Associated Board of Dance (ABD)

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Version 2.1 | June 2025

Review Date: June 2027

Applies to: HQ Staff, Examiners, Teacher Members, and Centres

Compliance Officer: Ms Leigh-Ann James | compliance@abd.dance

Approved by: ABD Board of Directors

1. Introduction and Purpose

The ABD is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and vulnerable persons involved in dance education and associated activities. This policy sets out the ABD's commitment and the framework within which all those connected with the ABD are expected to operate.

It is recognised that teacher members and centres operate in their own individual contexts, in a wide range of venues and circumstances. This policy sets the minimum standards and expectations of ABD membership. Every teacher member and centre is responsible for having their own detailed safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures in place, appropriate to their specific setting.

> *This policy provides general guidance and is not intended to replace the specific safeguarding arrangements that each centre is responsible for developing and maintaining. Members should seek appropriate advice and training to ensure their own policies are fit for purpose.*

2. Scope — Who This Policy Applies To

This policy applies to all individuals who engage with the ABD in any capacity, including:

- ABD HQ staff (employed, contracted, or voluntary)
- ABD Examiners (including visiting and associate examiners)
- ABD Teacher Members
- Dance Centres and their staff, assistants, and volunteers
- Any third parties working on behalf of the ABD who come into contact with children or vulnerable persons

3. Our Commitment

The ABD and all its members affirm that:

1. Every child and vulnerable person has the right to protection from all forms of abuse.
2. The welfare of children and vulnerable persons is always the paramount consideration.

3. All safeguarding concerns will be taken seriously and responded to promptly.
4. We will work in partnership with parents, carers, and statutory agencies where required.
5. This policy will be reviewed regularly and kept up to date with legislative and best practice developments.

4. Types of Abuse

All those working with children and vulnerable persons should be familiar with the main categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. Abuse can also occur online or through digital channels.

It is not the role of ABD members to investigate or make judgements about suspected abuse. However, all members should be able to recognise when something may not be right and know how to report a concern. Teacher members and centres should ensure that their own safeguarding policies include clear guidance on recognising and responding to the different types of abuse relevant to their setting and the age groups they work with.

> *Members are encouraged to access recognised safeguarding training appropriate to their role. Guidance on the types of abuse and how to recognise them is available from organisations including the NSPCC (www.nspcc.org.uk) and the government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.*

5. Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

All those connected with the ABD have a responsibility to act if they have a safeguarding concern. The key principle is simple: if something concerns you, report it. It is not your responsibility to investigate — it is your responsibility to pass the concern on to the right person.

5.1 At ABD Events and Activities

Any concern arising at an ABD event or activity should be reported in the first instance to the person in charge of the event. If the concern involves that person, it should be reported directly to the ABD Compliance Officer.

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If the concern involves the Compliance Officer, it should be referred to the Theatre President of the ABD.

5.2 At Member Centres

Teacher members and centres should have their own clear procedures for reporting and recording safeguarding concerns, including a named designated safeguarding lead for their setting. Where there is an immediate risk to a child, the police or local Children's Services should be contacted without delay.

Significant safeguarding incidents occurring at a member's centre which relate to ABD activities or examinations should also be reported to the ABD Compliance Officer.

5.3 Investigation

On receipt of a complaint or concern, the Compliance Officer will convene a committee of three Directors to hear and investigate the matter. All parties, including parents or legal guardians where appropriate, will have the right to be heard. The Directors have the power to suspend the individual(s) concerned from membership pending the outcome of any investigation.

6. Prevent — Safeguarding Against Radicalisation and Extremism

Radicalisation and extremism are safeguarding concerns and will be treated as such by the ABD. All members should be alert to signs that a child or young person may be vulnerable to being drawn into extremist thinking or activity, and should report any such concerns through the same channels as any other safeguarding matter.

Teacher members and centres should ensure their own safeguarding policies address the Prevent duty where relevant to their context. Further information and guidance is available from the government's ACT Early programme (www.actearly.uk) and local authority Prevent leads.

7. Venue Security

Teacher members and centres are responsible for ensuring that their premises and activities are safe and secure for children and vulnerable persons. Centres should have appropriate arrangements in place for controlling access to their premises, the supervision of children, and responding to emergency situations including lockdown scenarios.

At ABD events held at external venues, members should familiarise themselves with the venue's own security and emergency procedures. The ABD will communicate relevant emergency information to lead teachers at the start of each event.

> *All centres are encouraged to have a written emergency and lockdown procedure in place and to ensure staff are familiar with it. The national 'Run, Hide, Tell' guidance provides a useful framework for responding to security threats on or near premises.*

8. DBS Checks

The ABD requires all member teachers to hold a current enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) disclosure. There will be no exceptions other than for non-teaching or retired members.

Each member should maintain a record of all persons associated with their school who have access to children or who come into supervisory contact with children in their activities — whether paid or voluntary — and ensure that all such persons are appropriately DBS checked.

The ABD Compliance Officer (Ms Leigh-Ann James) is responsible for liaising with the ABD's Umbrella Body on DBS disclosures. Members can request a DBS check by contacting ABD HQ. The ABD operates its DBS scheme through 'Due Diligence Checking'.

9. Good Practice

The following general principles of good practice apply to all ABD members and those working with children in any ABD context:

Positive Practice

- Always work in an open environment — avoid private, unobserved situations with children.
- Treat all children equally and with respect and dignity.
- Always put the welfare of each child first.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times.

Practices to Avoid

- Spending time alone with a child away from others, save where one-to-one teaching is essential.
- Using personal social media or private messaging to communicate with children or young people.

Practices Never to Be Sanctioned

- Any form of inappropriate touching or physical contact.
- Sexually suggestive comments to a child or young person.
- Reducing a child to tears as a means of control.
- Failing to act on or record a concern or allegation made by a child.

Incidents That Must Be Reported

The following must be reported immediately to the ABD Compliance Officer if they occur during or in connection with an ABD event or activity:

- Accidentally hurting a child.
- A child misunderstanding or misinterpreting something you have done.
- A child appearing to be unusually distressed or at risk.
- Any concern about the behaviour of another adult towards a child.

10. Photography and Video Recording

Parental or guardian consent must be obtained before any images or footage of children are taken. Images must only be used for the purpose for which consent was given and must not be shared on social media or published online without explicit written consent.

Personal devices must never be used to photograph or film children in changing areas or toilets. Any concerns about inappropriate photography or filming should be reported immediately to the event organiser or the ABD Compliance Officer.

11. Events Policy

ABD teacher members are responsible for the duty of care of their individual school, students, and organisation whilst attending any ABD event. Adequate chaperones must be provided, with additional chaperones recommended for larger groups.

This applies to ABD Festivals, Scholarships, Theatre Events, Congress, and all other ABD events.

12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by the ABD Board of Directors at least every two years, or sooner in response to changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, or following any serious safeguarding incident.

Next Review Date: June 2027

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