



Health & Safety Policy

Policy owner: Top Hat Theatre School

Applies to: Students, staff, teachers, volunteers, contractors, parents/carers and visitors

Effective from: September 2026

Review date: September 2027

1. Statement of General Policy

The management of Top Hat Theatre School is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all students, employees, volunteers, parents/carers, visitors and other persons who may be affected by our activities.

Top Hat Theatre School will take all reasonably practicable steps to identify and control health and safety risks arising from its activities and premises.

Our general policy is:

- To provide adequate control of health and safety risks arising from our activities.
- To consult with employees and volunteers on matters affecting their health and safety.
- To provide appropriate information, instruction and training.
- To ensure that employees and volunteers are competent to carry out their responsibilities safely.
- To take reasonable steps to prevent accidents, injuries and work-related ill health.
- To maintain safe and healthy working conditions.
- To provide and maintain safe equipment and facilities.
- To carry out appropriate risk assessments.
- To monitor health and safety arrangements and take action where risks are identified.
- To maintain appropriate records of accidents, incidents, training and inspections.
- To regularly review and update this policy and associated risk assessments.

Top Hat recognises that its activities involve children and young people and that performing arts activities, including dance, acrobatics, drama and musical theatre, may involve specific risks.

Health and safety arrangements will therefore take account of the age, experience, ability and needs of students.

2. Responsibilities

The Principal

The Principal, **Julie McKenna**, has overall responsibility for health and safety at Top Hat Theatre School.

The Principal will ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that:

- appropriate health and safety arrangements are in place;
- suitable risk assessments are undertaken;
- significant risks are addressed;
- staff receive appropriate information and training;
- accidents and incidents are recorded and reviewed;
- suitable first-aid arrangements are provided;
- the premises and equipment are appropriately maintained;
- relevant health and safety policies are reviewed.

Staff and Teachers

All staff and teachers have a responsibility to:

- take reasonable care of their own health and safety;
- take reasonable care of the health and safety of students and others;
- follow Top Hat's health and safety procedures;
- report hazards, accidents and concerns promptly;
- use equipment appropriately;
- follow relevant risk assessments and safe working procedures;
- never knowingly put themselves or others at unnecessary risk.

Students

Students are expected to:

- follow reasonable instructions from teachers and staff;
- use equipment appropriately;
- behave responsibly;
- report hazards, accidents or injuries;
- not deliberately create unsafe situations;
- respect the safety of other students.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- follow reasonable health and safety instructions;
 - inform Top Hat of relevant medical or access needs;
 - ensure that children arrive appropriately prepared for their activities;
 - report relevant changes in a child's health or circumstances;
 - follow Top Hat's procedures during emergencies and evacuations.
-

3. Risk Assessment

Top Hat Theatre School will carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments for activities and areas where significant risks may arise.

Risk assessments will consider:

- the nature of the activity;
- the age and ability of students;
- the number of people involved;
- the premises and available space;
- equipment being used;
- foreseeable hazards;
- emergency arrangements;
- supervision requirements;
- persons requiring additional support.

Risk assessments will be reviewed:

- regularly;
- following an accident or significant incident;
- following a significant change to an activity or premises;
- when new equipment is introduced;
- where a new hazard is identified;
- where existing control measures are no longer considered adequate.

HSE guidance describes risk assessments as working documents which should be reviewed when circumstances change.

Specific risk assessments may include:

- Fire Safety;
- Dance;
- Acro;
- Musical Theatre;
- Drama;
- Singing;
- Trips and visits;
- Performances;
- Manual handling;
- Slips, trips and falls;
- Use of equipment;
- Kitchen/café activities;
- Cleaning and chemicals;
- Lone working;
- Working at height;
- Outdoor activities;
- Specific individual needs.

4. Teaching Facilities

Top Hat will ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that teaching facilities are maintained in a safe and suitable condition.

Facilities should provide:

Flooring

Suitable flooring appropriate to the technique being taught, with a clean and safe surface designed to minimise the risk of injury.

Heating and Ventilation

Adequate heating and ventilation appropriate to the activity and occupancy.

Lighting

Adequate lighting throughout teaching, circulation and working areas.

Changing Facilities

Suitable, secure and safe areas for changing.

Equipment

Appropriate equipment which is maintained in a safe condition and used in accordance with its intended purpose.

Any potential safety hazard must be reported promptly to the Principal or the senior member of staff responsible at the time.

5. Dance, Acro and Physical Activities

Top Hat recognises that dance, acrobatics and other physical activities carry inherent risks of injury.

Teachers must ensure that activities are appropriate to:

- the student's age;
- ability and experience;
- physical development;
- level of training;
- available space;
- equipment;
- appropriate supervision.

Students should undertake suitable warm-up and preparation before strenuous physical activity where appropriate.

Teachers should not knowingly ask students to undertake activities beyond their current level of competence or in circumstances where the activity cannot be conducted safely.

Acrobatic activities must be taught in accordance with appropriate training, supervision and equipment requirements.

Specific Acro and dance risk assessments should be maintained separately.

6. Class Size and Supervision

Top Hat will ensure that classes are of a size appropriate to:

- the level and technique being taught;
- the available studio space;
- the age and ability of the students;
- the activity being undertaken;
- the level of supervision required.

Where appropriate, students within a class should be of compatible age, ability and/or standard.

Teachers are responsible for maintaining appropriate supervision throughout their classes.

Students should not be left unsupervised in studios or other areas where this would create an avoidable safety or safeguarding risk.

