

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

For Academy Ballet School of Annapolis (ABSA), an RAD-affiliated ballet school

1. Statement of Commitment

At ABSA, the safety and wellbeing of all children, young people, and adults at risk is our highest priority. We are committed to creating a safe and positive environment where every student can learn, grow, and thrive.

We recognize our responsibility as mandated reporters under Maryland law to safeguard all individuals in our care and to take prompt and appropriate action whenever there is a safeguarding concern.

Under no circumstances will any staff member, volunteer, or representative of the school inflict physical, emotional, or psychological harm on a child or adult at risk. Assault, abuse, or exploitation is against the law and will be treated as a criminal offence.

2. Procedures to Keep Students Safe

Our safeguarding procedures are designed to ensure the safety of all children and adults at risk.

2.1 If you are concerned that a child may be at risk of abuse or neglect:

- Report immediately to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**.
- The DSL will document the concern and notify the **Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Protective Services (CPS)**.
- Any staff member who suspects abuse is also legally required to make a direct report to CPS (1-800-91-PREVENT or the Anne Arundel County DHS office: 410-421-8400).
- If a child is in immediate danger, call **911**.

2.2 Peer-on-peer abuse (bullying, harassment, inappropriate physical contact):

- All reports will be taken seriously and investigated promptly by the DSL.
- Support will be offered to both the student raising the concern and the student alleged to have caused harm, with emphasis on safety.

2.3 Concerns about staff or volunteers:

- Any allegation that a staff member or volunteer may pose a safeguarding risk must be reported to the DSL immediately.
- The DSL will contact **Child Protective Services** and/or the **police** as required.
- Staff accused of abuse will be suspended from duties pending investigation.

2.4 Complaints procedure:

- Children, families, or staff may raise safeguarding concerns directly with the DSL.
 - If the concern involves the DSL or school leadership, families should contact CPS directly (see contacts below).
 - Complaints will be addressed fairly, confidentially, and in compliance with Maryland law.
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3. Staff and Volunteers Code of Conduct

All staff and volunteers must:

- Treat every student with dignity and respect.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Avoid being alone with a child in an isolated setting whenever possible.
- Never use physical punishment, humiliating language, or any form of abuse.
- Use constructive and positive teaching methods.
- Report safeguarding concerns immediately, following the procedures above.

All staff and volunteers will receive safeguarding training upon hiring and refresher training annually.

4. Guidance for Parents, Carers, and Students

We believe that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Families are encouraged to speak openly with the DSL about any concerns. This policy is available on our website and in hard copy on request.

Key Contacts

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Lindsay Lucas, 443-996-7961, lzetterj@gmail.com

- **Maryland Department of Human Services, Child Protective Services (Anne Arundel County):** 410-421-8400
 - **Maryland Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline:** 1-800-91-PREVENT
 - **Anne Arundel County Police (non-emergency):** 410-222-8610
 - **Emergency Services:** 911
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5. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated whenever necessary in line with RAD guidance and Maryland state law.

Last reviewed: September 7th, 2025

Next review due: August 31st, 2026
