



Safeguarding Policy

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1. Introduction

The International College of Musical Theatre (ICMT) is committed to ensuring the safety, welfare, and well-being of all students, staff, and visitors. As a higher education institution specialising in performing arts, the ICMT recognises its unique responsibilities in safeguarding and protecting individuals from harm, including fulfilling its statutory duties under the Prevent Duty to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

This policy provides a clear and comprehensive framework for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk within the ICMT community. It also outlines the institution's approach to identifying, reporting, and managing concerns related to safeguarding and the Prevent Duty, tailored to the distinct context of performing arts education.

Purpose and Scope

The ICMT's Safeguarding and Prevent Policy applies to all activities undertaken by the institution and covers:

- All staff, students, contractors, volunteers, and visitors, whether on campus or participating in off-site activities organised by the ICMT.
- A range of educational and performance-related settings where students may be in close contact with peers, staff, and external collaborators, including rehearsals, performances, and outreach activities.
- Situations where students or staff may encounter individuals who are vulnerable due to age, disability, mental health, or other factors.

This policy aims to:

- Create a safe and inclusive environment where everyone can learn, work, and perform without fear of harm or discrimination.
- Equip staff and students with the knowledge and tools to recognise and respond appropriately to safeguarding and Prevent concerns.
- Ensure compliance with all legal and statutory safeguarding responsibilities.

Our Commitment

Safeguarding is a collective responsibility at the ICMT, and all community members share a role in promoting the well-being of others. In the performing arts context, where collaboration and physical interaction are integral to the educational experience, the ICMT prioritises fostering trust, maintaining professional boundaries, and addressing vulnerabilities.

The ICMT is dedicated to:

- Protecting individuals from maltreatment, neglect, exploitation, and harm, both on and off campus.
- Promoting the mental and emotional well-being of its community members.
- Fulfilling its obligations under the Prevent Duty to identify and address risks of radicalisation and extremism, using a safeguarding approach to protect vulnerable individuals.

Legal Framework and Statutory Guidance

This policy is underpinned by key legal and statutory requirements, including:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023): Statutory guidance for schools and colleges in safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.
- The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015: Establishing the Prevent Duty as a statutory responsibility for higher education providers.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018): Guidelines for multi-agency cooperation in safeguarding children.
- The Care Act 2014: Defining safeguarding responsibilities for adults at risk.
- The Equality Act 2010: Ensuring an inclusive environment free from discrimination.

By adhering to these frameworks, the ICMT ensures that its safeguarding and Prevent practices remain robust, transparent, and aligned with best practices in higher education.

2. Definitions

This section defines key terms used throughout the ICMT Safeguarding and Prevent policy. These definitions ensure a shared understanding among staff, students, and stakeholders, particularly within the unique context of performing arts education.

Safeguarding: Safeguarding refers to the actions and measures taken to promote the welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk, protecting them from harm, abuse, neglect, or exploitation. It encompasses ensuring a safe and inclusive environment where individuals feel supported to thrive academically, socially, and artistically.

The ICMT also regards safeguarding in managing unique risks associated with:

- **Professional Relationships:** Ensuring mutual respect and appropriate boundaries between staff and students, particularly in intensive and hierarchical training environments.
- **Physical Contact:** Managing the necessity of physical touch in dance, acting, or movement training with clear guidelines and consent to maintain respect and trust.

Prevent Duty: The Prevent Duty is a statutory responsibility under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, requiring higher education institutions to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism." This involves identifying individuals at risk of radicalisation, including, where appropriate, taking appropriate intervention steps and referring cases to relevant authorities, such as the Local Authority Channel Panel.

At the ICMT, the Prevent Duty is approached through the lens of safeguarding, focusing on supporting vulnerable individuals and promoting a culture of openness and resilience.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is a senior staff member responsible for safeguarding and Prevent-related matters. Their duties include:

- Acting as the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns.
- Managing referrals to external agencies such as the Local Authority or Channel Panel.
- Providing guidance and training to staff and students on safeguarding procedures.

At the ICMT, the DSL ensures safeguarding practices are sensitive to the collaborative and physical nature of performing arts education, including addressing concerns arising in rehearsals, performances, or external placements.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for the ICMT is Onelia Soldini. In their absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is John Edwards.

