



Policy for

Safeguarding and the Protection of

Children and Adults at Risk

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POLICY STATEMENT & CODE OF CONDUCT

Raincity Dance recognizes the responsibility it has under The Child, Family and Community Service Act (2008) requiring that anyone who has reason to believe that a child may be abused, neglected, or in need of protection for any other reason must report the matter to the Ministry of Children and Family Development. to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

This responsibility is more fully explained in the Protection of Children - Province of British Columbia gov.bc.ca All staff must be made aware of their duties and responsibilities, which are set out below.

Staff at Raincity Dance are required to read RECOGNIZING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT p.23-47 of The BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect for Service Providers (2017), https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/public-safety/protecting-children/childabusepreventionhandbook_serviceprovider.pdf

Everyone at Raincity Dance shares an objective to uphold the commitment of Raincity Dance to safeguard and promote the welfare of all its students, children, young people, and adults at risk, by adhering to the following principles as a code of conduct:

- Providing a safe environment in which to learn.
- Identifying and responding to children, young people, and adults at risk in need of support or protection.
- Supporting children's development in ways which will foster a sense of self-esteem and independence.
- Fostering a learning environment in which every student feels valued and able to articulate their wishes and feelings in their preferred method of communication, in an atmosphere of acceptance and trust.
- Working to ensure that students, volunteers, parents, and carers all understand how to raise a concern and know how to ask for any help at any time.
- Dismissing from the school; teacher, staff, volunteer, administrator, student, parent, and any others who do not follow our safety and code of conduct policies. Informing authorities if necessary.

This policy sets out how Raincity Dance discharges its statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are students at the school. Our policy applies to all staff, paid and unpaid, working in the school and includes volunteers at external or special events. Teaching assistants, backstage helpers/chaperones and office staff as well as teachers can be the first point of disclosure for a child. Concerned parents/carers may also contact the school.

Implementing a safe environment and a protective ethos suitable for children, also supporting a respectful, safe, and protective environment for young adults (up to age 25) or adults at risk. We recognize, however, that the law requires a different process if a concern is raised where the subject of the concern is a legal adult (i.e., aged 18 or older). We will ensure that our staff are informed about the specific differences regarding consent and referral procedures that affect adults at risk. The cause for concern form template has a specific section to complete if the subject of the concern is an adult.

There are four main elements to our policy:

1. **Prevention** through the teaching and pastoral support offered to all students, and the creation and maintenance of a whole school protective ethos.
2. **Procedures** for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
3. **Supporting children** particularly those who may have been abused or witnessed violence towards others.

4. **Preventing unsuitable people working with children.** Processes are followed to ensure that those who are unsuitable to work with children are not employed.

Raincity Dance has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) responsible for the maintenance and regular review of this policy in accordance with legal and statutory guidelines, as well as ensuring that all staff have read and agreed to abide by this policy. The DSL for Raincity Dance is the school's Artistic Director; Meiko Perkins. Raincity Dance's Operations Director; Meiyen Lum Min, will act as Deputy DSL whose responsibilities are to support the DSL in their duties, and to step into the role of DSL in the absence or unavailability of the DSL.

This policy applies to:

- all children under the age of 18, whether their responsible adult is present or not,
- all adults at risk, and adult students where the application of good policy safeguards all participants,
- vulnerable people of any age who will benefit from similar safeguards – wherever the policy refers to children, this broader meaning applies, and
- all staff, contractors, freelance staff, volunteers, and consultants working within Raincity Dance. In the case of contractors and consultants it is the responsibility of the DSL to ensure that they are made aware of these guidelines.

Raincity Dance will therefore:

1. establish and maintain an environment where children feel safe, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to,
2. ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty and their concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon as appropriate, and
3. establish a protective ethos in which all individuals feel safe and respected and know who to approach if they are worried and their concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon.

