



Perform Events Festivals

Safeguarding & Child Protection

Policy & Procedures

Purpose and aim of these procedures:

Perform Festivals celebrates dancers aged from three to 21 years and are members of the British and International Federation of Festivals for Music, Dance and Speech (BIFF) and the national charity, All England Dance.

Our Festivals are committed to promoting the welfare of children and young people and keeping them safe. We are also committed to equality, valuing diversity and working inclusively across all our activities. Perform Festivals are committed to ensuring safe environments for children and young people and believe that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind.

Perform, AED and BIFF festivals recognise our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people. We aim to ensure those children who attend our Festivals, and any other children who may come to our attention, receive the protection and support they need if they are at risk of abuse.

This policy applies to all persons involved in the running of Perform Festivals. It has been drawn up on the basis of relevant law and guidance that seeks to protect children and young people, and its purpose is to set out the overarching principles that guide our approach.

These procedures give clear direction to all staff and volunteers at Perform Festival events on how to provide safe environments for the children and young people attending / performing at our Festivals. They also explain how to respond if they have concerns that a child needs protection or concerns about the conduct of a member of staff or volunteer.

Creating Safer Festivals for Everyone

1. Appropriate recruitment and induction procedures for all new Festival staff and volunteers responsible for providing safe environments for everyone attending / performing at a Perform Festival - see 'Safer staff and volunteers' section below.
2. All Festival personnel wear an official festival badge. All teachers / parents / guardians/carers are asked to report all incidents of any nature to anyone wearing a Festival badge.
3. All reported incidents will be handled in accordance with the **Safe Working Practice** and **Festival Child Protection** best practice advice. In addition, we will ensure the availability of a quiet area / room where concerns can be expressed in private.
3. For the duration of a Festival all teachers/parents/guardians/carers are responsible for the continuous care and supervision of their own children/pupils, except at the time of performing. If they are unable to attend personally, they must delegate their responsibilities to an identified adult and ensure that their children/pupils are aware of the identity and name of the person responsible for their care. This includes supervision throughout all Festival venues, and public preparation areas that may be provided.
4. No unauthorised photography, audio or video recording of children and young people is allowed at our Festivals.
5. Teachers give approval for official photography at the point of entry. If a child/young person is not to be photographed this information is easily available to staff/volunteers
6. Some children and vulnerable adults may have specific needs in order to take part. If this is the case we ask the responsible teachers/parents/guardians/carers to contact the Festival Organisers prior to arrival. The Festival actively seeks wherever possible to meet these needs, and to know beforehand gives us the best opportunity to prepare the required support.
7. The Festival's Child Protection Policy and approach to Creating Safer Festivals for Everyone is published explicitly in our Syllabus and Programme. By ticking the entry box all parents / guardians / carers and teachers of performers under 18 (or vulnerable adults of any age) confirm that they give (or have obtained) the necessary consents for the performers to take part in the Festival, all are fit enough to do so (this will be confirmed again on the day of performing) and all participants agree to abide by the rules. Without consent the entry to the Festival cannot be accepted.

Roles and Responsibilities

Child Protection is everybody's business and all staff and volunteers working at our Festivals need to have an awareness of our policies and procedures and to understand their responsibilities to safeguard children and young people.

The best practice advice provided in the BIFF Federation's **Safe Working Practice** and **Festival Child Protection Leaflets** must always be followed and copies can be downloaded from our website.

Perform Festival has a Festival Safeguarding Officer to take a lead role in this.

Festival Safeguarding Officer (FSO)

Purpose of the role:

The Festival Safeguarding Officer (FSO) takes the lead role in ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for keeping children and young people safe when attending / performing at the Festival.

Duties and responsibilities:

1. Make sure that the Festival adopts the latest AED and BIFF Federation's child protection policy and procedures, including compliance with child licensing regulations.
2. Incorporate the AED and BIFF Federation's recommended best practice into our Festival procedures.
3. Ensure that all staff and volunteers working at the Festival understand their responsibilities to safeguard children and young people and have received a copy of the latest **Safe Working Practice** and **Festival Child Protection Leaflets**. Including an explanation of how to recognise signs of abuse and what they should do if they have a concern about a child or about the behaviour of an adult.
4. Ensure all issues concerning the safety and welfare of children and young people who attend the Festival are properly dealt with in accordance with the child protection policy and procedures.
5. Make sure that all participants at the Festival: performers, teachers/parents/guardians/carers, staff, volunteers, and audience members are made aware of the child protection policy and procedures of the Festival.
6. Manage any concerns about a child raised by Festival staff or volunteers. This includes ensuring the **Festival's Reporting Concerns Form** is completed correctly and onward referral to statutory child protection agencies as appropriate.

Safer Staff and Volunteers

Perform Festivals are committed to promoting the welfare of children and young people and keeping them safe. We are also committed to equality, valuing diversity and working inclusively across all our activities.

Through our staff/ volunteer recruitment and selection procedures we will ensure we are compliant with all requirements under relevant legislation and guidance (specifically the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 2013, Part V of Police Act 1997, Equality Act 2010, and Working Together to Safeguarding Children guidance). We will take all reasonable steps to prevent unsuitable people from joining our organisations and will ensure that new staff members and volunteers are given a proper induction

We recognise that our staff and volunteers are our most important resource and they cannot perform their role effectively unless they are inducted properly and receive ongoing support and supervision. We are also aware that sometimes unsuitable individuals seek out opportunities via employment or volunteering to have contact with children in order to harm them. This is why we ensure all recruitment of staff and volunteers is undertaken with the appropriate safeguards in place.

