

# Sakoba Dance Theatre & Sakoba Dance For All

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURES

This document has been prepared drawing from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children's booklet Stopcheck and the Arts Council of England's Keeping the Arts Safe Guidelines. Child Protection is underpinned by a considerable body of legislation, government guidance and standards, designed to ensure that children are protected from harm including; The Children Act 1989, Human Rights Act 1998 and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by the UK government in 1991.)

**Sakoba Dance Theatre and Sakoba Dance For All are Committed to practice which protects all children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or religion. Staff and artists in this organisation accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues that cause children harm.**

The purpose of this document is to guide Sakoba's staff in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults from harm when participating in Sakoba's projects and to make clear their responsibilities, actions they should take and lines of responsibility.

### What is Child Protection?

Artists working with Sakoba Dance Theatre and Sakoba Dance For All should be aware of Child Protection issues, as everybody has a responsibility for the safety of children and to work for the prevention of child abuse: categorised as physical, sexual and emotional or instances of neglect.

#### **When working with children and young people they must be**

- valued and treated as individuals
- listened to and heard
- respected for their identity and uniqueness
- encouraged and praised
- involved in decisions, as appropriate

Sakoba Dance Theatre and Sakoba Dance For All at all times strives to endeavor to provide a safe and secure environment for all project participants, working together and in partnership with the host organisation.

When working in schools it is important to remember that every school should have a named person with sole responsibility for child protection, so that overall responsibility for protection lies with the school. Sakoba contracts with schools shall state that a teacher or other member of staff from the school is present in activities at all times.

### What is a Child?

In law, a child is defined as all young people under the age of 18 in The Children Act 1989. (Extensions of this exist for children who are disabled and for those in local authority care settings.)

As an artist or arts organisation working directly with children, young people or vulnerable adults, Sakoba should always have a contact person with legal responsibility for the child, young person or vulnerable adult. Sakoba staff should never assume sole responsibility for a child, young person or vulnerable person.

### What is Abuse?

It is generally accepted that there are four main forms of child abuse and that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse. Some children are subjected to more than one form of abuse at any one time. These four definitions do not minimise other forms of maltreatment:

**Physical Abuse** includes hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning or misuse of medicines, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating.

**Emotional Abuse** is persistent emotional ill treatment, which is likely to cause serious harm to the child's emotional development. May involve making a child feel that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate and

cause children to feel frightened, in danger, be exploited or corrupted.

**Sexual Abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child or young person is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. This may involve penetrative and non-penetrative acts. Sexual abuse also includes non-contact activities such as involving children or young people in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material, watching sexual acts or encouraging them to behave in a sexually inappropriate way. Sexual abuse of vulnerable adults can be rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the person does not consent or is pressurised into consenting.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure of a parent or carer to meet a child's basic physical and, or, psychological needs, which is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

### How can you recognise if abuse is taking place?

Recognising child abuse is not easy. It is not the responsibility of Sakoba's staff to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place, or if a child is at significant risk: this is a task for professional child protection agencies. However it is everyone's responsibility to act if there is a concern.

### Everyone has a responsibility to report suspected or alleged child abuse.

**Anyone working for Sakoba may become aware of child abuse in a number of ways including:**

- a child may disclose that he/she is being abused at home or elsewhere including by someone within the organisation
- someone else may report that a child has told them, or that they strongly believe, that a child has been or is being abused

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- a child might show some signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation
- a child's behaviour may indicate that it is likely that he or she is being abused
- something in the behaviour of one of the workers or a young person, or in the way the worker or young person relates to a child, alerts them or makes them feel uncomfortable in some way
- observing one child abusing another
- Reassure the individual that 'they did the right thing'
- Tell the person what you are going to do next
- Only ask questions for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer
- Record in writing what was said – note date, time, and any names that were involved or mentioned.
- In confidence, make your manager or project organiser aware of the situation.

### Responding to signs or suspicions of abuse

Any member of Sakoba who is made aware of actual or possible child abuse should report and discuss their concerns as soon as possible with Bode Lawal. Written documentation should also be made.

### Responding to allegations of abuse against a member of Sakoba staff

These should be reported as soon as possible to Bode Lawal. Written documentation should also be made.

### Responding to allegations of abuse against someone not working in the organisation

This may be a parent, carer, service user, another child or anyone else. As above any incidents, disclosures or observations should be reported to Bode Lawal and documented.

### Guidance on responding to a child disclosing abuse

- Remain calm
- Listen carefully to what is said
- Do not promise to keep secrets, use the first opportunity you have to say that you will need to share the information with others. Make it clear that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help.

### Confidentiality

The legal principle that the '**welfare of the child is paramount**' means that the considerations of confidentiality which might apply to other situations in the organisation, should not be allowed to override the right of children to be protected from harm. However every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned when an allegation has been made and is being investigated. (*Stopcheck, NSPCC*)

### Safe Recruitment Practices & Disclosure

In order to ensure the suitability of all artists and other staff working on projects involving direct contact with children and vulnerable adults, and that they work in a way as to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm, Sakoba will apply for an Enhanced Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau. Sakoba arranges and pays for this to take place.

Disclosure is an information service provided by the Criminal records Bureau (CRB) – an executive agency of the Home Office. A Disclosure is an impartial and confidential document that details an individual's criminal record, and where appropriate, details of those who are banned from working with children. For further information please visit [www.disclosure.gov.uk](http://www.disclosure.gov.uk).

### What about Health & Safety in arts practice?

The following Guidelines are taken from 'Keeping Safe':

#### Recommendations are that:

- groups should not have more than 26
- an appropriate number of legally responsible adults are present
- there must be adequate space
- there must be access to a telephone in the building
- equipment must meet safety standards
- risk assessments must be carried out
- there must be a first-aid box which meets current Health and Safety (first Aid) Regulations and a member of staff trained in first aid
- regular and appropriate food and drinks are provided
- special needs are catered for
- no child under 5 years of age should be left at events, unless the parent/carer or responsible older sibling stays with the child
- no school group, youth group or group from a care setting should be left without a legally responsible staff member present
- the artists should know the evacuation procedures and should tell the group
- children and young people should have a 'named person' to whom they may report any worries or concerns

### Useful contacts

#### **National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)**

Publications and information unit  
Telephone 020 7825 2775  
[www.nspcc.co.uk](http://www.nspcc.co.uk)

#### **NSPCC Child Protection Helpline**

A free 24 hour service that provides counseling, information and advice to anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse.  
Telephone 0800 800 5000  
Text phone 0800 0560566  
[Help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:Help@nspcc.org.uk)

#### **Criminal Records Bureau**

Helpline 0870 9090811  
[www.crb.gov.uk](http://www.crb.gov.uk)  
[www.disclosure.gov.uk](http://www.disclosure.gov.uk)