



## **Performing Arts Club St Johns**

### **Child Protection Notes and Guidance**

#### **A safe environment is one where:**

- Abuse is openly acknowledged to exist and is discussed by adults
- Training in awareness takes place
- Policies and Procedures are known by all and followed
- There is support for those who report suspicions or concerns and Child protection policies should explicitly commit to these.

#### ***In addition, safe environments:***

- Ensure that those working with children learn the child or young person's communication method. They may need help to do this.
- Ensure that the child or young person's health needs are known, recorded and that sufficient people know how to respond. This may mean knowing how to manage a seizure or an asthma attack. It may mean ensuring that medication is kept to hand, administered correctly, and recorded
- Ensuring a mobile phone is available and switched on
- Discuss with parents or carers any physical care that is required and how this can best be done with respect and dignity. This will usually mean same gender carers, and consistent carers or supporters. Consideration needs to be given to the balance of the need for privacy with the need for accountability and protection against allegations for carers. This is best done by consulting with parents or carers and the child or young person concerned
- Give the child or young person every opportunity to make informed choices and respect their choice
- Have clear strategies for dealing with difficult behaviour that excludes any kind of physical punishment or restraint
- Listen to and advocate for children and young people
- Involve children or young people and their families wherever possible in the running of the club. This helps give all children and young people a voice and may act to deter abusers.



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### Protecting Children and Young People with Disabilities

- For many years children and young people with disabilities were not considered to be vulnerable to abuse. It is now known that this is not the case and that children and young people with disabilities are at an increased risk of abuse and that the greater the disability the greater the risk. There are a number of factors that contribute to this and these include:
  - Lack of friends and peer group to support and protect
  - Intimate/physical care/invasive medical care required. This can make it difficult for the child or young person to know what is acceptable and unacceptable touch
  - Lack of speech or limited communication. This makes it harder to report abuse
  - Difficulty in resisting
  - Multiple carers – making it hard to identify who may be abusing
  - History of being told what to do and not given choices
  - Depending on the abuser for a service or basic need
  - Having medical conditions that are used to explain injuries
  - A history of finding that compliance to others results in gentler care than challenging a carer
  - Difficulty in identifying the abuse if sensory impaired
  - Others seeing all carers as beyond criticism.
  - Children and young people with disabilities may also be less valued than their peers and poor care may be observed but tolerated by others. This might include such things as not speaking directly to the child or young person; not offering choices; not moving and handling them safely; not respecting their privacy and dignity; not treating them according to their age; allowing physical restraint to occur; or using derogatory language.
- There is no one way to ensure that children and young people with disabilities are protected but the safest environments are those that help children and young people to protect themselves by helping them to speak out and do their best to stop abuse from happening and take responsibility for observing, challenging and reporting poor practice and suspected abuse.
- Safe environments for children and young people with disabilities are also safer for all children and young people.

