

Safeguarding policy

September 2023

The purpose and scope of this policy statement

Elizabeth Samuels Drama School believes everyone has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We will give equal priority to keeping all children and young people safe regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

We will respond promptly and appropriately to all concerns and incidents regarding the safety of a child that may happen.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Samuel Davis.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children and young people who receive Elizabeth Samuels' services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
- to provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.
- to set out how Elizabeth Samuels Drama School will meet the statutory duty under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and help them to achieve good outcomes.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Elizabeth Samuels', including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation is available from [nspcc.org.uk/learning](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/learning).

We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind.
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take.
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief,

sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.

- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people
- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently
- recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance [more information about this is available from the Information Commissioner's Office: ico.org.uk/for-organisations]
- sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions
- making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people,

staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance

- building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

1. What is Safeguarding?

‘Safeguarding children is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm – it is everyone’s responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.’ Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

Safeguarding is:

- 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.

2. Recording concerns and information sharing

It’s important to keep accurate and detailed notes on any concerns you have about a child. You will need to share these with your nominated child protection lead.

Include:

- the child’s details (name, age, address)
- what the child said or did that gave you cause for concern (if the child made a verbal disclosure, write down their exact words)
- any information the child has given you about the alleged abuser.

Why information sharing is important

Sharing information about a child’s wellbeing helps professionals build a clearer picture of the child’s life and gain a better understanding of any risks the child is facing.

Information sharing helps to ensure that an individual receives the right services at the right time and prevents a need from becoming more acute and difficult to meet (DfE, 2018).

General principles of best practice for information sharing are outlined below. Refer to your organisation’s procedures as well as local multi-agency arrangements to ensure you are following the information sharing processes that are most appropriate for your role.

When to share information

Timely information sharing is key to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

People who work with children, whether in a paid or voluntary role, may need to share information about the children and families they are involved with for a number of reasons.

These include:

- you are making a referral to arrange additional support for someone in the family
- someone from another agency has asked for information about a child or family
- someone in the family has asked to be referred for further help
- a statutory duty or court order requires information to be shared
- you are concerned that a child or a member of their family may be at risk of significant harm
- you think a serious crime may have been committed or is about to be committed which involves someone in the family.

You must always have a clear and legitimate purpose for sharing a child's personal information. Keep a record of the reasons why you are sharing or requesting information about a child or their family.

You should also make sure you are not putting a child's safety and wellbeing at risk by sharing information about them.

Always seek consent to share information about a child and their family. However if consent isn't given, you can still share information with relevant professionals under certain circumstances, for example if you are protecting a child from significant harm.

What information to share

You need to decide what specific information is appropriate to share and who to share it with.

- Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the child and anyone else who may be affected by the situation.
- Make sure you share the information quickly and securely. The sooner you report your concerns the better. This means the details will be fresh in your mind and action can be taken quickly.
- Identify how much information should be shared. This will depend on the reasons for sharing it.
- Use language that is clear and precise. Different agencies may use and understand terminology differently.
- Make sure the information you are sharing is accurate. Make it clear what information is factual and what is based on opinion (yours or other people's).

Facts and opinions

When working with children and families you will gather information from a variety of sources. How you interpret this information can depend on:

- any previous information received
- your knowledge of research and theory
- your own frame of reference.

When recording information you should be as factual as possible. If you need to give your own or somebody else's opinion make sure it is clearly differentiated from fact. You should identify whose opinion is being given and record their exact words.

3. Taking Action

Any child in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of 'It could happen here'.

Key points for staff to remember when taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call 999
- report your concern to the DSL as quickly as possible – immediately when there is evidence of physical or sexual abuse and certainly by the end of the day.
- do not start your own investigation
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- complete a record of concern, inform the DSL or deputy and seek support for yourself if you are distressed or need to debrief.

4. The 4 Types of Abuse

Child abuse is when a child is intentionally harmed by an adult or another child – it can be over a period of time but can also be a one-off action. It can be physical, sexual or emotional and it can happen in person or online. It can also be a lack of love, care and attention – this is neglect.

- Emotional abuse is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It's sometimes called psychological abuse. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child. Emotional abuse is often a part of other kinds of abuse, which means it can be difficult to spot the signs or tell the difference, though it can also happen on its own.
- Physical abuse is when someone hurts or harms a child or young person on purpose. It includes: hitting with hands or objects, slapping and punching, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning and scalding, biting and scratching, breaking bones, drowning. It's important to remember that physical abuse is any way of intentionally causing physical harm to a child or young person. It also includes making up the symptoms of an illness or causing a child to become unwell.
- Sexual abuse is when a child or young person is forced or tricked into sexual activities. They might not understand that what's happening is abuse or that it's wrong. And they might be afraid to tell someone. Sexual abuse can happen anywhere – and it can happen in person or online. It's never a child's fault they were sexually abused – it's important to make sure children know this.
- Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and the most common form of child abuse. A child might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision or health care. This can put children and young people in danger. And it can also have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing.