Radicalisation: Radicalisation is the process through which an individual comes to support terrorism or forms of extremism that lead to terrorism. Vulnerability to radicalisation can stem from factors such as:

- Feelings of isolation or marginalisation.
- Exposure to extremist content, including online material.
- Manipulation by individuals or groups seeking to exploit personal grievances.

Child: A child is defined as anyone under 18, in line with the Children Act 1989.

Adult at Risk: An adult at risk is any individual aged 18 or over who:

- Requires care and support due to mental or physical health needs.
- Is at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, or radicalisation.
- May be unable to protect themselves due to these factors.

Abuse: Abuse refers to acts or omissions that cause harm, exploitation, or neglect. It includes physical, emotional, sexual, and financial abuse, as well as neglect and discriminatory behaviour.

Professional Relationships: Professional relationships describe the interactions between staff and students or peers defined by mutual respect, trust, and adherence to professional boundaries. In performing arts education, this includes:

- Maintaining objectivity and fairness in assessments and feedback.
- Ensuring that authority is exercised responsibly in training or mentoring contexts.
- Recognising and managing potential conflicts of interest or favouritism.

Physical Contact in Training: Physical contact is often integral to performing arts training, particularly in disciplines such as acting, dance, or physical theatre. However, all physical contact must:

- Be clearly explained and consented to by the student.
- Be appropriate to the context of the training or performance.
- Respect personal boundaries and cultural sensitivities.

The ICMT has clear guidelines to ensure safe and respectful physical contact.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding is a collective responsibility at the International College of Musical Theatre (ICMT). This section outlines the specific roles and duties of individuals and groups within the ICMT community to ensure safeguarding and that the Prevent Duty are effectively implemented, particularly within the unique context of performing arts education.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is a senior staff member responsible for safeguarding and child protection across the ICMT. The DSL plays a critical role in ensuring that safeguarding practices are robust, transparent, and tailored to the context of the ICMT.

Key Duties:

1. Receiving and Managing Concerns:

- Act as the first point of contact for safeguarding and child protection concerns.
- Ensure all concerns are appropriately recorded, assessed, and escalated, including referrals to external agencies such as the Local Authority, Channel Panel, or police.

2. Policy and Procedure Management:

- Oversee the development, implementation, and review of safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure they remain up-to-date and effective.
- Ensure procedures account for the unique risks associated with performing arts, such as physical contact and intense working relationships.

3. Training and Awareness:

- Provide safeguarding and Prevent training for staff and students tailored to ICMT's educational context.
- Act as a source of advice and support for staff regarding safeguarding concerns.

4. Monitoring and Compliance:

- Maintain accurate records of all safeguarding concerns and outcomes.
- Ensure compliance with statutory safeguarding and Prevent obligations, including reporting requirements.

Prevent Lead

The Prevent Lead oversees the ICMT's compliance with the Prevent Duty, working closely with the DSL to manage cases involving radicalisation or extremism.

Key Duties:

1. Risk Assessment and Management:

- Identify and assess risks of radicalisation within the ICMT community.
- Lead on Prevent-related referrals to external agencies such as the Channel Panel or police.

2. Training and Education:

- Ensure Prevent awareness training is provided to all staff and students, highlighting indicators of radicalisation and steps to address concerns.

3. Policy Integration:

- Work with the DSL to fully integrate Prevent considerations into ICMT's safeguarding policies and practices.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff members, including tutors, administrative staff, and support personnel, have a duty to safeguard students' welfare and act promptly on concerns. This responsibility is particularly significant in the performing arts training environment, where close working relationships and physical interaction are common.

Key Responsibilities:

1. Recognising and Reporting:

- Be alert to signs of abuse, neglect, or radicalisation and report concerns to the DSL without delay.
- Follow ICMT's safeguarding and Prevent-reporting procedures.

2. Maintaining Professional Relationships:

- Uphold clear boundaries in all student interactions, particularly in physically or emotionally demanding activities such as rehearsals or performances.

3. Participating in Training:

- Complete all safeguarding and Prevent training as required, ensuring an understanding of ICMT's policies and practices.

Student Responsibilities

Students play an active role in maintaining a safe and inclusive environment for themselves and their peers.

Key Responsibilities:

1. Awareness and Reporting:

- Be aware of ICMT's safeguarding and Prevent policies and report any concerns about themselves or others to a member of staff or the DSL.

2. Respect and Inclusion:

- Foster a supportive and respectful environment during training, performances, and social interactions.

