Mayes School of Performing Arts disclosure/concern document. Note the date, time, any names that were involved or mentioned, and who you gave information to. Make sure you sign and date your record.

Mayes School of Performing Arts have a duty of care to pass on any information that may be disclosed or observed to cause concern to us during contact with our children to the local authority and MASH (The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, which is made up of a range of organisations in Suffolk who are responsible for safeguarding adults and children) for possible investigation. If recommended, we will follow up any verbal discussion to the Safeguarding team with a written referral within 48 hours.

Discussion with the parent/carer would take place in regards to this referral following conversation with appropriate departments in the local authority (Social Care) after seeking advice to ensure children remain safe at all times.

Concerns will be recorded in writing, signed and dated by the Child Protection Lead for Mayes School of Performing Arts. These will be kept securely for the period of time that is required whilst investigations are happening by other authorities as these may assist with their investigations. These will be destroyed appropriately following advice.

Any report of concern about the behaviour of a member of staff or allegation of abuse against a member of staff must immediately be reported to the Lee Mayes (Child Protection Lead) or Megan Mayes (Deputy Child Protection Lead)

## **E-Safety**

- Most of our children will use mobile phones and computers. They are a source of fun, entertainment and education. However, we know that some men, women and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and e-mails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face to face meetings.
- All staff/ volunteers must not communicate with children via their phone or on social media. Communication should just be with the parent/carer
- Staff should not be 'friends' on social media with any pupil
- Cyber bullying by children via texts and e-mail will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying
- Mobile phones with cameras should not be permitted in the changing rooms at performances except for emergency communication with the designated members of staff. No photos are to be taken by anyone on any device backstage.

## **In implementing this policy Mayes School of Performing Arts will:**

Ensure that all workers/members understand their legal and moral responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation.

Ensure that all workers/members and volunteers understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a child or young person, or a workers conduct towards a child or young person to the Child Protection Lead.

The Child Protection Lead will refer any child protection concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (i.e. Police and/or Children's Social Care).

Children, young people and parents will be informed of who the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy are and be able to raise any safeguarding concerns and know that these will be taken seriously and acted upon.

Nominated Child Protection Lead: Lee Mayes 07934 069230

Deputy Child Protection Lead: Megan Mayes 07934 069230

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

Written 11<sup>th</sup> May 2019

Latest Review April 2021

SIGNED: LMAYES

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