This policy is available to parents on request, is available in hard copy and via the school website. www.raincitydance.com This policy is reviewed annually or more frequently if legislation or guidance changes.

Section 1 – Prevention

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- protecting children from maltreatment,
- preventing impairment of children's health or development,
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

We seek to prevent harm occurring. It is our policy that all Raincity Dance staff, teachers and volunteers will care, promote, and safeguard the wellbeing of all students, whether child, adult or considered at risk.

We recognize that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends, and open and good quality lines of communication with all adults help to protect children and young adults.

We will endeavour to ensure that children and adults at risk are protected from harm while they visit or are attending classes. We will do this by:

1. making sure our staff are carefully selected,
2. providing training for staff on safeguarding issues and child protection, and working with adults at risk,
3. ensuring all staff undergo a Police Information Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening.

4. establishing and maintaining an ethos where all people, children, young people, and adults, feel secure and are encouraged to talk, to feel respected and listened to,
5. taking all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of any child or adult at risk,
6. taking all reasonable steps to prevent any staff member, persons working for us, or member of the public from putting any child or adult at risk in a situation in which there is an unreasonable risk to their health and safety,
7. taking all reasonable steps to prevent any staff member, persons working for us or member of the public from physically, emotionally or sexually abusing any child or adult at risk,
8. Reporting to Child Protection Services any evidence or reasonable suspicion that a child or adult at risk has been physically, emotionally or sexually abused in contact with anyone in our organization,
9. referring to statutory authorities, and
10. implementing this policy in conjunction with our Code of Conduct already in place.

Everyone working or applying to work for Raincity Dance is to be made aware of this policy. Furthermore, this document will be issued to all staff and other people who are likely to have contact with children as part of their work with us. All staff and volunteers will read and sign that they agree to abide by this policy before they start work at Raincity Dance.

Section 2 - Procedures

The Government of British Columbia website is a single point of contact and resource setting out the procedures for both the safeguarding children board and the safeguarding adults board. We will follow the procedures set out here.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/public-safety/protecting-children>

1. The Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection and Adults at Risk is:

Meiko Perkins

2. The Deputy DSL, who has received an equal level of Designated Person training:

Meiyen Lum Min

3. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- 3.1. Take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.
- 3.2. Ensure that the DSL has the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post. The DSL will have the time, funding, training, resources, and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters. Ensure that the DSL and deputy have undertaken DSL training and that this training is updated **at least every two years**.
- 3.3. Ensure that in addition to the formal training set out above, the DSL and DDSLs refresh their knowledge and skills, e.g. via bulletins, meetings or further reading **at least annually**.
- 3.4. Ensure that every member of staff, paid and unpaid, knows who the Designated Personnel are and the procedures for passing on concerns from the **point of induction**.
 - 3.4.1. Staff members are required to complete a logging concern form and pass it in person or electronically to the DSL/DDSL immediately.
- 3.5. Ensure that a DSL or DDSL are always available to discuss any safeguarding concerns.
- 3.6. Ensure every member of staff knows:

- 3.6.1. the name of the designated person/s and their role,
 - 3.6.2. how to identify the signs of abuse and neglect,
 - 3.6.3. how to pass on and record concerns about a student,
 - 3.6.4. that they have an individual responsibility to be alert to the signs and indicators of abuse, and for referring child protection concerns to the DSL/DDSL,
 - 3.6.5. that they have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn, and
 - 3.6.6. the process for making referrals to children's social care.
- 3.7. Ensure that staff training information is regularly updated and that in addition to this training, all staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates as required **but at least annually**.
- 3.8. Ensure that all staff, paid and unpaid, recognize their duty and feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice regarding children, and that such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with agreed whistle-blowing policies.
- 3.9. Ensure that this policy is available publicly either via the school website or on the studio noticeboard.

4. Reporting a concern

Anyone, (student, carer, teacher, staff member, volunteer), may report a concern, and should feel that they will be listened to carefully and taken seriously when they do.