3. Adherence to Guidelines:

- Follow guidelines regarding physical contact, personal boundaries, and appropriate behaviour in collaborative and creative settings.

Visitor Responsibilities

Visitors, including contractors, guest lecturers, and industry professionals, must comply with ICMT's safeguarding policies while on campus or engaging in ICMT activities.

Key Responsibilities:

1. Compliance:

- Adhere to safeguarding and Prevent guidelines provided by ICMT.

2. Reporting:

- Report any safeguarding concerns to the DSL or ICMT staff immediately.

Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team (SMT) oversees safeguarding and Prevent practices at the ICMT, ensuring that policies are effectively implemented and resourced.

Key Responsibilities:

1. Leadership and Oversight:

- Ensure safeguarding and Prevent remain central to ICMT's mission and values.
- Allocate adequate resources for safeguarding training, staffing, and policy development.

2. Policy Review:

- Approve and regularly review safeguarding and Prevent policies to ensure alignment with statutory requirements and best practices.

3. Culture of Safety:

- Promote a culture of openness, trust, and accountability where safeguarding concerns can be raised without fear.

4. Recognising and Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility at the ICMT. It requires vigilance, understanding potential risks, and a clear process for identifying and addressing concerns. This section provides guidance on recognising safeguarding concerns, the specific challenges within performing arts education, and the appropriate reporting and responding steps.

Identifying Safeguarding Concerns

Safeguarding concerns may arise from observable signs, individual disclosures, or behaviours that suggest a person is at risk. It is crucial to remain alert to a broad range of potential issues, including abuse, neglect, and radicalisation.

General Indicators of Safeguarding Concerns:

- **Physical Abuse:** Unexplained injuries, repeated injuries, or reluctance to explain them.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Low self-esteem, withdrawal from social activities, or excessive fearfulness.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Inappropriate knowledge of sexual matters, sudden changes in behaviour, or reluctance to participate in activities.
- **Neglect:** Poor hygiene, malnourishment, or consistently unmet medical or personal needs.
- **Radicalisation:** Expressions of extremist views, changes in behaviour or appearance, or isolation from usual social groups.

Additional Factors Relevant to Adults at Risk:

- Difficulty managing daily tasks independently.
- Signs of financial exploitation or coercion.
- Deterioration in mental health or cognitive functioning.

Specific Challenges in Performing Arts Education

The performing arts environment presents unique dynamics that can heighten vulnerabilities or complicate safeguarding, including:

1. Emotional Vulnerability:

- Students may explore sensitive acting, voice, or movement themes that evoke strong personal emotions.
- The competitive nature of performing arts can impact self-esteem and mental health.

2. Close Professional Relationships:

- The collaborative and hierarchical nature of rehearsals and training can blur boundaries if not carefully managed.
- Physical contact may be necessary in dance, choreography, or physical theatre, requiring clear consent and communication.

3. Industry Exposure:

- Students often work with external professionals or in unfamiliar environments, increasing risks such as exploitation or inappropriate behaviour.

Our safeguarding approach accounts for these challenges by embedding professional guidelines for physical interaction, clear boundaries in teacher-student relationships, and mechanisms to support emotional well-being.

Steps in the Reporting Process

When a safeguarding concern arises, it is essential to act promptly and in accordance with ICMT's procedures. The following steps outline the process for reporting and responding to concerns.

1. Immediate Action:

- If there is a risk of immediate harm, contact emergency services (999) and inform the DSL as soon as possible.
- Ensure the individual is safe and supported while maintaining a calm and non-judgmental approach.

2. Reporting the Concern:

- All safeguarding concerns, including Prevent-related issues, must be reported to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** using the **Safeguarding Concern Reporting Form**.
- Include detailed observations, factual information, and any disclosures made. Avoid speculation or personal opinions.

3. Confidentiality:

- Safeguarding concerns must be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Information should only be shared on a "need-to-know" basis, in line with data protection laws, to protect the privacy and dignity of those involved.

4. Record-Keeping:

- All concerns must be documented accurately and promptly using ICMT's secure safeguarding records system.

- Records should include:
 - Date, time, and location of the concern.
 - Details of the individual(s) involved.
 - Actions taken and referrals made.

These records are vital for monitoring, accountability, and compliance with statutory requirements.

5. DSL Action:

- The DSL will assess the concern and determine the appropriate response, which may include:
 - Offering internal support or counselling.
 - Referring the case to external agencies such as the Local Authority Safeguarding Team, Channel Panel, or police, in consultation with the Prevent Lead.
- For Prevent-related concerns, the DSL will consult with the Prevent Lead to decide on further action.

