

# SCENEUK

## Child Safeguarding

SCENEUK is dedicated to developing the potential of children in an environment of safety and security.

The purpose of this document is to give a clear picture of the expectations SCENEUK has with regard to safeguarding our students and how team members should behave with students in their care.

We work to create and maintain safe environments for students who attend our schools and take part in events.

All team members and new recruits must be given a copy of this policy to read. A team member is anyone who has unsupervised contact with students under the age of 18.

## **Recruiting Team Members**

The main elements of the recruitment process are:

- Ensuring that the job specification includes specific reference to suitability to work with children.
- Obtaining and scrutinising applicant information, and checking and satisfactorily resolving any discrepancies or anomalies in CVs.
- Obtaining independent professional and character references that answer specific questions to help assess an applicant's suitability to work with children, and following up any concerns.
- A face-to-face interview that explores the candidate's suitability to work with children as well as his or her suitability for the post.
- Verifying the successful applicant's identity.
- Verifying the successful applicant's academic or vocational qualifications.
- Checking his or her previous employment history and experience and discussing most recent employment.
- Verifying the successful applicant has the health and physical capacity for the job.
- Obtaining the mandatory DBS via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Guidance on the DBS system is attached to this document.

Please note: It is important not to rely solely on the DBS check. It is an essential safeguard, but it will only pick up those abusers who have been convicted, or have come to the attention of the police, or who have been listed as unsuitable to work with children. Many individuals who are unsuited to working with children will have a clear DBS check.

## **A Safe Environment**

We aim to control who comes into our schools and, ensure doors can be locked to stop unidentified people from entering and students from leaving without our knowledge.

Teachers should give clear instructions to students as to toilets and rules around their use. It is not realistic to escort children to the toilet on all occasions, and if the toilets are within the safe zone then there is no need to do this. If the toilets are elsewhere then team members should make a judgment about escorting a student.

Be aware that potential abuse can come from outside as well as from older, more capable students.

Creating and maintaining a safe environment is vital in keeping students safe.

Think about potential risks, and plan how to minimise these risks.

Whilst our priority is keeping our students safe, we must also recognise teachers or team members can also be subject to intimidation and bullying, and we must be aware of any concerns.

## **Standards Of Professional Behaviour And Boundaries**

Everyone working with SCENEUK needs to demonstrate safe behaviour in order to protect the students in our care and also to protect ourselves from allegations of misconduct.

Follow these good practice standards to create a positive culture and climate.

## Good Practice

- Always work in an open environment.
- Avoid private or unobserved meetings with students and never allow yourself to be left alone with a student. There may be rare occasions in schools when a confidential interview or a one-to-one meeting is necessary and, in such circumstances, the interview should be conducted in a room with an open door or one with visual access. If this is not possible, the teacher or Manager should ensure there is another adult nearby.
- Touching a student must be appropriate to their SCENEUK training. It is unrealistic and inappropriate for SCENEUK to prohibit physical contact between teachers and students. Touch is very much part of what we do and it is an essential part of the creative interpretation of roles as well as a means of directing movement, encouraging performance and providing comfort and reassurance. Where physical contact is necessary the teacher should explain the reason. However, teachers must bear in mind that even innocent actions can be misconstrued. It is important for you to be sensitive to a student's reaction to physical contact and to act appropriately. No student should ever be touched on a part of his/her body or in a way that is indecent. The areas covered by bra and pants should never be touched, except in case of emergency. If there is a reason why you have had to touch a child in these areas then you should record what you have done. Touch must always be related to the needs of the student.
- Treat all students equally and with respect and dignity. SCENEUK will take positive action to eliminate discrimination against any person or group of people.
- Ensure that students are protected from discrimination on any grounds, including ability, and challenge discriminating comments and behaviour.

- Activities should be designed to include all students and to promote positive attitudes towards diversity.
- Never enter into an intimate relationship with a student or share a room with students during residential events.
- Maintain a safe environment and act in a responsible manner with regard to the care of students.
- Conduct yourself in a manner that sets a good example to students.
- Be an excellent role model – this includes not drinking alcohol in the company of/whilst responsible for students.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Request parental consent in advance if you are required to transport students in your car, or if a student expects to leave SCENEUK without a parent, i.e. to catch a bus.
- Always refer any child safeguarding concerns to the Manager.
- Question any unknown adult who enters the premises and/or who attempts to engage with the students.

