



Child Protection Policy and Procedures

1. Policy Statement

Flamingo Chicks is committed to safeguarding the wholeness and wellbeing of every person of whatever age that engages with its services and activities. Flamingo Chicks acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice which reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and regulatory requirements.

This policy and these procedures recognise that the welfare and interests of children and young people are paramount in all circumstances. For the purpose of this document a child - and the age range covered by this policy - is defined as a person under the age of 18.

Flamingo Chicks aims to ensure that regardless of age, gender, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic background, all children and young people using its services or activities:

- have a positive and enjoyable experience in a safe and child centred environment
- are protected from abuse whilst participating in the activity or outside of the activity.

As part of its policy Flamingo Chicks will

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
- ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people
- ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern
- ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored
- prevent the employment/deployment/engagement of unsuitable individuals
- ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation

This policy and these procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in the organisation. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Flamingo Chicks is Katie Sparkes. The deputy person responsible for safeguarding is Sam McCormick (Head of Dance).

2. What is child abuse?

Child abuse is a difficult issue and presents challenges to all involved in providing services for children and young people. Disabled children are also at an increased risk of abuse.

It is not always easily recognisable but abuse is generally divided into four categories:

1. **Physical Abuse** - where adults physically hurt or injure children; hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning, or failing to prevent physical injury are all forms of physical abuse. Giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison and attempted suffocation or drowning are also physical abuse. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

2. **Neglect** – the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic needs, like food, warm clothing or medical attention, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may involve a parent/carer failing to provide adequate food, protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, ensure adequate supervision, or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also involve neglect of a child’s basic emotional needs. Emotional Abuse – persistent lack of love and affection damages children emotionally. Being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted can make the child very nervous and withdrawn.
3. **Sexual Abuse** – this is where children are encouraged or forced to observe or participate in any form of sexual activity. This could occur through unnecessary or inappropriate physical contact or through suggestive comments or innuendo or include showing children pornographic materials. Sexual abuse can take place online and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse also includes grooming a child in preparation for abuse.
4. **Emotional Abuse** - the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or “making fun” of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing a child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Other safeguarding issues that should also be considered:

Historical Abuse - There may be occasions when a child will disclose abuse (sexual, physical, emotional or neglect) which occurred in the past. This information needs to be treated in exactly the same way as a disclosure of current child abuse. The reason for this is that the abuser may still represent a risk to children now.

Domestic Abuse - Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been intimate family partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial and emotional.

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting impact on children. Children experiencing this may demonstrate many of the symptoms listed in Recognising Abuse (below). Staff will need to treat them sensitively, record their concerns and consider informing the relevant organisation.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) - FGM has been a criminal offence in the UK since 1985. In 2003 it also became a criminal offence for UK nationals or permanent residents to take their child abroad to have female genital mutilation (Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003) Anyone found guilty of the offence faces a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison.

Section 73 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 amended the Female Genital Mutilation Act to include FGM protection orders (FGMPOs). An FGM protection order is a civil measure which can be applied for through a family court. The FGM protection order offers the means of protecting actual or potential victims from FGM under civil law.

All agencies have a statutory responsibility to safeguard children in terms of preventing girls from FGM and identifying children who have already survived the procedure. It is important that staff and volunteers are aware of what FGM is and the signs to look out for in girls at risk of the practice.

For more information please go to the BSCB FGM Safeguarding Guidance:
<https://bristolsafeguarding.org/children-home/professionals/policies/#FGM>

Consider whether any other indicators exist that suggest FGM may take place or has already taken place, for example:

- The child has changed in behaviour after a prolonged absence from the setting;

- The child has health problems, particularly bladder or menstrual problems;
- The child has difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may appear to be uncomfortable.

If a girl is at immediate risk of FGM taking place, it is a significant child protection issue and must be reported to the police and/or First Response.

All staff and volunteers have a statutory duty to report if a girl under 18 informs you they have had FGM or if you see it. If FGM has taken place it is a significant child protection issue and must be documented and reported to the relevant local organisation and/or the police.

Prevent Duty / Radicalisation - it is essential that staff and volunteers are able to identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and to know what to do when they are identified. Staff will be trained to recognise possible signs.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to a terrorist or extremist ideology. As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff and volunteers should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. It is important to take action if staff/volunteers observe behaviour of concern.

The Police Prevent Team can give advice, contact 01278 647466 or ring 101 and ask for the Prevent team, explaining you are calling about extremism or radicalisation.