5. Managing Prevent Concerns

The ICMT is committed to fulfilling its statutory obligations under the Prevent Duty, ensuring that its staff and students are safeguarded from the risk of being drawn into terrorism. This section provides an overview of Prevent Duty, indicators of radicalisation in educational settings, and practical steps for identifying, reporting, and escalating Prevent concerns.

Overview of the Prevent Duty

The Prevent Duty, introduced under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, requires higher education providers to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism." The Duty is a safeguarding measure that focuses on identifying vulnerabilities, addressing risks, and supporting individuals who may be susceptible to radicalisation.

At the ICMT, the Prevent Duty is integrated into broader safeguarding practices, recognising the unique vulnerabilities present in a performing arts environment, such as:

- Exploration of complex or controversial themes in performances.
- Close-knit relationships that may expose individuals to undue influence.
- A multicultural and international student body requiring sensitivity to diverse beliefs and experiences.

Indicators of Radicalisation in Educational Settings

Recognising the signs of radicalisation is critical to protecting vulnerable individuals. These indicators may vary depending on personal circumstances but can include:

a) Behavioural Indicators:

- Withdrawal from usual social groups and activities.
- Increasing levels of isolation or secrecy.
- Sudden changes in behaviour, attitudes, or appearance (e.g., adopting extreme political or religious views).

b) Communication Indicators:

- Expressing extremist ideologies, often accompanied by intolerance towards differing views.
- Justifying violence as a means to achieve ideological goals.
- Sharing or promoting extremist content online or in discussions.

c) Educational-Related Indicators (specific to ICMT):

- Using creative projects, performances, or scripts to express or normalise extremist views.
- Refusal to engage in educational discussions about diversity, equality, and inclusion.
- Targeting peers to recruit or influence.

It is important to remember that these indicators alone do not confirm radicalisation but may signal a need for further assessment or support.

Escalation Process for Prevent Concerns

All Prevent concerns at the ICMT must follow a clear escalation process to ensure they are managed effectively and comply with statutory guidance.

a) Step 1: Immediate Action

If there is a risk of immediate harm to the individual or others:

- Contact emergency services (999) without delay.
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) when it is safe.

b) Step 2: Reporting the Concern

For non-urgent concerns:

- Complete the Safeguarding/Prevent Concern Reporting Form detailing the nature of the concern. Note: Staff and students are not required to make a judgement on whether a concern is Prevent-related, as this determination will be made by the DSL and Prevent Lead.
- Submit the form directly to the DSL, marking it as a Prevent-related issue.

c) Step 3: Initial Assessment by the DSL

The DSL will:

- Review the concern and gather additional information, if necessary.
- Consult with the Prevent Lead to assess the level of risk and determine the appropriate response.
- If the concern involves a safeguarding element, integrate safeguarding measures alongside Prevent actions.

d) Step 4: External Referral

If the concern meets the threshold for external intervention, the DSL will:

- Contact the Local Authority's Prevent Team or the Channel Panel, providing relevant details from the Prevent Concern Reporting Form.
- Maintain a record of all communications and outcomes for monitoring and compliance.

e) Step 5: Feedback and Monitoring

- The DSL will ensure feedback is provided to the reporting individual, maintaining confidentiality where required.
- Cases will be monitored for progress, with follow-up actions taken as necessary to support the individual and mitigate ongoing risks.

More information can be found in the Prevent Duty Policy.

6. Training and Awareness

The ICMT is committed to ensuring all staff and students understand safeguarding and Prevent responsibilities.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will ensure that staff with specific safeguarding responsibilities, including the Prevent Lead and deputies, receive detailed safeguarding and Prevent training appropriate to their roles. All staff and students will receive information about their responsibilities and reporting procedures, including how to respond to disclosures of abuse or other protection concerns.

Mandatory safeguarding and Prevent awareness training will be provided to all staff during induction, with periodic refreshers to ensure ongoing compliance with current legislation and professional guidance.

Training content will reflect the unique needs of the ICMT's performing arts environment, such as maintaining professional relationships and addressing vulnerabilities in collaborative settings.

The DSL and the Senior Management Team will ensure that this policy and training programmes are updated in line with legislation and best practice changes and that any updates are communicated promptly to all relevant parties.