## **Bad Practice**

The following practices should never be sanctioned:

These sorts of behaviours give rise to serious concerns about an individual worker, are deemed as gross misconduct, and should be reported. It is not an option to ‘turn a blind eye.’, Concerns must be reported immediately.

- Never use physical force against a student, unless it constitutes reasonable restraint to protect him/her or another person or to protect property. The incident should be recorded in writing, with a witness statement (where possible), immediately afterwards.
- Do not engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Never use physical punishment.
- Do not engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Never tolerate a student’s inappropriate use of language and/or behaviour. This should always be challenged. Do not make sexually suggestive comments to a student, even in a light-hearted manner.
- Avoid using sarcasm and bad language and never reduce a pupil to tears as a form of control.
- Never allow allegations made by a student to go unrecorded or to not be acted upon.
- Do not do things of a personal nature for students who can do it for themselves (e.g. apply sunscreen).
- Do not allow students access to your personal social media accounts
- Never exchange personal mobile phone numbers or other contact details with students.
- Do not invite or allow students to stay with you at your home, or arrange meetings with them away from the school.

## Code Of Conduct For Students

Good behaviour and personal discipline are a central theme for students at SCENEUK. We expect the highest standards of behaviour from one another.

Courtesy, good manners and consideration for others, together with self-discipline, are encouraged at all times, and are important if we are to make SCENEUK a true, caring community. We place great emphasis on praising students for their achievements, politeness and kindness to others.

All students are encouraged to make a full contribution to SCENEUK and to support the positive endeavours of all its members. Rules are essential for the benefit of all and we try to keep these as simple as possible, but we do expect them to be respected.

*Students are expected to contribute to the learning environment by:*

- Working to the best of their ability in sessions
- Making it as easy as possible for everyone to learn and for the teachers to teach
- Behaving in a responsible manner and listening and responding to instructions by teachers

*Show respect for others by:*

- Being courteous co-operative and friendly to each other
- Being polite, courteous and honest with staff and visitors
- Trying to understand other people's point of view



- Taking pride in your appearance and having respect for other people and their possessions.
- Doing nothing to endanger a healthy, safe and secure environment
- Ensuring forbidden items are not brought to school
- Refraining from fighting and name-calling and any form of bullying (including cyberbullying and use of email, text and video/sound recordings to facilitate bullying)
- Reporting any instances of bullying immediately to staff

The Manager will bring any serious breach of discipline or any disruptive behaviour to the attention of the parents concerned, and an appropriate course of action will be decided upon.

## **What Is Abuse?**

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child; somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm. It can take many forms but is usually divided into up to five categories.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse is the involvement or enticing of a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative and non-penetrative acts.

Sexual activities may also include non-contact activities, e.g. involving children in looking at, or in production of abusive images, watching sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. This may include use of photographs, films, pictures, cartoons, literature or sound recordings e.g. the internet, books, magazines, audio cassettes, tapes, CDs.

Ultimately it is a corruption of relationship that leaves children damaged and potentially unable to function.

If you are engaged in a professional role with children and young people under 18 years of age you need to be clear that they cannot provide lawful consent to any sexual activity.

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, giving children alcohol and/or inappropriate drugs, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may

also be caused when a parent or carer encourages symptoms that are not genuine, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of health and development. Neglect is by far the most common form of abuse and may involve a parent or carer failing to:

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- Provide adequate food, shelter and clothing (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Protect a child from physical harm or danger.
- Meet or respond to a child's basic emotional needs.
- Ensure adequate supervision including use of adequate caretakers.
- Ensure adequate access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- Ensure that educational needs are met.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child which would adversely affect his or her emotional development. It may involve:

- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only because they meet the needs of another person. This may be verbally or via electronic or written communication.
- Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations, for example over protection or limitation of exploration and learning.