In addition, if you think a child is at risk of extremism, the Counter Extremism Group must be contacted via email: counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk or Tel: 020 7340 7264

The DSL will take responsibility for making contact with the Police and relevant agencies, but all staff and volunteers have a responsibility for reporting any concerns to the DSL (see below)

3. Taking Steps

Flamingo Chicks will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks (including Disclosure and Barring Service) are made – all DBS certificates will be enhanced and cover child and adult workforce.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

All staff and volunteers will be made aware of their responsibility to report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (see section 4).

Awareness of Online Activities

Flamingo Chicks also considers the potential risks associated with providing online classes and activities for children and young people and will always ensure that these are appropriately risk assessed. Safety guidance is provided for all sessions and appropriate online platforms used at all times.

Online classes require the attendance of at least one parent/carer or member of support staff to be present with the child/ren at all times, and a 'volunteer spotter' is provided by Flamingo Chicks in all classes to support teachers. Specific online safeguarding measures are in place, including ensuring children cannot use chat functions privately between themselves and parents/carers/settings have been provided with clear information on our procedures.

Online classes mean that children are sometimes joining our sessions from their homes – this is different to in-person sessions, which do not take place at home. Therefore, we have risk assessed this specifically, and have clear guidance for our team, volunteers, and parents/carers to ensure children are safe.

Key members of staff have completed the NSPCC's 'Keeping Children Safe Online' course and Flamingo Chicks also follows guidance from leading dance and education organisations, such as People Dancing and One Dance UK, around safety when running classes online.

Recognising Abuse

Recognising abuse is one of the first steps in protecting children and young people. There could be signs or behaviour that make you feel concerned. All staff should be alert to the following types of behaviour in children:

- Becoming excessively aggressive, withdrawn or clingy.
- Seeming to be keeping a secret.
- Significant changes in children's behaviour.
- Deterioration in children's well-being
- Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect.
- Unreasonable fear of certain people or places.
- Acting out in an inappropriate way perhaps with adults, other children, toys or objects.
- Children's comments which give cause for concern, e.g.: inconsistent explanations of bruising, injuries or burns.
- Sexually explicit language or actions.

Not all concerns about children or young people relate to abuse, there may well be other explanations. It is important to keep an open mind and consider what you know about the child and their circumstances.

4. What to do if abuse is suspected or disclosed

If abuse is **suspected**, remain calm and report all concerns to Flamingo Chicks' DSL (Katie) straight away.

If abuse is **disclosed** to a staff member or volunteer:

- stay calm
- listen to and reassure the child that they have done the right thing telling you
- do not ask leading questions
- never promise a child that you can keep it secret, be honest about who you will need to tell to help keep them safe. If a child asks what might happen next, it's ok to say you don't know but that you can support them if they want you to.
- do not ask the child to repeat what they have told you to another member of staff or volunteer, this will be done by trained professionals should the matter progress further.
- take a written record as soon as possible using the child's **actual words**
- all records should be factual – be aware of making assumptions or interpreting what the child told you.
- report the disclosure to Flamingo Chicks' DSL (Katie) straight away, who will then be able to take this further.

It is not the role of leaders, staff or volunteers to investigate an allegation of abuse. Any member of staff or volunteer who receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that abuse may have occurred **must report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead** (DSL) in Flamingo Chicks (Katie) or, if unavailable, to the deputy designated person (Sam).

As our activities take place within settings around the country, our DSL will then ensure they notify the DSL of the relevant setting straight away – this person will then be able to take the necessary action for their specific location, following the policies and procedures of their setting. Flamingo Chicks' DSL will then continue to liaise with them as appropriate.

All settings sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Flamingo Chicks, which includes agreement that the setting is to take overall responsibility for safeguarding and health and safety issues at all times.

In all situations, parents/carers will be informed unless to do so would present a risk to the child.

If abuse is disclosed, this may result in direct referral to a Social Work Team or to Early Help and/or advice and guidance being given about services to help families.

If abuse is suspected, the DSL will monitor the situation and make a decision about how to proceed. The DSL can discuss any concerns they have and seek guidance from the relevant local organisation before actually reporting any child protection issues.

Confidentiality must be maintained and information relating to individual children and young people/families shared with staff on a strictly need to know basis.

5. Alleged Abuse by Staff or Volunteers

Flamingo Chicks is committed to maintaining the highest standards of honesty, openness and accountability and recognises that employees and volunteers have an important role to play in achieving this goal.

They may be the first to know when someone inside or connected with an organisation is doing something illegal or improper, but may feel apprehensive about voicing their concerns. This may be because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or the organisation itself. Or it may be because they do not think that their concerns will be taken seriously or they are afraid that they will be bullied or dismissed.