If you are concerned about a student or anyone at Raincity Dance, a specific incident occurs, or a situation arises that causes you concern, then you should report it as soon as is possible to the DSL/DDSL, to a member of the Raincity Dance staff or teacher who is present. You may do this in person, by phone or in writing.

If you believe that the child is at immediate risk of harm, then do not wait to contact the DSL, report the concern immediately to the police or to The Ministry of Children and Family Development - Child Protection Services. Phone **1 800 663-9122** at any time of the day or night.

The DSL can support and 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, if it is a concern that does not reach the threshold for referral, should simply be added to a student's record.

Safeguarding referrals will be made by the DSL/DDSL as is required in British Columbia:

1. by phone to Child Protection Services.
2. To the Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours) **1 800 663-9122**, or
3. the Vancouver Police Department (non-emergency) 604 717-3321, or
4. by contacting the police in the event of a serious emergency or life-threatening situation using the 911 service.

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

5. Liaison with other agencies

Raincity Dance will:

- 5.1. continue to work to develop effective links with relevant services to promote the safety and welfare of all students,
- 5.2. notify Child Protection Services immediately if:
 - 5.2.1. it should have to exclude a student who is subject to a Child Protection Plan (whether fixed term or permanently),
 - 5.2.2. there is an unexplained absence of a student who is subject to a Child Protection Plan, or

- 5.2.3. there is any change in circumstances to a student who is subject to a Child Protection Plan.

When a student who is subject to a child protection plan leaves, information will be transferred to the new school immediately, if we know the school. Child Protection Services will also be informed.

6. Record keeping

The DSL will ensure that record keeping at Raincity Dance is in line with protocols advised by Child Protection Services. They will:

- 6.1. keep clear, detailed, accurate, written records of concerns about children (noting the date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to refer the matter to Social Care immediately,
- 6.2. ensure all paper records are kept securely, separate from the main student file, and in a locked location, prior to scanning them into electronic format for secure digital storage, and
- 6.3. Ensure that all electronic/digital records are kept securely in a reserved area of the server with appropriate password protection.

7. Confidentiality and information sharing

The Privacy Act 2019 does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

The school will ensure:

- 7.1. staff, teachers, and volunteers adhere to confidentiality protocols and that information is shared appropriately,
- 7.2. staff and teachers are aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies to safeguard children, (as set out in 'Information sharing; Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers,' DfE, July 2018),
- 7.3. that if a member of staff receives a Subject Access Request (under the Data Protection Act 2018) from a student or parent, they will refer the request to the DSL, and
- 7.4. staff and teachers are clear with children that they cannot promise to keep secrets.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- 7.5. disclose information about a student to other members of staff on a 'need to know' basis. Parental consent may be required,
- 7.6. aim to gain consent to share information and be mindful of situations where to do so would place a child at increased risk of harm. Information may be shared without consent if a person believes that there is good reason to do so, and that the sharing of information will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner,
- 7.7. record when decisions are made to share or withhold information, who the information has been shared with and why. (See 'Working Together to Safeguard Children,' July 2018), and
- 7.8. seek advice about confidentiality from outside agencies if required. (See 'Information sharing; Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers,' DfE, July 2018).

8. Communication with parents/carers

The school will:

- 8.1. ensure that parents/carers are informed of the responsibility placed on the school and staff in relation to child protection by setting out its duties in the school website,
- 8.2. undertake appropriate discussion with parents/carers prior to involvement of another agency, unless the circumstances preclude this action,
- 8.3. seek advice from Social Care if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk of harm to the child. Circumstances where parents **may not** be informed include any disclosure of sexual abuse or physical abuse where the child has an injury, and
- 8.4. record what discussions have taken place with parents or if a decision has been made not to discuss it with parents, record the reasons why. Records may subsequently be disclosable to relevant partner agencies if child protection proceedings commence