- Causing children to feel frightened or in danger (e.g. witnessing domestic abuse, seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.)
- Exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

## **Bullying**

*Bullying can take several forms including:*

- Physical, e.g. hitting, kicking, theft
- Emotional, e.g. name-calling, constant teasing, sarcasm, racist or homophobic taunts, threats, graffiti, gestures, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring
- Sexual, e.g. unwanted physical contact, abusive comments

The damage inflicted by bullying is often underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self harm and suicide).

Teachers need to be aware that cyber bullying, involving the use of mobile phones and the Internet, is increasingly being used.

## **Signs Of Abuse**

It is important to remember that a child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and that abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time. There is no absolute criterion on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. The following indicators are signs and symptoms that teachers might notice, that may be consistent with abuse; but children may exhibit them for other reasons too.

### **Sexual Abuse**

- Frequent unexplained abdominal pains discomfort when walking/sitting
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge for the child's age
- Promiscuity
- Sudden changes in behaviour, including emotional withdrawal or aggression
- Inappropriate sexually explicit stories or performances
- Overeating or anorexia
- Substance/drug misuse
- Reports of assault
- Physical Abuse
- Frequent or unexplained bruising, marks or injury
- Bruises that reflect hand marks or shapes of articles e.g. belts
- Cigarette burns
- Bite marks
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Unexplained broken or fractured bones
- Scalds
- Fear of parent being contacted
- Reports of injury caused by parents

- Neglect
- Poor hygiene
- Weight loss/underweight
- Inappropriate dress
- Unattended physical problems or medical needs
- Constantly tired
- Poor relationship with parent or carer
- Behavioural extremes – aggressive/angry outbursts/ withdrawn or violent behaviour
- Fear of going home
- Emotional Abuse
- Delays in physical development or progress
- Sudden speech disorders
- Failure to thrive
- Impairment of intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development
- Bullying
- Stomach aches and/or headaches
- Reduced concentration becoming withdrawn clingy, depressed
- Tearful, erratic mood swings
- A drop-in performance at school or standard of play

### **Action: What To Do If you observe bad practice...**

If you have concerns about a team member working for SCENEUK who shows signs of bad practice in line with the examples above, talk this through with the Manager.

It is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Whilst it is accepted that teachers are not experts at such recognition, you do have a responsibility to act if you have any concerns about the behaviour of someone (an adult or a child) towards a student.

All team members have a duty to discuss any concerns about the welfare of a student immediately with the Manager. Report your concerns and allow others to help.

### **If a student tells you something ...**

When a student tells you something or you observe any of the behaviour detailed above, it is important that your actions do not abuse the student further or prejudice further enquiries.

*For example:*

- Listen to the student if they are telling you something. If you are shocked by what is being said, try not to show it. It is OK to observe bruises but not to ask a student to remove or adjust their clothing to observe them
- Let the student dictate the pace when they tell you something. They should not feel pressed or pressurised to give you details. Avoid asking such questions as “what did they do next?” or “where did they touch you?”

- It is our role to listen, not to investigate. Use open questions such as “is there anything else you want to tell me?” or “yes?” or “and?” Try not to press the student or introduce your own hypotheses about what you are being told.
- Accept what the student says. Be careful not to burden them with guilt by asking questions such as “why didn’t you tell me before?”
- Do acknowledge how hard it was for them to tell you this.
- Don’t criticise the alleged perpetrator as this may be someone they love.
- Don’t promise confidentiality. Reassure the student that they have done the right thing, explain that you will have to tell the Manager and explain why.
- Do not make promises that you cannot keep such as “I’ll stay with you all the time” or “it will be alright now”.



## **If you see something of concern ....**

Looking through the list of signs of abuse as set out above can lead people to be hypersensitive to the possibility of abuse, but it is important you take action if you notice something, particularly any changes in line with the signs of abuse.

### **Report To The Manager**

After talking with the student and noting any concerns, you must discuss the matter with the Manager as soon as possible and no later than the end of the teaching session.

### **Recording The Information**

Make some brief notes at the time or immediately afterwards; record the date, time, place and context of the disclosure or concern, recording facts and not assumption and interpretation.

Note the non-verbal behaviour and the key words in the language used by the student (do not translate into “proper terms”). It is important to keep these original notes and pass them to the Manager.

