



## **CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY**

Status:	Council Approved
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Target Audience:	Internal/STAT student and teaching members History: Policy review

## Introduction

The Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique (STAT) recognises that it has a responsibility to ensure that a safe environment is provided for all children and vulnerable adults taking lessons in the Alexander Technique from STAT members, either individually or in a group setting.

STAT will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child or vulnerable adult.

A copy of this policy will be distributed to all STAT members and employees and it is a condition of membership of, or employment by, STAT that all teachers or employees of STAT confirm acceptance of, and adherence to, the Policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the STAT 'Whistle-blowing Policy' and the STAT policy on photography and videoing.

For the purposes of this policy

- Abuse** is defined as improper behaviour towards, or mistreatment of, a child or vulnerable adult by a STAT teaching member or member of staff. This can include verbal, physical, psychological and sexual mistreatment, bullying, neglect or exploitation (including financial abuse) in such a way that it constitutes a violation of the individual's human and civil rights. Abuse may also be an act of neglect or an omission to act as a result of failure to undertake action or appropriate care tasks.
- Children** are defined as young people under the age of 18.
- Vulnerable Adults** are defined as people over the age of 18 who are or may be in need of community care services because of age, illness, physical or learning disability, or those who are unable to take care of or protect themselves against harm or exploitation (including those for whom English is second language).
- Responsible adults** are defined as people over the age of 18 who may or may not be parents and who assume responsibility for children or vulnerable adults during a lesson of the Alexander Technique.

## Recruitment of staff

- All potential office staff should complete an application form that includes a requirement for self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent will be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Two references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity must be obtained including passport or driving license with photo.

## Membership of STAT

All teaching members of STAT must have a current enhanced Disclosure and Barring

Service (DBS) check, which should then be renewed. The type of enhanced check depends on whether the teaching practice includes teaching children and/or vulnerable adults. The office will contact the member at the point of joining for new members with full information on the appropriate checks and renewal procedures. Members will be sent the application form to complete.

'Portable' enhanced checks issued within the last two years will be accepted. Where portable checks do not record a check against the DBS Vulnerable Adults' barred lists, and/or the DBS Children's barred list, the members will be required to confirm in writing that they do not work with the respective group - vulnerable adults or children. Alternatively, they will be required to obtain a full new enhanced check that includes the relevant barred list(s).

### **Disclosure of previous convictions**

The Data Protection Officer will bring disclosures of previous criminal convictions to the attention of the Chair. The Chair will assess the situation and will contact the person who has returned a disclosure of criminal conviction or if is deemed appropriate will confer with the Professional Complaints Committee Co-ordinators to determine the best course of action to follow.

### **Third year student members**

Students in their third year of study may only teach when supervised by teachers who hold a current enhanced DBS check.

### **Good Practice Guidelines**

In any situation and including working with children and vulnerable adults all teachers are expected to adhere to the **Code of Professional Conduct and Competence** and to abide by the **Guidance Notes on Best Practice**, and where appropriate, to form a contractual relationship between the teacher and the Responsible Adult.

In addition it is recommended that when working with children or vulnerable adults, teachers:

- Work in an open way and avoid unobserved situations
- Invite the parent / responsible adult to stay in the room for the duration of the lesson
- Demonstrate the same level of respect that would extend to any pupil
- Respect the wishes of the child or vulnerable adult wherever possible
- Secure consent from the responsible adult in writing to act in *loco parentis* should the need arise e.g. administering first-aid
- Secure consent in writing should it be anticipated that the teacher may be called upon to do things of a personal nature for the child or vulnerable adult
- Take a history as regards the child or vulnerable adult from the responsible adult as applicable
  
- Follow all STAT guidelines with reference to physical contact and record keeping and confidentiality
- Discuss any concerns arising from a lesson with the responsible adult

## **Medication**

Teachers should not give a child or vulnerable adult medication under any circumstances.

## **Behavioural issues**

Teachers may, if necessary, ask the responsible adult to remove a child or vulnerable adult.

## **Suspected or witnessed abuse**

- If any member or employee of STAT has a suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult has been abused by a teacher, officer or employee of STAT, then the matter should be reported immediately to the STAT Professional Conduct Committee Coordinator via the office who will take the necessary steps to investigate the matter.
- If any member or employee of STAT witnesses abuse of a child or vulnerable adult by a teacher, officer or employee of STAT, then the matter should be reported immediately to the Professional Conduct Committee Co-ordinator via the office. The PCC coordinator will inform the police and other relevant persons / bodies.
- No teacher or member of staff should attempt to investigate a situation where abuse is suspected. The matter must be referred to the PCC co-ordinator who will go through the agreed process as set out in the terms of reference for the PCC.
- If the STAT PCC coordinator is the subject of the suspicion/ allegation then the matter must be referred to the Chair of STAT who will take appropriate action in consultation with the Company Secretary and the non-conflicted PCC coordinator
- Should the Chair or any other officer be the subject of allegations of abuse then the PCC coordinator will discuss a way forward with those Council members who are not subject to an allegation.

## **Internal Enquiries and Suspension**

The STAT PCC coordinator will consult with the Chair as a matter of urgency (or in the absence of the Chair another member of STAT Council) as to the steps to taken with regard to any individual accused of abuse.

Decisions regarding suspension or termination of membership will be taken according to Rule 8.1.5 as set out in the Rules of the Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique.

This policy will be reviewed in February 2016