9. Dealing with child-on-child abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment between children

We recognize that peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This can include but is not limited to: bullying, control, cyberbullying, sexual violence, sexual harassment, being coerced to send sexual images (sexting), teenage relationship abuse and physical abuse. **All** forms of peer-on-peer abuse are unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

The school will therefore:

1. create a whole school protective ethos in which peer on peer abuse, including sexual violence and sexual harassment cannot thrive and will not be tolerated,
2. provide access to training for staff and associate teachers about recognizing and responding to child-on-child abuse, including raising awareness of the gendered nature of peer abuse,
3. ensure that staff do not dismiss instances of child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence and sexual harassment as an inevitable part of growing up, and
4. ensure that staff members follow the procedures outlined in this policy when they become aware of peer-on-peer abuse.

The school recognizes that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. Sexual violence may include rape, assault by penetration, or sexual assault. Sexual harassment refers to 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature', such as sexual comments, sexual taunting, or physical behaviour such as deliberately brushing against someone. Online sexual harassment may include non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos, sexualized online bullying, unwanted sexual comments and messages, and sexual exploitation, coercion, and threats.

The school will:

- 9.1. work to create a shared environment that supports positive relationships between peers, so that peer-to-peer abuse might be prevented,
- 9.2. be clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment will not be tolerated,
- 9.3. provide training for staff on how to manage a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment,
- 9.4. make decisions on a case-by-case basis,
- 9.5. reassure victims that they are being taken seriously, offer appropriate support and take the wishes of the victim into account when decision making,
- 9.6. implement measures to keep the victim, alleged perpetrator and if necessary other children and staff members, safe. Record any risk assessments and keep them under review,
- 9.7. consider the welfare of both the victim(s) and perpetrator(s) in these situations, and
- 9.8. liaise closely with external agencies, including police and social care, when required.

Section 3 – Supporting children and adults at risk

The school recognizes that **any** child or adult may be subject to abuse and neglect. As such will support all Raincity Dance students by:

1. creating an ethos that actively promotes a positive, supportive and safe environment and values the whole community, where students feel that they are listened to, heard and respected,
2. applying the school's behaviour policy effectively. All staff will agree on a consistent approach, which focuses on the behaviour of the child but does not damage the student's sense of self-worth. The school will ensure that the student knows that some behaviour is unacceptable, but that they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred,
3. developing productive and supportive relationships with parents/carers, and
4. liaising with other agencies which support the student such as the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

The school recognizes that while **any** child may benefit from early help, staff are encouraged to consider the wider environmental factors present in a child's life which could pose a threat to their welfare or safety, (contextual safeguarding). Staff are required to be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for:

A. Children with disabilities, additional needs or special educational needs

We recognize that, statistically, children with additional needs, special educational needs, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. School staff who deal with children with complex and multiple disabilities and emotional and behavioural problems should be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

The school may have students with emotional and behavioural difficulties or challenging behaviours, as well as physical disabilities/challenges. The school will support staff to decide appropriate strategies that will reduce anxiety for the individual child and raise self-esteem as part of an overall behaviour support plan agreed with parents/carers.

The school has students who may have communication difficulties and we are aware that they are vulnerable to abuse because they are unable to express themselves to others. Instead, such students will often exhibit changes in behaviours or signs of abuse recognized by staff with a good knowledge of the child.

B. Young carers

The school recognizes that children who are living in a home environment which requires them to act as a young carer for a family member or a friend, who is ill, disabled or misuses drugs or alcohol can increase their vulnerability and that they may need additional support and protection.

School will:

- seek to identify young carers,
- offer additional support internally,
- signpost to external agencies, and
- be particularly vigilant to the welfare of young carers and follow the procedures outlined in this policy, referring to Early Help or Social Care as required if concerns arise.

C. Children at Risk of Criminal Exploitation

Criminal exploitation of children is a form of harm that is a typical feature of 'County Lines' activity. Drug networks or gangs exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas. Exploitation can occur even if activity appears to be consensual.