Flamingo Chicks does not believe that it is in anyone's interests for staff or volunteers with knowledge of wrongdoing to remain silent. It will take all malpractice very seriously, whether it is committed by staff, volunteers, consultants or contractors. It will also aim to support staff or volunteers whom make an allegation, and also those about whom an allegation has been made as appropriate.

An allegation or concern against a member of staff or volunteer must be passed to Flamingo Chicks' DSL or their deputy or, if the allegation concerns them both, direct to the Local Authority Designated Officer.

It may be clear in some cases, where a child has been injured and/or there is clear evidence or risk of significant harm, that an immediate referral must be made to the police, First Response or emergency services. In addition, either the DSL, or the person responsible must then contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) WITHIN 1 WORKING DAY of receiving the report of an allegation. The LADO's advice will then be followed.

6. Record Keeping

Any member of staff or volunteer receiving a disclosure of abuse, or noticing possible abuse, must make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen, putting the event into context, and giving the date, time and location. All records must be dated and signed.

All hand-written records will be retained, even if they are subsequently typed up in a more formal report. Written records of concerns about children or young people should be kept, even where there is no need to make a referral immediately.

All records relating to child protection concerns will be kept in a secure place and will remain confidential.

7. Parental Involvement

Flamingo Chicks is committed to helping parents/carers understand its responsibility for the welfare of all children and young people.

Parents/carers will be given information about the organisation's child protection procedures.

In most situations it may be appropriate, after consultation with the designated officer, for a staff member to talk to parents/guardians/carers to help clarify any initial concerns (as opposed to investigating possible abuse). For example, if a child seems withdrawn, he/she may have experienced an upset in the family, such as a parental separation, divorce or bereavement.

However, there are circumstances in which a child might be placed at even greater risk if concerns are shared – and advice and guidance must be sought from First Response if there is any uncertainty about contacting parents or carers about initial concerns.

8. Training

All staff and volunteers will be made aware of this policy and asked to confirm they have read and understood it.

All staff will be required to undertake child protection training every two years and will be signposted to further training materials related to Child Protection alongside this. Any volunteer who works with a us for more than 3 days per 30 days will also undergo safeguarding training (we get this frequency from the enhanced DBS criteria).

Anyone else, e.g. volunteers who work with our children less than 3 days per 30 days will be required to undertake our own online training, which explains their safeguarding responsibilities. They will also get a copy of this and other relevant policies.

The recommended course we signpost staff and volunteers to is the NSPCC Child protection course: An online introductory safeguarding course for anyone who works with children.

The designated Child Protection representatives within Flamingo Chicks are Katie Sparkes (Founder) and Sam McCormick (Head of Dance). Katie is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and will undertake Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership multi-agency training every two years. Sam will attend safeguarding training local to her in West Yorkshire.

Attending these courses will ensure that Flamingo Chicks meets the requirements documented in Working Together 2018: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

9. Review

The policy will be reviewed every year.

Appendix A – Useful contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Katie Sparkes / 07968081152 / katie@flamingochicks.co.uk

Deputy Safeguarding Person:

Sam McCormick / 07740 366365 / sam@flamingochicks.co.uk

BRISTOL

Referral Agencies:

- First Response – 0117 9036444

The place to call if you are concerned about a child or young person or think they need some help. Calls to First Response may result in direct referral to a Social Work Team or to Early Help and/or advice and guidance being given about services to help families.

- Disabled Children Team - Tel: 0117 9038250
- Out of Office Hours Tel: 01454 615 165 (Emergency Duty Team)
- Email childprotection@bristol.gov.uk

Staff Allegations

- Local Area Designated Officer - Telephone 0117 903 7795, Work mobile: 07795 091020

Support and advice

- South West Child Protection Procedures (online guidance) www.swcpp.org.uk
- Bristol Safeguarding Children Board (training) -Tel: 0117 3532505
- BAND Development and Support Worker –Tel: 0117 9542128.

FGM Referral Risk Assessment

The Bristol Safeguarding Children Board has created an FGM referral risk assessment for professionals to consider the risks of girls from FGM.

<https://bristolsafeguarding.org/media/27269/fgm-referral-risk-assessment-2018.pdf>

If used, a record of the outcome must be kept.

NATIONAL SUPPORT

- Police: Non emergency – Tel: 101 / Emergency – Tel: 999
 - Childline -Tel: 0800 1111 (open 24 hours)
 - National Association for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) -Tel: 0800 800 500
 - NSPCC FGM helpline: 0800 028 3550 or email fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk
 - NSPCC Whistleblowing hotline – 0800 0280 285
 - Police Prevent Team: 01278 647466
 - Channel info: channelsw@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk
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Last reviewed: Friday 26th March 2021

Reviewed by: Samantha McCormick (Head of Dance)