5. What are the signs of child abuse?

The signs of child abuse aren't always obvious, and a child might not feel able to tell anyone what's happening to them. Sometimes, children don't even realise that what's happening to them is abuse.

There are different types of child abuse and the signs that a child is being abused may depend on the type. For example, the signs that a child is being neglected may be different from the signs that a child is being abused sexually.

Common signs

Some common signs that there may be something concerning happening in a child's life include:

- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
- becoming withdrawn
- seeming anxious
- becoming uncharacteristically aggressive
- lacks social skills and has few friends, if any
- poor bond or relationship with a parent
- knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age
- running away or going missing
- always choosing to wear clothes which cover their body.

These signs don't necessarily mean that a child is being abused, there could be other things happening in their life which are affecting their behaviour – but we can help you to assess the situation.

You may also notice some concerning behaviour from adults who you know have children in their care, which makes you concerned for the child/children's safety and wellbeing.

6. Peer-on-peer abuse

Occasionally, allegations may be made against students by others in the drama school, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a student, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:

- is made against an older student and refers to their behaviour towards a younger student or a more vulnerable student
- is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- raises risk factors for other students in the drama school
- indicates that other students may have been affected by this student
- indicates that young people outside the drama school may be affected by this student

Examples of safeguarding issues against a student could include:

- physical abuse: violence, particularly pre-planned, forcing others to use drugs or alcohol
- emotional abuse: blackmail or extortion, threats and intimidation
- sexual abuse: indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults, forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting
- sexual exploitation: encouraging other children to attend inappropriate parties, photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts

In areas where gangs are prevalent, older students may attempt to recruit younger students using any or all of the above methods. Young people suffering from sexual exploitation themselves may be forced to recruit other young people under threat of violence.

If peer-on-peer abuse is suspected or disclosed to Elizabeth Samuels staff then they will follow the same procedures as set out above for responding to child abuse.

7. Extremism and Radicalisation

We're here to protect children from harm. It can be hard to know when extreme views become something dangerous. And the signs of radicalisation aren't always obvious.

Spotting the signs of radicalisation

Radicalisation can be really difficult to spot. Signs that may indicate a child is being radicalised include:

- isolating themselves from family and friends
- talking as if from a scripted speech
- unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- a sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- increased levels of anger
- increased secretiveness, especially around internet use.

Children who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem, or be victims of bullying or discrimination. Extremists might target them and tell them they can be part of something special, later brainwashing them into cutting themselves off from their friends and family.

When any member of staff has concerns that a student may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they will speak with the DSL.

8. Complaints and Allegations about Staff

Despite all efforts to recruit safely there may be occasions when allegations of abuse against children are reported to have been committed by staff, practitioners and/or volunteers, who work with students in our drama school.

An allegation is any information which indicates that a member of staff or volunteer may have:

- behaved in a way that has, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

We understand that a student may make an allegation against a member of staff or staff may have concerns about another staff member. If such an allegation is made, or information is received which suggests that a person may be unsuitable to work with children:

- the member of staff receiving the allegation or aware of the information, will immediately inform the DSL.
- the allegation will be recorded on a Safeguarding Concern Form. All witnesses, including the person reporting the allegation will sign and date the form.
- the DSL will report the allegation to the Local Authority Designated Officer within 24 hours.
- Elizabeth Samuels will follow any advice from the LADO and if advised, it may be possible that the member of staff will be suspended pending a full investigation of the allegation.
- If Elizabeth Samuels removes a member of staff or volunteer from working with children because they pose a risk of harm (or if you would have but the person has resigned or left) then we will inform the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Staff, parents and the wider Elizabeth Samuels community are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing including content placed on social media sites.