7. Code of Conduct

The International College of Musical Theatre (ICMT) is committed to fostering a safe, inclusive, and professional environment for all members of its community. This Code of Conduct establishes clear behavioural expectations for staff, students, and visitors, ensuring a respectful and supportive atmosphere in all teaching, learning, and performance contexts.

Behavioural Expectations

For Staff:

- Demonstrate professionalism, respect, and fairness in all interactions with students, colleagues, and visitors.
- Uphold safeguarding principles, ensuring the welfare of students and addressing concerns promptly.
- Adhere to ICMT policies on professional relationships, physical contact, and consent.
- Avoid favouritism, personal relationships, or behaviour that could undermine trust or objectivity.

For Students:

- Treat peers, staff, and visitors respectfully and courteously, fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment.
- Refrain from behaviours that could cause harm, including bullying, harassment, or discrimination.
- Follow ICMT guidelines on appropriate conduct during rehearsals, performances, and social events.
- Respect personal boundaries and seek consent in activities requiring physical interaction.

For Visitors:

- Comply with ICMT policies while on campus or participating in ICMT activities.
- Act in a manner that reflects the ICMT's values of safety, respect, and professionalism.

Maintaining Professional Boundaries

The performing arts environment often requires close collaboration, physical interaction, and emotional vulnerability. Staff and students must maintain professional boundaries to ensure trust, respect, and safety in all activities.

Guidelines for Professional Boundaries:

1) Physical Contact:

- Physical contact may be necessary for dance, acting, or choreography instruction but must always be explained, consensual, and appropriate to the learning or performance context.
- Avoid unnecessary or prolonged physical contact.

2) Feedback and Critique:

- Provide constructive feedback that focuses on skill development and avoids personal criticism.
- Deliver feedback in a supportive and private manner when addressing sensitive issues.

3) Emotional Support:

- Recognise the emotional demands of performing arts training and offer appropriate support while maintaining professional boundaries.
- Refer students to ICMT's well-being services for ongoing or complex issues.

4) Social Interactions:

- Avoid situations where personal relationships could compromise professional objectivity, such as socialising outside ICMT settings in ways that may create conflicts of interest.

8. Safer Recruitment

The ICMT is committed to safer recruitment practices to ensure the safety and well-being of all students, staff, and visitors. All recruitment processes include clear safeguarding responsibilities in job descriptions, thorough application screening, and interviews that assess candidates' commitment to safeguarding.