The School will address indicators of child criminal exploitation with staff through training. Staff will follow the procedures outlined in this policy if concerns of criminal exploitation arise.

D. Children frequently missing

The School recognizes that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities

The school monitors attendance of individual students to aid early identification concerning patterns of absence. Staff are reminded regularly to check in with the office to follow up if a child is missing from a class for two weeks without notice.

E. Children or adults misusing drugs or alcohol

The discovery that a young person is misusing legal or illegal substances, or reported evidence of their substance misuse, is not necessarily sufficient to initiate child protection proceedings but the school will consider such action in the following situations:

When there is evidence or reasonable cause:

- to believe the young person's substance misuse may cause him or her to be vulnerable to other abuse such as sexual abuse,
- to believe the student's substance related behaviour is a result of abuse or because of pressure or incentives from others, particularly adults,
- where the misuse is suspected of being linked to parent/carer substance misuse,
- where the misuse indicates an urgent health or safeguarding concern, and
- where the child is perceived to be at risk of harm through any substance associated with criminality.

F. Children and adults at risk of sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity **(a)** in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, or **(b)** for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology.

Sexual exploitation can take many different forms from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship to serious organized crime involving gangs and groups. Potential indicators of sexual exploitation will be addressed within staff training, including raising awareness with staff that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not show any external signs of abuse and may not recognize it as abuse. Staff will follow the procedures outlined in this policy if concerns of child sexual exploitation arise.

We also recognize that adults with disabilities, learning needs or other vulnerabilities are statistically more likely to be at risk of sexual (or other) exploitation. Potential indicators of sexual exploitation will be addressed within staff training, including raising awareness with staff that some adults at risk, who are being sexually exploited do not show any external signs of abuse and may not recognize it as abuse. Staff will follow the procedures outlined in this policy if concerns of sexual exploitation arise.

G. Children living with substance misusing parents/carers

Misuse of drugs or alcohol is strongly associated with significant harm to children, especially when combined with other features such as domestic violence.

When the school receives information about drug and alcohol abuse by a child's parents/carers they will follow appropriate procedures.

This is particularly important if the following factors are present:

- Use of the family resources to finance the parent's dependency, characterized by inadequate food, heat and clothing for the children.
- Children exposed to unsuitable caregivers or visitors, e.g. customers or dealers.
- The effects of alcohol leading to an inappropriate display of sexual or aggressive behaviour.
- Chaotic drug and alcohol use leading to emotional unavailability, irrational behaviour and reduced parental vigilance.
- Disturbed moods because of withdrawal symptoms or dependency.
- Unsafe storage of drugs or alcohol or injecting equipment.
- Drugs or alcohol having an adverse impact on the growth and development of the unborn child.

H. Children living with domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is defined as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional.

The school recognizes that where there is domestic abuse in a family, the children/young people will always be affected; the longer the violence continues, the greater the risk of significant and enduring harm, which they may carry with them into their adult life and relationships. Domestic abuse can also affect children in their personal relationships as well as in the context of home life.

Staff will follow the procedures outlined in this policy if concerns of domestic abuse arise. The school will vigilantly monitor the welfare of children living in domestic abuse households.

The school recognizes that adult students may also be at risk from domestic abuse, which may affect their behaviour or personal relationships. Staff will follow the procedures outlined in this policy if concerns of domestic abuse arise.

I. Children at risk of honour-based violence including Female Genital Mutilation

So called honour-based violence (HBV) encompasses incidents which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community, including breast ironing, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. Staff are required to treat all forms of HBV as abuse and follow the procedures outlined in this policy.

FGM is a procedure involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs, and is illegal in Canada. Any indication that a child is at risk of FGM, where it is suspected, or where the woman is under 18, will be dealt with under the child protection procedures outlined in this policy. Staff will report concerns to the DSL, who will make appropriate and timely referrals to Child Protection Services. In these cases, parents will not be informed before seeking advice and the case will still be referred to social care even if it is against the student's wishes.

