



basement|studio

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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Basement Studio

Child Protection Policy

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1. Aims of the Policy

The aim of the Basement Studio Child Protection Policy is to ensure that there are always systems in place to keep children safe whilst taking part in activities with us, in respect of child protection.

The policy covers the following criterion:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Basement Studio.
- Allow all Basement Studio team members to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

As a company that will engage in activities with children, we will ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All team members (paid/voluntary) working with Basement Studio have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.
- All tasks carried out in reference to this policy are done in accordance with The Children's Act 1989 and The Protection of Children Act 1999.

2. Policy Statement

Basement Studio has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in all activities undertaken with us from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.

The Studio will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in all activities through adherence to the child protection guidelines.

For the purposes of this policy and procedure, a child is any person under the age of 18, or those whom are considered vulnerable. This definition is in accordance with the definition of a child as stated in the Children Act 1989.

3. Promoting Good Practice

a) Good Practice Guidelines

Abuse can occur within many situations. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with children in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with children and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document. All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations.

Basement Studio will encourage the following practices to create a positive culture and environment:

- Always working in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication.
- Treating all children/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each child first.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust, and empowering children to share in the decision making process.
- Making music fun and enjoyable.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developments/needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance.
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away for the day or night, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible.
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Requesting written parental consent if staff/volunteers are required to transport young people in their cars.

b) Practices to be Avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If a case arises where these situations are unavoidable (e.g. the child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or if a parent fails to arrive to pick up a child the end of a session), it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge at the studio, or the child's parents.

Otherwise, avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children and away from others. Meetings with individual children should be avoided or take place within sight of others. If privacy is needed, doors should remain open and other staff or volunteers should be aware of the meeting.
- Taking children to your home where they will be alone with you
- Taking or dropping off a child to an event or anywhere else.

c) Practices Never to be Sanctioned

The following should never occur under any circumstances:

- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Sharing a room with a child.
- Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allowing children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allowing allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children to stay at your home unsupervised.
- Meet children outside of organised activities, unless it is with the knowledge and consent of the parents and the person in charge of the Basement Studio event.
- Make promises to keep any disclosure confidential from relevant authorities.

d) Other Things to be Aware Of

If a team member finds themselves the subject of inappropriate affection or attention from a child, they should make others aware of this.

If a team member has any concerns relating to the welfare of a child in their care, be it concerns about actions/behaviours of another team member, or concerns based on any conversation with the child; particularly where the child makes an allegation, they should report this to a designated person.

e) Reporting & Recording Incidents Involving Children

If any of the following occur, they should be immediately reported to another colleague or the Child Protection Officer and record the incident. The parents of the child should also be informed:

- If a child is accidentally hurt.
- If the child seems distressed in any manner.
- If a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

f) Designated Child Protection Officer

As previously mentioned, the company director is designated as the company Child Protection Officer who will deal with any issues relating to child protection and the implementation of any reporting of incidents to the relevant authorities. All incidents or suspected incidents that occur during Basement Studio activities must be reported to the Child Protection Officer immediately.

4. Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment

There is evidence that some people have used events involving children as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of children in vulnerable positions. All Basement Studio team members should be vigilant, and any concerns should be reported to the Child Protection Officer.

There is no intention to prevent team members using video equipment as a legitimate teaching aid during any workshops or courses that the studio may run. However, parents/carers should be made aware that this is part of the programmes offered and such films should be stored safely.

5. Recruitment and Selecting Staff and Volunteers

Basement Studio recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

When undertaking pre-selection checks the following should be included:

- All applicants should complete an application form. This will elect information about an applicant's past and self disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau.
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo).
- Qualifications.

Further training will ensure that team members recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse, or concerns expressed by a child.

6. Responding to Allegations or Suspicion

a) Action

It is not the responsibility of anyone working with Basement Studio to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with appropriate authorities.

Basement Studio will assure all team members 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.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation.
- A child protection investigation.
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the

disciplinary investigation.

If following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Child Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

b) Concerns About Suspected Abuse

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by anyone working at Basement Studio should be reported to the Child Protection Officer, who will take necessary steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

The Child Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department which may involve the police. If out-of-hours, the allegation will go directly to the police.

The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.

If the Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Company Secretary who will refer the allegation to social services.

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

c) Concerns Outside the Immediate Activity Environment.

All concerns should be reported to the Child Protection Officer, who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible.

d) Information for the Social Services or Police about Suspected Abuse.

To ensure that any information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The child's name, age, date of birth..
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation, including dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, whether or not the child has been spoken to and what was said.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- Whether or not the parents have been contacted, and what has been said.
- Whether or not anyone else has been consulted, and a record of these details.
- If anybody has been alleged to be the abuser, and a record of these details.
- The name of the contact who took the referral.

7. Dealing with Bullies and Bullying

Basement Studio recognises that bullying is a serious problem, and can be emotionally scarring for anyone involved, particularly children. Basement Studio has a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying.

a) Action to Prevent Bullying and Help the Victim

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns.
- Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority.
- Investigate all allegation and take action to ensure the victim is safe.
- Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, but do not promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when etc)
- Report any concerns to the Child Protection Officer.

b) Action Towards Bullies

- Talk with the bully, explain the situation and try to get them to understand the consequences of their behaviour.
- Seek an apology to the victim/s.
- Inform the bully's parents.
- Insist on the return of borrowed items and that the bully compensates the victim.
- Provide support for any team member working directly with the victim.
- Impose sanctions if necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully to change behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.
- Inform all appropriate personnel of the action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.