9. Awareness and Training for our Staff

We will ensure that:

- all of our staff understand that it is everyone's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and that they have a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.
- all staff consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.
- all staff know how to respond to a student who discloses abuse.
- all staff will refer any safeguarding or child protection concerns to the designated safeguarding lead or if necessary where the child is at immediate risk, to the police or Single Point of Access (SPA), or if a child lives out of borough, to the relevant local authority.
- all staff provide a safe environment in which children can flourish.
- safer recruitment practices are adhered to.
- all staff are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationship with staff, students and parents.
- staff are fully aware of how to and have the confidence to report misconduct
- all staff receive information about Elizabeth Samuels safeguarding arrangements (including this policy), staff code of conduct, safeguarding and child protection policy, the role and names of the designated safeguarding lead and their deputy(ies), and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 part 1 and Annex A on induction
- all teachers will complete a Level 1 Safeguarding Training.
- all staff receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction which is regularly updated. In addition, they receive safeguarding and child protection updates from the DSL.
- all members of staff are trained in and receive regular updates in online safety and reporting concerns
- the safeguarding policy is made available via our website or other means.
- the DSL and Deputy Leaders receive regular training.
- Safeguarding training for the relevant members of staff is refreshed every year.

- all staff are aware of their statutory duties with regard to the disclosure or discovery of child abuse, and concerns about radicalisation.
- safeguarding is a permanent agenda item at all meetings.

10. Mobile Phones, Photography & Images

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place. To protect students we will:

- seek their consent and parental consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- use only the students first name with an image
- ensure that students are appropriately dressed
- encourage students to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them
- ensure that students/ parents do not take photographs or video images of other students without their express permission and the permission of a member of staff
- filming and photography by parents is not permitted at school events.
- mobile phones are only used during the class for playing music, taking the register, contacting parents, the DSL or the emergency services.
- ensure that all staff and pupils are aware of the changes to the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019 which criminalise the act of 'up skirting'. Incidents of up skirting in the school will not be tolerated. Elizabeth Samuels will make decisions on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL (or a deputy) taking a leading role and using their professional judgment, supported by other agencies, such as children's social care and the police as required.

11. What to do if staff are concerned about a child's welfare

If any of our staff have concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately. Any concerns regarding indicators of abuse or neglect or signs that a child may be experiencing a safeguarding issue should be recorded on the concerns form and passed to the DSL or Deputy DSL. For physical signs of abuse, a body map can also be used.

Following an initial conversation with the student, if the member of staff remains concerned they should discuss their concerns with the DSL and put them in writing on the concerns form.

If the student does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below regarding a student making a disclosure.

12. What to do if a student discloses to a member of staff

We recognise that it takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, guilty or scared, their abuser may have threatened that something will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults or believe that what has happened is their fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abuse.

A child who makes a disclosure may have to tell their story on a number of subsequent occasions to the police and/or social workers. Therefore, it is vital that their first experience of talking to a trusted adult is a positive one.

During their conversation with the student, staff will:

- listen to what the child has to say and allow them to speak freely
- remain calm and not overreact or act shocked or disgusted – the student may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting the listener
- reassure the child that it is not their fault and that they have done the right thing in telling someone
- not be afraid of silences – staff must remember how difficult it is for the student and allow them time to talk
- take what the child is disclosing seriously
- ask open questions and avoid asking leading questions
- avoid jumping to conclusions, speculation or make accusations
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who is being abused.
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing sooner. Saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about it when it started’ may be the staff member’s way of being supportive, but may be interpreted by the child to mean they have done something wrong
- tell the child what will happen next

If a student talks to any member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing the staff member will let the child know that they will have to pass the information on. Staff are not allowed to keep secrets.

Using the Safeguarding Concerns Form - The member of staff should write up their conversation as soon as possible on the concerns form in the child’s own words. Staff should make this a matter of priority. The record should be signed and dated, the member of staff’s name should be printed and it should also detail where the disclosure was made and who else was present. For physical signs of abuse, a body map can also be used. The record should be handed or emailed to the DSL.

13. Notifying parents

Elizabeth Samuels will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a student with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DSL will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

However, if Elizabeth Samuels believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from the Single Point of Access.

Where there are concerns about forced marriage or honour based violence parents should not be informed a referral is being made as to do so may place the child at a significantly increased risk.

Contact details

Nominated child protection lead/Designated Safeguarding Lead

Name: Samuel Davis

Phone: 07429478447

Email: sam@elizabethsamuelsdrama.com

NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 5000

Richmond & Kingston SPA

020 8547 5008

Out of Hours

020 8770 5000

Hounslow Children's Services

020 8583 6600 (Option 2) Children's Services

Then Option 3 for the Frontdoor

LADO

020 8891 7370

07774332675

lado@achievingforchildren.org.uk

This policy statement came into force 5th March 2020.

This policy will be reviewed 4th September 2024.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice **annually**.

This policy statement and accompanying procedures were last reviewed on 4th September 2023.

Signed: 

Date: 4/9/2023