J. Children who have returned home to their family from care

The school recognizes that a previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable. The school will vigilantly monitor the welfare of previously looked after children, keep records, and notify Social Care as soon as there is a recurrence of a concern in accordance with Child Protection Services.

K. Children showing signs of abuse or neglect

The School recognizes that experiencing abuse or neglect may have an adverse impact on children which may last into adulthood without appropriate intervention and support. School may be the only stable, secure, and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Children who have

experienced abuse or neglect may display this through their own behaviour, which may be challenging and defiant or passive and withdrawn. We recognize that children may develop abusive behaviours and that they may need to be referred on for appropriate support and intervention.

The school will provide access to training for teachers and staff to ensure that they have the skills to identify and report cases, or suspected cases, of abuse in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy. The definitions of the four categories of abuse are attached (see Appendix A).

L. Privately fostered children

Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16, (under 18 if disabled) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, a person with parental responsibility for them, or relative in their own home for 28 days or more.

The school will follow the mandatory duty to inform the local authority of any 'Private Fostering' arrangements.

M. Children who have family members in prison

When made aware, the school is committed to supporting children and young people who have a parent or close relative in prison and will work with the family to find the best ways of supporting the child. The school recognizes that children with family members in prison are at risk of poor outcomes including: poverty, stigma, isolation, poor mental health, and poor attendance.

The school will treat information shared by the family in confidence and it will be shared on a 'need to know' basis. The school will work with the family and the child to minimize the risk of the child not achieving their full potential.

Section 4 – Preventing unsuitable people from working with children

1. The school will operate safer recruitment practices including ensuring appropriate Police Information Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening and reference checks are undertaken according to Part Three of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2022).
2. Any allegation of abuse made against a member of staff should be reported straight away (also known as 'whistleblowing').
 - 2.3. In cases where the owner of the Dance School (DSL) is the subject of an allegation, it should be reported to Administration (DDSL).
 - 2.4. In all cases, the school will follow the procedures set out in Part Four of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2022), which incorporates both allegations which meet the threshold for referral and raising low-level concerns.
3. The DSL will liaise with Child Protection Services ensuring that all allegations are reported to within one working day. Following consultation with CPS, the Named Senior Officer will advise on all further action to be taken. Please note that Raincity Dance should **not** seek to interview the children or members of staff involved until advice has been sought. Doing so may compromise any police interviews that may be necessary.
4. The school will ensure that any disciplinary proceedings against staff relating to child protection matters are concluded in full even when the member of staff is no longer employed at the school and that notification of any concerns is made to the relevant authorities and professional bodies and included in references where applicable.

5. It is the legal duty of an employer that when a member of staff has been dismissed due to safeguarding concerns or misconduct or would have been dismissed if they had not resigned, a referral will be made to the Criminal Records Review Unit. Consideration will also be given to making a code of conduct complaint referral to the professional body of that teacher. (e.g. RAD, ISTD, CDMT).
6. Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not mandatory, nor is it automatic but, in some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children are protected. Care will be taken in the process to ensure that malicious complaints against staff are identified and handled appropriately.
7. Consideration must be given to the needs of the child and a recognition that a child may make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events do happen.
8. The school will ensure that all staff, paid and unpaid, are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationships with students and parents/carers. As part of the Induction process, all staff will receive guidance about how to create appropriate professional boundaries with all children, especially those with a disability or who are vulnerable.
9. The school will ensure that staff and volunteers are aware that sexual relationships with students aged under 18 are unlawful and could result in legal proceedings taken against them under the Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy Act (Abuse of Position of Trust).
10. The school will ensure that communication between students and adults, by whatever method, are transparent and take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries and are open to scrutiny.

