

## **Social Media and Online Teaching Safeguarding Policy.**

This policy explains how we use social media and online teaching within Victoria Walker Dance. It details our duty to safeguard in the online environment and our expectations regarding the behaviour of teachers, staff, volunteers, and the children, young people and adults who use our organisation. At Victoria Walker Dance we will do everything we can to limit children's exposure to online risk. We will do this by ensuring clear guidelines and procedure for all teachers, staff and volunteers working for Victoria Walker Dance Ltd and will do so in line with our Safeguarding Children and Adults Policies. Our full safeguarding policy can be found on our web page.

It is important that all staff members and volunteers are aware that their safeguarding duty extends to the safeguarding of students online, regardless of the type of online device or the type of platform used.

The designated safeguarding person at Victoria Walker Dance Ltd is: Victoria Walker

The designated safeguarding person (Victoria) will advise teachers, guest teachers, volunteers, students and parents/ guardians where appropriate on best practice and expectations regarding the use of online classes and Victoria Walker Dance social media platforms. They will be responsible for the monitoring and recording of any safeguarding concerns and for ensuring that all concerns are shared with the appropriate statutory authorities, online concerns are not an exception to this.

All staff and volunteers at Victoria Walker Dance Ltd will be made aware of this policy and should be able to demonstrate their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults whose care and support needs leave them unable to protect themselves when online. This must include how to raise concerns with children's social care, adult social care and/or Tusla. Staff and volunteers shall be made aware of this through staff training and meetings.

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers at Victoria Walker Dance Ltd to take steps to protect children, to keep them safe from online hazards and to take appropriate action where needed. It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to take reasonable steps to protect children and young people from harm and abuse while in contact with our organisation including through online activity and our staff and to report any incident of or suspicion of abuse to the designated safeguarding person or in their absence to the appropriate statutory authority.

It is essential that this policy is read in conjunction with our safeguarding children and safeguarding adults' policy and that all recording and information sharing procedures laid out within these are followed regarding any cause for concern that arises from online interaction. This includes any online disclosures of harm or any disclosed or witnessed examples of online or cyber bullying.

A 'child' is anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently, in further education, or working does not change his/ her entitlement to services or protection as a child. Our guidelines apply to all children and young people until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The designated safeguarding lead for Victoria Walker Dance Ltd is Victoria Walker

The person responsible for managing our organisations online presence is Victoria Walker

At Victoria Walker Dance Ltd we will safeguard students (both adults and children) using online services by:

- ensuring all social media accounts are password protected. That all taught sessions are password protected and that all users of Victoria Walker Dance Ltd

are informed in writing of the importance of not sharing passwords to protect the privacy of others

- the designated safeguarding officer (Victoria) shall have access to view sites and groups as necessary and there will be a designated member of staff who is responsible for checking and monitoring the quality and appropriateness of all posts on social media sites / groups. The member of staff with monitoring responsibility also has the right to remove inappropriate posts with immediate effect but will be asked to provide a reason for this decision where appropriate
- all social media posts will align with the work of Victoria Walker Dance Ltd, be fit for purpose and align with our organisational code of conduct
- all account names and email addresses shall be appropriate and fitting for a professional organisation.

Teaching staff and parent and guardians need to know:

- parents / carers shall be asked to be present during online taught sessions for children
- health and safety will be a key consideration in planning taught sessions in the home via video call
- no identifiers shall be posted on any online forum or page for example date of birth, address or phone number and full names should only be used with consent from a parent / guardian and only if necessary
- all photos and videos used must be with full consent from a parent or guardian
- children will not be admitted into groups without the consent of their parent / guardian
- groups will not be created on platforms that are not age appropriate for the intended members.
- all communication directly with children will be approved by parents in advance and children shall not be contacted on platforms or sites that are not age appropriate
- we will make children, young people and adults aware of who they can speak to should they come across social media or online content they find distressing or should they be exposed to bullying / cyber bullying while accessing online services.

At Victoria Walker Dance we expect all staff and volunteers to safeguard children and adults and to cause them no harm as outlined in our safeguarding policies. This also extends to the online environment:

Staff and volunteers:

- have a duty to bring to the safeguarding lead's attention anything they find to be inappropriate or potentially unsafe including online content or any concerns they have about what they have seen during live sessions either regarding a child /adult, the behaviour of others around them or their home circumstances
- will ensure on any videos they create or live sessions they generate that their background environment is clear, professional and appropriate
- will always try to consider children's understanding of the internet and their safety when making decisions about the online platforms they choose to use.
- will abide by Victoria Walker Dance Ltd safeguarding policies and data protection policy.

- must not 'friend' or 'follow' children, young people or their families on their personal social media accounts. All and the only social media contact must be through Victoria Walker Dance Ltd business pages.
- must always choose the most formal and professional channel of communication for example email rather than Whatsapp chat and will ensure messages have an appropriate professional tone. Additionally, teachers will not start 'conversations' with students on social media or email all communication will have a clear and legitimate purpose.
- all online communication with families should be part of an agreed social media or educational strategy

#### The School community:

All parents, carers, children, young people and adults using Victoria Walker Dance Ltd must also be aware of their duty towards others and be aware that the guidelines for behaviour set out in our code of conduct apply also to all online interaction. All involved with Victoria Walker Dance have a duty to uphold the code of conduct and have a right to be able to share any concerns and to be supported.

If any user of Victoria Walker Dance Ltd has a concern they should be listened to and this information should be recorded and passed to the designated safeguarding lead as soon as possible.

We recognise that many parents / carers do not feel confident in using the internet and are unsure how or where to report concerns. The designated safeguarding lead will maintain communication with parents who share concerns and ensure they are supported to act on their concerns in the most appropriate way.

Any concerns of significant harm will be raised with Tusla in line with our safeguarding statement.