



Safeguarding Policy

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1. Our commitment

Circus Brighton is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child and young person who takes part in our workshops, parties, school sessions and public events. Every child who comes into contact with us has the right to be safe, and to be treated with kindness, patience and respect. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility at Circus Brighton, not an afterthought.

2. Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to Lily, and to anyone else who works with Circus Brighton in any capacity where they may come into contact with children, including freelance performers, instructors and helpers engaged for parties, workshops or events.

3. Legal framework

This policy has been written with reference to the Children Act 1989 and 2004, and the statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2026), which sets out how organisations in England should keep children safe. The principle underpinning all of it is that the welfare of the child is paramount. Where a concern needs to go further than Circus Brighton itself, we follow the procedures set out by Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership (BHSCP), our local safeguarding partnership.

4. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead

Lily, the owner and main practitioner of Circus Brighton, is our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Any concern about a child's welfare, whether it's raised by a parent, a guardian, another member of staff, or a child themselves, should be brought to Lily in the first instance, as soon as possible.

5. Recruitment and vetting

All Circus Brighton staff hold a current, standard DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check. These are renewed regularly to keep them up to date. We are open about the fact that our checks are standard rather than enhanced; this reflects how DBS checks are administered through the umbrella company our freelance performers work under, and we keep this under review.

6. Our code of conduct

Everyone working with children at Circus Brighton is expected to:

- Treat every child with respect, patience and dignity, regardless of their age, ability or background.
- Ensure a parent or guardian is present throughout party bookings.

- Never be alone with a child in an unsupervised or isolated setting. Staff do work directly with children on a one-to-one basis during sessions, for coaching and skill-building, but this always takes place within sight of a parent, guardian or other responsible adult, never behind closed doors or out of view.
- Listen to and take seriously anything a child says that raises concern, without promising to keep it secret.
- Use only the physical contact that is necessary and appropriate for teaching a circus skill safely (for example, spotting or steadying), and nothing beyond that.
- Model and encourage inclusive, non-judgemental behaviour towards children of all abilities, including neurodivergent and disabled children, in line with our wider “circus for all” ethos.

■ 7. Recognising abuse and neglect

Staff are expected to stay alert to the signs that a child may be at risk, which can include (but are not limited to):

- **Physical abuse** — unexplained injuries, or injuries that don't match the explanation given.
- **Emotional abuse** — a child who seems excessively withdrawn, anxious, or afraid of a particular adult.
- **Sexual abuse** — inappropriate knowledge or behaviour for a child's age, or a child describing contact that is not appropriate.
- **Neglect** — a child who consistently arrives hungry, in unsuitable clothing, or without adequate care.

No member of Circus Brighton staff is expected to diagnose abuse. Our responsibility is to notice, to listen, and to pass on any concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead promptly.

■ 8. Raising a concern about a child

If you're a parent, guardian, or member of staff and you have any concern about a child's safety or welfare while in our care, please raise it with Lily directly and as soon as you're able to. Every concern will be taken seriously and listened to without judgement.

Where a concern needs to go further than Circus Brighton itself, it will be referred to Brighton & Hove's **Front Door for Families**, the council's central point of contact for child welfare concerns:

Phone: 01273 290400 (Monday–Friday, standard office hours)

Email: FrontDoorForFamilies@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Out of hours: Emergency Duty Service, 01273 335905

In an emergency, or if a child is in immediate danger, always call 999.

■ 9. Allegations against a member of staff

If a concern is about the conduct of a member of Circus Brighton staff, including Lily, it should not be raised with that person directly. Instead, it should go to the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** at Brighton & Hove City Council, whose role is to handle exactly this kind of allegation:

Email: ladoenquiries@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Or via the Front Door for Families: 01273 290400

This route exists so that a concern about anyone in a position of responsibility, including the person who would normally handle safeguarding concerns, can still be raised and taken seriously.

■ 10. Whistleblowing

Anyone working with Circus Brighton, paid or freelance, has the right to raise a safeguarding concern, including about how the organisation itself operates, without fear that doing so will affect their work with us. If someone isn't comfortable raising something with Lily, they can contact the LADO or Front Door for Families (details above) directly.

■ 11. Confidentiality and record-keeping

Information shared with us about a child's welfare is treated as confidential and shared only with those who need to know, such as the relevant safeguarding authority. We do not discuss a family's circumstances with other parents, staff, or on social media. Any safeguarding records we hold are stored securely and kept only for as long as necessary, in line with UK data protection law.

■ 12. Photography and social media

We will only use photographs or video of a child for our website, marketing or social media with the prior consent of a parent or guardian, given at the time of booking or on the day.

■ 13. Equality and inclusion

Circus Brighton exists to make circus accessible to everyone, including neurodivergent and differently-abled children and adults. Safeguarding applies equally to every child in our care, and we make reasonable adjustments to how we communicate about safety and consent so that every child, whatever their needs, is genuinely included and kept safe.

■ 14. Review

This policy is reviewed annually to make sure it still reflects how we work. It applies to Circus Brighton in its current form, and will continue to apply once Circus Brighton completes its conversion to a Community Interest Company (CIC).

Last reviewed: September 2026 **Next review due:** September 2027