Section 5 - Roles and responsibilities of staff, and other related policies

All staff and volunteers will be required to:

- take all reasonable steps to protect all Raincity Dance students & carers from hazards,
- observe and demonstrate in action the code of protective behaviour outlined throughout this document,
- take appropriate action if an accident occurs,
- take all reasonable steps to prevent abuse of children or adult at risk in contact with anyone within the school, and
- report any incident or suspicion of abuse immediately to the DSL.

Roles and responsibilities for all staff – Code of Conduct

- Safety of participants and staff is always of prime consideration. Individual risk assessments should not only be completed annually by all staff and teachers, but should be applied in practice.
- All injuries involving anyone should be recorded in the accident book located in the office, immediately or as soon as practicably possible.
- Staff are responsible for familiarizing themselves with building/facility safety issues, such as, fire procedures, location of emergency exits and first aid equipment.

- Staff are responsible for reporting suspected cases of child abuse to the named responsible person and/or agencies.
- In the event of any child experiencing distress, upset or accident during a class, staff will contact their parent, guardian or named emergency contact using the emergency contact details.
- Staff should ensure that their activities start and end on time.
- Staff are expected to articulate, promote, demonstrate, and incorporate the values of respect, trust and professional ethics throughout their activities.
- Staff should ensure that they are adequately insured, to protect against claims of negligence, through their organization or their own personal insurance if acting as a self-employed agent.

Photographing students

Occasionally, a photograph captured for teaching or performance reasons may be suitable to be used for contextual marketing or notification purposes (around the studio and in print, on the website, or on social media). Photographs are sometimes used for large scale marketing purposes ie. posters and flyers and in this case, those captured will be asked if they are willing to give their explicit permission to use that image in this way. A student or parent may withdraw consent at any time. It should be made clear to students that there is never any pressure to participate in filmed footage for any reason, and no sense of shaming should be attached to this decision. Students should be encouraged to make the decision for themselves and be supported in that process. Withdrawal of consent to use images should be made in writing and sent by email to the school.

Photos and videos will be taken as part of the annual performances and will be advised each year at the time of signing up to the event so that the parents of those involved can choose not to take part.

Personal phones/iPads/tablets

It is understood that many teachers carry music needed for teaching on their iPads/Tablets and phones, and that as such, these are used, visible and present in class.

It is understood that students may need to carry their phones with them when they come to classes for reasons of safety or personal choice. Phones should be switched off when students come to the studio, they should not be used to take pictures of themselves or anyone else on studio premises (particularly in the changing room) and if they are brought into class then they should be switched off. Teachers and group leaders are asked to remind the relevant-aged children from time to time about this.

Changing

It is occasionally necessary to escort or assist young children in toileting when they need to go to the bathroom during a lesson. Whenever this occurs, the teacher or teaching assistant in that class should help the child leave the class and go to find the child's parent together if they need assistance or allow the student to go to the bathroom by themselves – monitoring the absence age-appropriately, to ensure all is well.

If, however, the parent is not available, or the situation is urgent for a very young child, then the teaching assistant or teacher should take the child to the bathroom. At all times, the adult should ask the child to determine the support they need and act accordingly. Most appropriate is that the child enters the bathroom by themselves, and the adult waits outside the door for them to finish.

Occasionally a child needs more assistance – for example if they wet themselves during a class. In this case, the adult needs to assist the child by seeking alternative clothes for the child to put on, after having ensured that the child has been able to clean themselves appropriately. Where a child needs to change clothes to an intimate level, this should be done privately and when possible with a second adult close by as witness and a cause for concern form should be completed to log the incident. The parent should be advised of the incident immediately/on pickup and any concerns addressed. At all times, any anxiety or concern seen in or voiced by the child should be addressed kindly and considerately. Sensitivity to the child's age and gender should be considered at all times.

Dropping or collecting children

Children are not monitored before class, parents should stay with children until their child has entered their class. If a parent is late for picking up their child a call will be made to the contact number provided at registration. The child will stay in a studio with a teacher or in the office until the parent has come to pick them up. If parents are late to pick up their child on more than three occasions, the DSL/ DDSL will contact the parents to assess the issue. If the late pick up continues a fee will be implemented (see school policies).

