



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

APRIL 2016

The McKeown Irish Dance Academy has a duty of care to ensure the safety and well-being of all its students/children whilst taking part in its classes. In this document we have outlined good practices and values that the TCRG (registered teacher) and other staff/volunteers are to follow to create a positive environment for all those involved with the organization.



Child protection statement

- 1.1 The McKeown Irish Dance Academy, will take all necessary steps to ensure that the environment provided is safe for participation for children and young people, and that risks to participation are minimised wherever possible.
- 1.2 A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The children Act 1989)
- 1.3 As an organization registered with the Irish Dance Commission (An Coimisiun le Rinci Gaelacha - referred to in this document as 'An Coimisiun'), we are also bound by the regulations and terms of registration set out in the '*Child Protection and Welfare Policy - August 2014*' and '*Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure - April 2011*' guideline documents. These documents are available on request by speaking to the TCRG (registered teacher).

POLICY AIMS

- 1.4 The aim of the McKeown Irish Dance Academy Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice including:
- Ensuring children and young people are safe and protected from risk whilst in the care of The McKeown Irish Dance Academy.
 - all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Promoting good practice

- 2.1 Child abuse can provoke strong emotions in those facing allegations of poor practice. It is important that these feelings do not sway or influence judgement about the appropriate action to take.
- 2.2 Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and outside environments. The McKeown Irish Dance Academy will not ignore signs of abuse that may have originated outside of the environment provided by the organisation.
- 2.2.1 In accordance with the *An Coimisiun Child Protection and Welfare Policy* (page 7), the McKeown Irish Dance Academy has a responsibility to work to recognise incidents of abuse towards its students. This includes considering the possibility of abuse, looking for signs of abuse or neglect, and recording any information that may contribute to a future investigation into the welfare of the child to determine if abuse has taken place.
- 2.3 A teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported to The TCRG (registered teacher).

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

- 2.4 All teachers, staff and volunteers should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.
- 2.5 Good practice means:



- always working in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication
- treating all students equally with respect and dignity
- always putting the welfare of each student first
- building balanced relationships based on mutual trust
- making dance fun and enjoyable
- ensuring any form of manual/physical support required should be provided openly. Students should always be consulted and their agreement gained, prior to any manual support e.g hand holding.
 - Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance
 - details or copies of the above can be requested from the TCRG (registered teacher)
- involving parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents, teachers and volunteers work in pairs.
 - Teachers will, where possible, send children outside to their parents for personal care, including being taken to the toilet. Parents of any children that are not capable of personal care will be required to remain in the building while the child attends their class.
- being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the presence of students
- giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback
- recognizing the developmental needs and capacity of students - avoiding excessive training and not pushing them against their will
- securing parental consent to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of treatment given.

2.5.1 Any concerns that efforts to ensure good practice is not being undertaken whilst children and young people are in the care of the McKeown Irish Dance Academy should be reported to the TCRG (registered teacher).

PRACTISES TO BE AVOIDED

2.6 The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If a case arises where these situations are unavoidable (eg. The child sustains an injury and need to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick up a child at the end of a session), it should be with the full knowledge and consent of the TCRG (registered teacher) or the child's parents:

- spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- taking or dropping off a child to an event, unless written agreement is given and accepted between parent and staff. This can include a confirmation by email, text message and written communication that the parent is happy for this to take place.
 - The TCRG (registered teacher) will always be made aware of any confirmation provided by the parent/carer.



PRACTISES NEVER TO BE SANCTIONED

2.7 You should NEVER:

- engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- do things of a personal nature for students that they can do for themselves. NB It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the students involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. Particularly if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded by the TCRG/staff/volunteers

3.1 If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- if you accidentally hurt a student
- if a student seems distressed in any manner
 - The McKeown Irish Dance Academy will report any concerns that fall within, but are not exclusive to, the 'Reasonable Grounds for Concern' as identified in the *An Coimisiun Child Protection and Welfare Policy* (page 8)
- if a student misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done
- use of Photographic/filming equipment at events if there is evidence that some people have used performance events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people
 - as part of the induction sheet completed when the child/young person joins the McKeown Irish Dance Academy, parents/carers are asked to confirm that they consent to their child being filmed at any and all events for the purposes of marketing by either the McKeown Irish Dance Academy itself or its partners, including L.E.A.P.S.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

3.2 The McKeown Irish Dance Academy recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children and all reasonable steps will be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

3.3 All staff and volunteers will be required to read and accept The McKeown Irish Dance Academy and An Coimisiun's Code of Conduct.



