

Safeguarding Policy – Metrowest Dance Academy 2025/26

Organization Name: Metrowest Dance Academy

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Gemma Williams

Assistant Safeguarding Officer: Séarlait Carr

Statement

Metrowest Dance Academy (MDA) has a 'duty of care' to provide a safe environment for and to promote the health and well-being of children, young people, and adults at risk. MDA is dedicated to taking all necessary measures to ensure that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk are deeply ingrained in faculty/staff interactions with them through the training and activities offered. MDA ensures that children and adults at risk are well protected and that there is a system in place to safeguard their welfare.

MDA teaches dance classes to children, young people, and adults. MDA strives to create a secure and nurturing environment, fostering skill development through professional instruction and guidance ensuring a safe space for learning. The school offers student dance training in ballet, contemporary, tap and jazz. MDA also provides a place of learning and development for dance teachers and is committed to ensuring their welfare.

What is the School's Philosophy?

MDA teaches dance classes to children, young people and adults, age 3 and up. MDA provides a safe and nurturing environment where learning takes place and skills are built through expert instruction and guidance. The school offers student dance training in ballet, contemporary, tap, and jazz. MDA also provides a place of learning and development for dance teachers and is committed to ensuring their welfare.

MDA recognises that the welfare of children and adults is paramount. Regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

Under no circumstances should a member of staff or a volunteer inflict any physical or psychological harm on a child or adult dance student. Assault is against the law and is a criminal offense that can lead to prosecution.

All members of teaching staff have an up-to-date CORI on file through the City of Framingham.

Procedure in the event that a teacher suspects a child or adult is at risk:

1. At earliest possible moment discuss concerns with Gemma Williams (Director). If this is not possible in person it can be done by email gwilliams@metrowestdance.com or phone 774-208-6547.

2. Gemma Williams (GW) will decide subsequent procedure. Possible steps include talk to at-risk person with another teacher present and raise concerns about dancer's welfare with their parents. If the latter does not seem to be a safe option for the dancer, raise concerns with the Framingham Department of Children and Families for specialist support. DCF Framingham 300 Howard Street, Framingham, MA 01702. Phone: 508-424-0100

Procedure if student makes an allegation against a teacher:

1. Listen carefully to the student and if possible take notes of their concerns.
2. Immediately relay concerns to Gemma Williams (Director). If the allegations are against Gemma Williams relay concerns to Séarlait Carr (SC. Teacher and Administrator).
3. Either adult (GW or SC) will then speak to students first to review their concerns.
4. Concerns will be shared with the teacher in question and a meeting set up for them to discuss the allegations with the Director or SC.
5. Parents will be informed of any changes to class schedule and exactly how student concerns are being addressed.
6. Once the issue is resolved parents and students will receive clear communication of schedule/teacher changes if any.

Faculty Responsibility:

1. Faculty at MDA should always take concerns seriously and listen to the students carefully when they are approached by a student who is at risk or has concerns to share.
2. Faculty should try to create a private environment for the student while concerns are shared. This should be done at the end of a class when other dancers have been dismissed.
3. Faculty communicate that the concern will be relayed to Gemma Williams or Séarlait Carr for further action.
4. Faculty should let the dancer know that their concerns have been heard, check in on their well being, and let them know we will investigate further.