Safeguarding risk assessment

From time to time, it may be considered necessary to complete a risk assessment for an individual – either teacher or student – to address specific concerns or risks that might be associated with them being in class or at the studios. For example, if a student or teacher is pregnant, then their continuing involvement in dance classes should be assessed, discussed, and limits and responsibilities agreed up front. Another such example might be in the case of a student suffering from epilepsy or other medical condition that is known, and where the symptoms or treatment would have a severe impact on the normal operating processes of the school.

Section 6 - Four categories of abuse

Physical abuse - may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Physical abuse is any unwanted physical contact with another person – this includes the physical correction of a student without consent being sought and received in advance.

Neglect - persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. It may involve neglect or lack of responsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

It also includes parents or carers 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 care-givers, and
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Emotional abuse - Is persistent emotional maltreatment causing severe and adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to a child that they are:

- worthless
- unloved
- inadequate, and
- valued only insofar as they meet another person's needs.

It may include:

- not giving the child opportunities to express their views,
- deliberately silencing them, and
- making fun of what they say or how they communicate.

It may also feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children including:

- interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability,
- overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, and

- preventing participation in normal social interaction.

It may involve:

- seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another,
- serious bullying (including cyberbullying) causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, and
- the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment although it may occur in isolation.

Sexual abuse – involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, and whether the child is aware of what is happening or not.

This may involve:

- physical contact including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex),
- non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing, and
- non-contact activities involving:
- children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images,
 - children in watching sexual activities,
 - or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, and
 - 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.

Sources of further information

Maintaining School Safety: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/erase/documents/maintaining-school-safety-guide.pdf>

Safe, Caring, and Orderly Schools - A Guide: https://bccpac.bc.ca/upload/2016/05/safe_caring_orderly_school2008.pdf

Canadian Centre for Child Protection protectchildren.ca

The following URLs provide links to local and national bodies offering advice and guidelines for identifying and reporting safeguarding or protection issues:

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/public-safety/protecting-children/childabusepreventionhandbook_serviceprovider.pdf

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/ministries/children-and-family-development>

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/policies/cf_3_child_protection_reponse.pdf

<http://www.nwgnetwork.org/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/>

Useful contacts

If a child is in immediate danger, call police (call 9-1-1) to intervene and a child protection social worker should be contacted to determine whether the child is in need of protection.

If you think a child or youth under 19 years of age is being abused or neglected, you have the legal duty to report your concern to a child welfare worker. Phone 1 800 663-9122 at any time of the day or night.

Your call will be answered by the Provincial Centralized Screening team (PCS) and their primary role is to receive and assess child protection reports and initial requests for ministry service across the province, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Provincial Centralized Screening can be reached at the following number: 1-800-663-9122.

If you are a child or youth and would like to talk to someone call:

Kids Help Phone: kidshelp.ca 1-800-668-6868

Helpline for Children: 1-877-631-8282 (the call is free and you do not have to give your name)

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/public-safety/protecting-children/reporting-child-abuse>

Relevant documents

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/crime-prevention/criminal-record-check/employer-organizations>

For information about mental-health and addictions resources, including resources specifically for youth, visit: www.helpstartshere.gov.bc.ca

Find Erase resources online: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/erase>

To report bullying, visit: <https://erasereportit.gov.bc.ca/>

For information about digital literacy training through Erase, visit: <https://pages.saferschoolstogether.com/erase-family-session>

To learn more about the Intimate Images Protection Act, visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023AG0036-000657>

To read about supports available for survivors of gender-based violence, sexual assault or domestic violence, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/public-safety/domestic-violence>

To access resources and research on the online sexual exploitation of children, visit: <https://cybertip.ca/en/>

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