3.4 Child protection procedures will be explained and training needs clarified.

TRAINING

3.5 In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process will include training to help staff and volunteers to:

- compare their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations.
- recognise responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
- work safely and effectively with children.
- give advisory information outlining good practice and information on what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person
- give advisory information outlining good practice and information on what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour between children.
- responding to allegations or suspicions

3.6 It is not the responsibility of anyone working in The McKeown Irish Dance Academy, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. There is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

3.7 Any allegations of abuse made by a child to teachers, staff or volunteers with the McKeown Irish Dance Academy will be reported by the TCRG (registered teacher) to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) within An Coimisiun as well as the local authority safeguarding team.

3.7.1 This is in accordance with the guidelines set out in the *An Coimisiun Child Protection and Welfare Policy* (page 11) under the 'What to do if you are Concerned About a Child or Young Person' section.

3.7.2 The DLP will discuss concerns raised with a duty social worker including records of any discussions with the child recorded by McKeown Irish Dance Academy teachers, staff or volunteers.

3.8 The McKeown Irish Dance Academy assures all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports their concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Action

4.1 Concerns about poor practice:

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, The TCRG (registered teacher) will deal with it as a misconduct issue. If the allegation is made towards The TCRG (registered teacher), the report must be made to An Coimisiun.

4.2 Concerns about suspected abuse



Any suspicion that a child has been abused by a member of staff or volunteer must be reported to The TCRG (registered teacher), who will take actions considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question any other child who may be considered at risk.

4.2.1 The TCRG (registered teacher) will refer the allegation to the DLP in accordance with the *An Coimisiun Child Protection and Welfare Policy* (page 11) under the 'What to do if you are Concerned About a Child or Young Person' section. The parents or carers of the child will be contacted following advice from social services, if the DLP deems it appropriate for social services involvement.

4.3 If the TCRG (registered teacher) is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to An Coimisiun.

4.4 The TCRG (registered teacher) will deal with ALL media enquiries.

Confidentiality

5.1 Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information will be handled and given out on a 'need to know' basis only. This will include the following:

- the TCRG (registered teacher)
- the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- the person making the allegation
- social services
- the alleged abuser (and parents if the abuser is a child)

5.1.1 The McKeown Irish Dance Academy observes the statement in the *An Coimisiun Child Protection and Welfare Policy* (page 16) that considerations of confidentiality will not be allowed to override the rights of children or young people to be protected from any form of abuse.

Bullying

6.1 If bullying is suspected, the following actions will take place:

6.2 To help the victim and to prevent bullying:

- all signs of bullying will be taken very seriously
- all children will be encouraged to speak about their concerns. The victim will be helped to speak out and to tell someone in authority.
- all allegations will be investigated and actions taken to ensure the safety of the victim.
- victims and alleged bullies will be spoken to separately
- victims will be reassured that they can trust who they are speaking to and they will be helped, but promises must not be made to tell no one else.
 - Any disclosure of information by a child will be dealt with in accordance with the guidelines set out for 'Dealing with Disclosures' in the *An Coimisiun Child Protection and Welfare Policy* (page 8)
- records of all discussions will be kept
- any concerns must be reported to The TCRG (registered teacher) immediately.



6.3 Action towards the bully(ies):

- alleged bullies will be spoken to, help them to understand the consequences of their behaviour and an apology sought where required.
- parents will be informed
- provision of support for the victim's teacher
- sanctions as necessary will be imposed
- encourage and support the bullies to change their behaviour
- meetings with parents will be scheduled to report on progress
- written records of all actions taken to be kept

6.4 Information to be obtained when suspicions or allegations are made:

- child's personal details, name, age, date of birth (obtainable from enrolment form)
- child's home address and telephone number (obtainable from enrolment form)
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else
- the nature of the allegation, including date, times and any special factors relevant · a description of any visible signs of injury.
- any behavioural changes.
- details of any witnesses to the incident.
- the child's account of events
- time of parental involvement
- parental response
- full report of the alleged incident, who reported it, etc.

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