



Policy for
Safeguarding and the
Protection of
Children and Adults at Risk

POLICY STATEMENT & CODE OF CONDUCT

Hamilton Dance recognises the responsibility it has under section 157/175 of the Education Act 2002 to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

This responsibility is more fully explained in the statutory guidance for schools and colleges 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2022). All staff must be made aware of their duties and responsibilities under part one of this document, which are set out below.

Staff at Hamilton Dance are required to read Part 1 and Annex B of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2022), 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for adults who work with children and young people in education settings' (2019) and 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners' (March 2015).

Everyone at Hamilton Dance shares an objective to uphold the commitment of Hamilton 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.

This policy sets out how Hamilton 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 a child also supports a respectful, safe and protective environment for a young adult (up to age 25) or an adult at risk. We recognise, 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.

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

Hamilton 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 Hamilton Dance is the Principal, Mrs Anneliese Hamilton-Stevens.

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 freelance staff and volunteers working within Hamilton Dance or on our premises.

Hamilton 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 and via the school website - www.hamiltondance.co.uk. This policy is reviewed annually or more frequently if legislation or guidance changes.

Section I – 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 Hamilton Dance teachers and volunteers will care, will promote and safeguard the wellbeing of all students, whether child, adult or considered at risk.

We recognise 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 adult at risks 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 (including teaching staff, administrators, and ancillary staff) undergo an Enhanced DBS Check,
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 Hamilton Dance any evidence or reasonable suspicion that a child or adult at risk has been physically, emotionally or sexually abused in contact with us or anyone in our organisation,
9. referring to statutory authorities

Everyone working or applying to work for Hamilton 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 Hamilton Dance.

Section 2 - Procedures

<https://www.seftonscp.org.uk/scp> 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.

Reporting a concern

Anyone, (student, career, 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 Hamilton 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 or to a member of the Hamilton Dance staff 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 children's social care.

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 as is required in Sefton or Liverpool,

1. by phone to Children's Social Care Services,
2. To the Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours), or
3. by contacting the police in the event of a serious emergency or life-threatening situation using the **999 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.

Record keeping

The DSL will ensure that record keeping at Hamilton Dance is in line with protocols advised by Sefton Safeguarding Partnership Board. They will:

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,

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
3. Ensure that all electronic/digital records are kept securely in a reserved area of the server with appropriate password protection.

Confidentiality and information sharing

The Data Protection Act 2018 does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

The school will ensure:

1. staff, teachers, and volunteers adhere to confidentiality protocols and that information is shared appropriately,
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),
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 or Anneliese Hamilton-Stevens
4. staff and teachers are clear with children that they cannot promise to keep secrets.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

5. disclose information about a student to other members of staff on a 'need to know' basis. Parental consent may be required,
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. 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
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).

Communication with parents/carers

The school will:

9. 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,

10. undertake appropriate discussion with parents/carers prior to involvement of another agency, unless the circumstances preclude this action,
11. 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
12. 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

Section 3 – Preventing unsuitable people from working with children

1. The school will operate safer recruitment practices including ensuring appropriate ID, DBS 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 Principal is the subject of an allegation, it should be reported to another teacher within the school and a joint decision made on how to approach the situation.
- 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 the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) ensuring that all allegations are reported to the LADO within one working day. Following consultation with the LADO, the Named Senior Officer will advise on all further action to be taken. Please note that Hamilton 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 Data and Barring Service. 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 Offences Act 2003 (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 4 - Roles and responsibilities of staff, and other related policies

All staff and volunteers will be required to:

- take all reasonable steps to protect all Hamilton 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 risks 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 accidents involving anyone should be recorded in the accident book located in the office, immediately or as soon as practicably possible.
- Staff are responsible for familiarising 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 organisation or their own personal insurance if acting as a self-employed agent.

Photographing students

Photographs or video footage of any student should only be taken if consent has been obtained in advance from the student themselves. Consent should be given verbally after the teacher has explained in an age-appropriate manner the reason for the photography or video footage, and what will happen to the images once captured. A student 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.

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 will have given permission in advance or chosen not to take part.

Occasionally, a photograph captured for teaching or performance reasons may be suitable to be used for contextual marketing purposes (around the studio and in print, or on the website) and in this case, those captured will be asked if they are willing to give their explicit permission to use that image in a different way than for the reason it was captured.

Social media

Teachers of Hamilton Dance should not interact privately online with students. This means you should not be following students under the age of 18. Any 'professional' social media accounts may attract pupils as followers but you should refrain from any private messaging to their account. Comments on their posts should be restricted to encouragement only - no negative or hurtful comments should be made.

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. Hamilton Dance has a Toilet Policy which should be referred to if you are uncertain.

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 finding another adult to seek 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 with a second adult close by as witness. 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 (updated 20th August 2024)

Parents are required to drop children off at the start of the lesson and then collect again at the end.

Parents should note the start and end time of each session and arrive on time for collection. Any child who is not collected promptly will be taken back into the hall to wait with the staff member who will need to start their next class.

During the classes the main doors to the halls will be locked and as such we request that children arrive on time and are ready for their first class rather than relying on the changing rooms to get into the correct uniform and shoes. Changing rooms will

still be available in between classes when the children have a break which will be supervised by a class assistant or other chaperone.

We will no longer be able to permit any parent to enter the buildings or changing room areas at the start of the session, in between classes or indeed at the end of the session. Where a child has more than one class they will be supervised in between by our class assistants.

During the class time the teacher is responsible for the safety and well being of the child and only once they are back with parents does this responsibility end.

In the event that a parent or any unfamiliar adult enters the building without prior arrangement our staff have been instructed to action our intruder policy and take the necessary steps to protect the children in their care as they see appropriate.

All children under the age of 13 must be handed over to a parent and should not be permitted to walk across the car park to a car or leave the building until the parent has been sighted. Absolutely no exceptions to this rule!

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.