### **The Aftermath**

SCENEUK recognises that students who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. Being at SCENEUK may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. For this reason we would

encourage teachers to allow students who have made disclosures to ‘feel normal’ whilst they are at SCENEUK.

## **Parents**

Parents play an important role in protecting their children from abuse. We are required to consider the safety of the student and, should a concern arise, seek advice from the manager before contacting parents. The reason for this, at this stage, is that it may be that we need to be clear that they are not involved in any potential abuse. We will work with parents to support the needs of their child.

We aim to help parents understand that SCENEUK, like other schools, has a responsibility for the welfare of all students and has a duty to refer appropriate cases to the Police and/or Social Services in the interest of the child.

### **Confidentiality**

Teachers have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the safeguarding of children with other professionals, particularly investigating agencies. If a student confides in a member of the team and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the team member tells the student sensitively that he/she has a responsibility to speak to the Manager for the student's own sake. Within that context, the student should be reassured that the matter will be disclosed only to the people who need to know about it. Team members who receive information about children and families in the course of their work should have the information only within professional context. Child safeguarding records should be kept securely locked.

## NOTES

### The Internet and Social Media/Networking Sites

#### **Personal Accounts**

Personal social networking sites as they appear and develop must never be used by teachers, teaching assistants or helpers to communicate with students. Social networking sites are precisely that, 'social'. It is essential that you maintain appropriate boundaries to keep those in your care safe.

SCENEUK students and their parents may at times ask if they can be a friend of yours on Facebook or other social networking systems and these requests must be politely declined.

Some might think that this is an overreaction, but the reasons for this rule are clear and are as follows:

- Social networking sites are used by children and young people to maintain contact with friends in the same way they might phone one another, meet and discuss their lives etc. These are, quite rightly, areas that we, as adults, do not play a part in. You should not consider your students as friends as this would fundamentally change the relationship, and leave the student and you unsafe.
- Even if your motives are pure, you leave students with the view that it is 'okay' to make contact with teachers and other professionals outside the usual school environment. There are some adults who will use the fact that you have breached a boundary with students as a way of making their own behaviour seem acceptable, opening up the potential for them to groom and

abuse young people. As soon as you start to communicate with students outside the school environment you begin a process that makes them unsafe.

Similarly, you should not use your own personal email account or social networking sites to communicate with students in your care. You should also consider what material you have on your social networking sites that is accessible to all. Do not include material that might cause offence or undermine your position in your professional role.

### **Social Networking Accounts**

SCENEUK have public social media accounts and these are used to communicate about the services we offer.

## **The Use of Cameras, Mobile Phones, and Digital Recording Equipment**

Increasingly sophisticated technology makes it easy for video pictures and images to be shared on the internet and on mobile phones.

Managers should adopt a common sense approach to the use of cameras and other recording equipment used to film students during performances and showcases. There will be occasions where Managers, parents and carers will wish to take photographs or make video recordings of their child/children taking part in a performance.

In order for schools to ensure that use of photography and video is safe, Managers and teachers should:

- Tell parents that they have permission to take photographs and videos of their child/children during performances. This information should be given prior to a performance, in writing, to allow for any parents who might object to make their views known to you. Make it clear that the Manager and staff have the safeguarding of children as a priority and that you reserve the right to challenge anyone who you think is misusing the opportunity.
- Seek permission from parents if you plan to use a video or photographs of their child or children for marketing purposes. Use a Media Consent form and make sure it contains explicit information relating to how and where the image or video will be used. If you do not get parental permission, you cannot use that child in any of your marketing.
- Ensure that photography or video recording only takes place in designated areas. For example, in the main school hall where the performance is taking place and not in 'backstage' areas.

- If you intend to photograph or video performances on behalf of the school, use a designated camera or video recorder. Before the performance begins, let parents and carers know that you will be videoing or taking photographs of the event and explain how those images will be used, for example a DVD of the event which will be available to buy.

## **The Disclosure and Barring Service**

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is an executive agency of the Home Office and has been set up by the Government to help organisations make safer recruitment decisions for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. The DBS provides a service called 'Disclosure' in order to safeguard children and young people. A Disclosure is a document containing information held by the police and government departments. A DBS Disclosure is required for all Managers and their team members prior to their school opening.