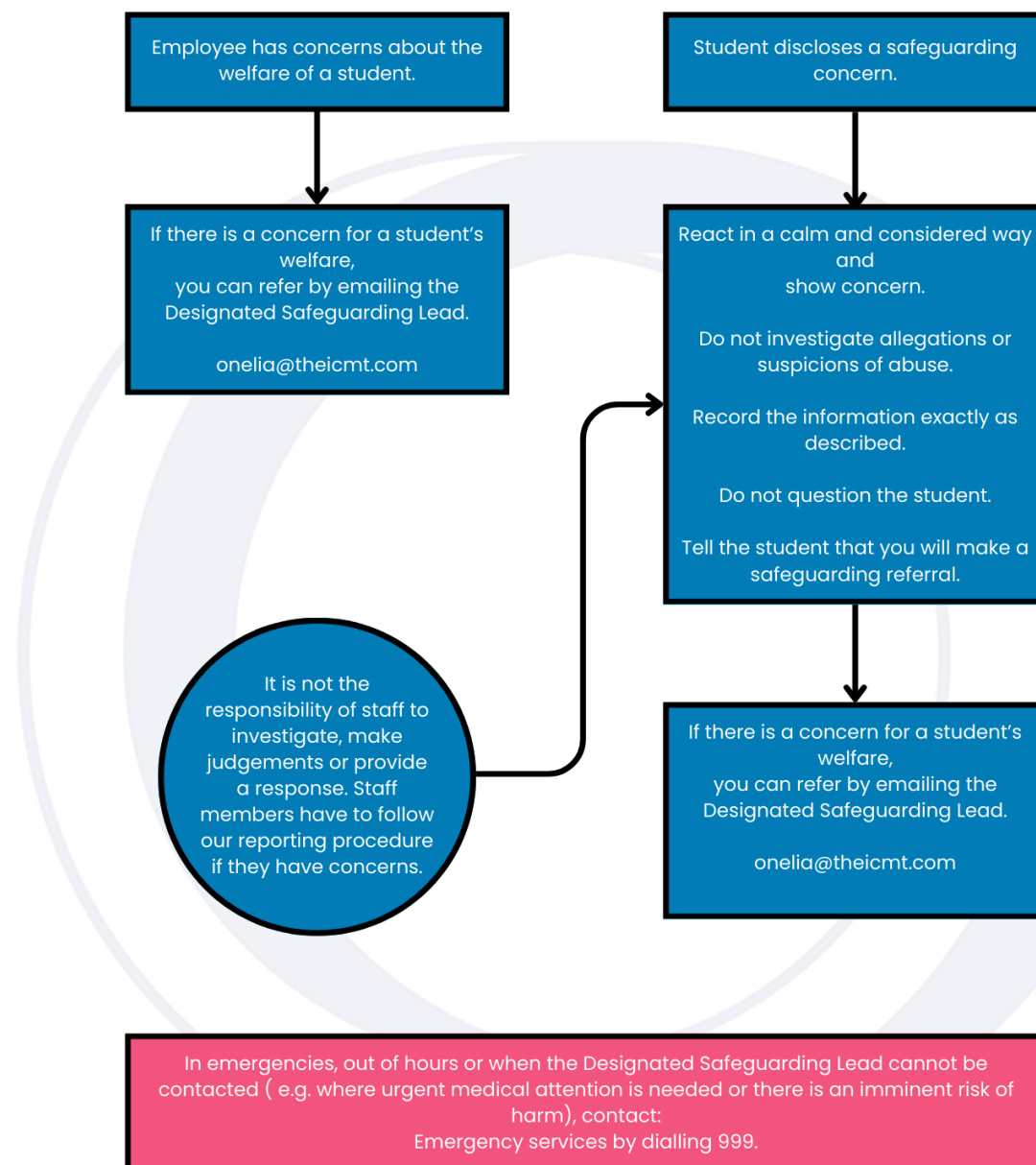
Staff working directly with students must undergo enhanced DBS checks and provide references addressing their suitability for such roles. Safeguarding awareness is embedded in the induction process through mandatory training on ICMT's safeguarding policies, reporting procedures, and maintaining professional boundaries. Ongoing safeguarding training ensures staff remain informed of legal updates, best practices, and ICMT-specific guidelines, fostering a safe and professional environment.

9. Review

The ICMT Safeguarding and Prevent Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it meets current legal requirements and best practices. The Senior Management Team, led by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), will oversee the review process. The ICMT will seek input from external safeguarding experts, Prevent coordinators, and feedback from staff and students to ensure the policy remains effective and relevant. This regular review reflects ICMT's commitment to maintaining a safe and inclusive environment.

10. Appendices

Appendix A: Reporting Flowchart for Safeguarding and Prevent Concerns



Concerns relating to staff members

If the concern relates to a staff member, report directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Prevent Lead. The concern will be assessed in consultation with senior leadership, and appropriate steps will be taken in line with the ICMT's HR and safeguarding policies.

Appendix B: Key Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Onelia Soldini onelia@theicmt.com
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	John Edwards john@theicmt.com
Prevent Lead	Gary Wood gary@theicmt.com
Local Safeguarding Agency:	Hackney Children and Families Services Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) mash@hackney.gov.uk 020 8356 5500 https://hackney.gov.uk/child-protection
Hackney Prevent Contacts:	Tracey Thomas tracey.thomas@hackney.gov.uk James Walsh James.A.L.Walsh@met.police.uk
Emergency Services:	Call 999

Appendix C: Example Safeguarding Scenarios

Scenario 1: Physical Contact in Training

A student expresses discomfort with physical adjustments made during a choreography session. The tutor ensures future adjustments are explained in advance, seeks explicit consent, and reports the concern to the DSL for monitoring.

Scenario 2: Radicalisation in Peer Discussions

Students begin expressing intolerant views during group discussions and isolate themselves from peers. A classmate reports this to a tutor, who records the behaviour and submits a Prevent Concern to the DSL.

Scenario 3: Bullying in a Group Project

A student reports feeling excluded and mocked during rehearsals. The DSL intervenes, arranging mediation and ongoing support for the affected student while addressing the behaviour with the group.

Scenario 4: Emotional Vulnerability During Performances

A student becomes visibly upset during a performance exploring sensitive themes. The tutor provides immediate support, informing the DSL for follow-up.