We recruit and induct our staff and volunteers by:

1. Highlighting the organisation's commitment to safeguarding if advertising any work/volunteering opportunities.
2. Ensuring that all applications for both paid and volunteer positions are made using our application form for recruiting staff or volunteers
3. Conducting a formal face-to-face interview with anyone who is not already familiar to the organisation
4. Obtaining two references and two pieces of ID from candidates who are not already familiar to the organisation
5. Using a self-disclosure form where appropriate
6. Carrying out the required Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) or other National equivalent, checks for candidates in line with DBS/National guidelines.
7. Ensuring that all new staff and volunteers are made aware, during their induction period, of how to keep children and young people safe at Perform Festival events.

All new staff and volunteers will receive a copy of the latest **Safe Working Practice** and **Festival Child Protection Leaflets** from the Federation with an explanation of how to recognise signs of abuse and what they should do if they have a concern about a child or the conduct of a staff member or volunteer.

What is Child Abuse

Child abuse is the term used when an adult harms a child or a young person under the age of 18. There are four main kinds of abuse, all of which can cause long term damage to a child.

1. **Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
2. **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, '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 the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the 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.

3. **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of material substance abuse.

Once a child is born it may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment; failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision, including the use of adequate care takers; or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

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

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts, such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or 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.

Staff and volunteers should, in addition, be aware of new and emerging methods of abuse such as sexual exploitation, child trafficking and abuse linked to culture or belief. Bullying and different types of discrimination are also forms of child abuse. Like other kinds of abuse they can harm a child physically and emotionally.

How to recognise abuse

Signs of abuse may be obvious and sudden:

- An injury.
- A child tells you they have been ill-treated.
- A child is showing concern about the way an adult is behaving towards them.
- A child tells you about another child who is being mistreated.
- An adult tells you they are concerned about the abuse of a child.

Or may be more subtle and part of a bigger picture:

- A child who is regularly dirty, unsuitably clothed or hungry
- A child who is showing unusual behaviour for their age.
- A child who is isolated, distressed or angry.

Reporting an allegation or concern

If you have concerns about a child, you must:

- Report any concern about the safety of a child immediately to your FSO.
- Record what has been noticed or said on the Festival's Reporting Concerns Form. Sign and date the form and give it to your FSO.
- Keep what has happened confidential to as few people as possible who need to know.
- Be aware that it is not your role to investigate or talk to any parents/ carers that may be involved.

If a child tells you about abuse you must:

- Treat what the child tells you seriously.
- Reassure the child they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Not question the child or put words in their mouth.
- Not promise to keep what they have said a secret.
- Tell the child you will have to pass on what they have said.
- Not speak to the child's parents.
- Immediately report the information to the FSO.
- Record what the child has said in their own words as far as possible on the **Festival's Reporting Concerns Form**. Sign it, date it and give it to your FSO

What happens next?

- The FSO will decide whether to refer to Children's Social Care / Local Authority Designated Officer and will make the referral if this is the decision.
- The Social Work team / Local Authority will then decide on further action
- The FSO should let you have some feedback.
- If you feel you cannot report the concern to the FSO you must still take action and report your concerns to the HoS at the BIFF Federation / AED.
- The HoS at the BIFF Federation / AED is available to provide support and advice to the FSO.

If you have concerns about the conduct of a member of staff or volunteer, you must:

- Report any concerns that indicate that a member of staff or volunteer may be a risk to children to the FSO.
- Report any concerns regarding the FSO to the HoS at the BIFF Federation / AED.
- Be aware that if the concern is about the Head of Safeguarding at the BIFF Federation / AED then you must report your concerns to the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the BIFF Federation or AED.

The Festival Reporting Concerns Form

- Use the **Festival Reporting Concerns Form** to record any concern and how it is dealt with. The relevant sections of the form should be completed and signed at each stage of the procedure. It can be used to forward information to the statutory child protection authorities where necessary.
- The form should be signed and dated by all those involved in its completion and kept confidentially. The name of the person making the notes should be written alongside each entry.

Helping a child in immediate danger or in need of emergency medical attention

In an urgent situation you may initiate contact to prevent an accident or harm to a child:

- If the child is in immediate danger and is with you, remain with them and call the police.
- If the child is elsewhere, contact the police and explain the situation to them.
- If they need emergency medical attention, call an ambulance and, while you are waiting for it to arrive, get help from the Festival's first aider.
- If the first aider is not available, use any first aid knowledge that you may have yourself to help the child.

Once any immediate danger or emergency medical need has been dealt with you must contact the FSO to let them know what is happening and to report any child protection concerns that may be related to the incident. The FSO will then onward refer to statutory child protection agencies as appropriate.

When to involve the Local Authority Designated Officer or team (LADO)

The FSO should report the allegation to the LADO (or National equivalent) within one working day if the alleged behaviour suggests that the person in question:

- May have behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child
- Has possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or has behaved towards a child in a way that suggests that they may be unsuitable to work with children.

Useful Contact Details:

Each Festival Safeguarding Officer should maintain the following list of useful contact numbers available for use during all their Festival Events:

BIFF Federation / AED Head of Safeguarding: *Contactable via the BIFF / AED website.*

Festival Safeguarding Officers:

Kelly Hopkins 07795 822254 / Emma Barnard 07770 853846

Local authority children's social care department:

Via HCC / West Council Local Authority

Local authority designated officer or equivalent:

Via HCC / West Council Local Authority

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000 or help@nspcc.org.uk

ChildLine: 0800 1111 (Textphone 0800 400 222) or www.childline.org.uk

Policy Review:

Last Review: September 2025

This policy will be reviewed annually, next due September 2026, unless changes to guidance or legislation means this is to be done sooner.