7. Safeguarding

Health and safety arrangements operate alongside Top Hat's Safeguarding Policy.

Top Hat recognises that the safety and wellbeing of children and young people includes both physical safety and protection from harm.

Relevant staff will undergo appropriate safeguarding checks and training.

Top Hat will maintain appropriate DBS arrangements in accordance with the requirements applicable to the role.

Any safeguarding concern must be reported in accordance with Top Hat's Safeguarding Policy.

8. First Aid

Top Hat Theatre School will maintain appropriate first-aid arrangements based on the needs of the premises, activities, staff and students.

The first-aid provision will include:

- appropriately stocked first-aid equipment;
- access to trained first-aid personnel;
- suitable arrangements for summoning emergency assistance;
- arrangements for recording first-aid treatment and accidents;
- appropriate cover where trained first aiders are absent.

The main First Aid Box is located in the **office**.

Top Hat will take reasonable steps to ensure that appropriate first-aid provision is available whenever the premises are occupied for teaching or other school activities.

HSE recommends considering visitors and other non-employees as part of first-aid provision, even though the statutory workplace first-aid regulations primarily concern employees.

9. Qualified First Aiders

The following individuals are recorded as qualified first aiders at Top Hat:

- **Julie McKenna**
- **Kelly Hartnett**
- **Emily Read**
- **Evey Donnelly**

Current training certificates and expiry dates should be recorded and monitored.

Top Hat will ensure that appropriate cover is considered for holidays, sickness and other periods when named first aiders may be unavailable.

10. Accidents and First Aid Records

All accidents, injuries and significant incidents occurring during Top Hat activities must be reported to the teacher or senior member of staff and recorded appropriately.

Top Hat maintains an accident/incident log for students and other relevant incidents.

Records should include, where appropriate:

- date and time;
- name of person involved;
- description of incident;
- injury sustained;
- first aid provided;
- action taken;
- witnesses;
- whether parents/carers were informed.

Serious incidents will be assessed to determine whether further investigation or external reporting is required.

Where appropriate, incidents will be reviewed to establish whether an existing risk assessment or control measure needs to be changed.

11. Medical Conditions

Parents/carers should inform Top Hat of relevant medical conditions or health needs which may affect a student's participation or safety.

Examples may include:

- asthma;
- allergies;
- diabetes;
- epilepsy;
- significant physical conditions;
- medication requirements;
- conditions affecting participation in physical activity.

Information will be handled sensitively and shared with relevant staff where necessary to ensure the student's safety.

Parents/carers should inform Top Hat promptly of significant changes to a child's medical circumstances.

12. Emergency Procedures and Fire

Top Hat maintains a separate **Fire Risk Assessment and Fire Safety Policy**.

All staff must familiarise themselves with:

- fire exits;
- fire alarm arrangements;
- evacuation procedures;
- assembly point;
- fire-extinguisher locations;
- their responsibilities during an evacuation.

Students will be evacuated calmly and safely in accordance with the Fire Risk Assessment.

Teachers are responsible for supervising and accounting for the students in their care.

13. Electrical Safety

Electrical equipment will be maintained in a safe condition.

Staff must:

- visually check equipment before use;
- report damaged equipment;
- avoid overloading sockets;
- avoid using damaged cables or plugs;
- use equipment only for its intended purpose;
- ensure equipment is appropriately switched off when not required.

Portable and fixed electrical equipment will be maintained and inspected as appropriate to the equipment and level of risk.

14. Equipment and Props

All equipment used by Top Hat should be appropriate for its intended use and maintained in a safe condition.

This includes:

- dance equipment;
- acrobatic equipment;
- musical equipment;
- theatrical props;
- furniture;
- staging equipment;
- portable electrical equipment.

Damaged or unsafe equipment must be removed from use until it has been assessed and, where appropriate, repaired or replaced.

15. Slips, Trips and Falls

Top Hat will take reasonable measures to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls.

This includes:

- maintaining clear walkways;
- keeping floors clean and dry;
- managing cables safely;
- ensuring storage does not obstruct routes;
- addressing damaged flooring;
- cleaning spills promptly;
- ensuring adequate lighting.

Teachers and staff should report hazards promptly.

16. Manual Handling

Where staff or volunteers are required to move equipment, props, furniture or other items, the task should be assessed appropriately.

Staff should avoid lifting loads beyond their capability.

Where appropriate, staff should:

- use suitable lifting techniques;
 - seek assistance with heavy or awkward items;
 - use suitable equipment for moving heavier objects;
 - avoid unnecessary manual handling.
-

17. Working at Height

Staff must not use chairs, tables or other unsuitable furniture as makeshift steps or platforms.

Appropriate equipment must be used for tasks requiring access at height.

Any activity involving work at height must be appropriately planned and risk assessed.

18. Kitchen and Café

The café/kitchen will be operated in accordance with appropriate health and safety and food-safety procedures.

Controls will include:

- safe use of cooking equipment;
- safe storage of food and supplies;
- safe use of electrical appliances;
- maintaining clean working surfaces;
- managing hot liquids and hot equipment;
- appropriate cleaning;
- safe waste disposal.

Children should not use potentially hazardous kitchen equipment unless specifically authorised, supervised and appropriately risk assessed.

19. Cleaning and Chemicals

Cleaning products and other potentially hazardous substances must be stored safely and used in accordance with manufacturer instructions.

Where required, appropriate COSHH assessments will be maintained.

Cleaning chemicals should not be left accessible to students.

Staff should follow appropriate procedures for spills, exposure and disposal.

20. Noise

Top Hat uses music as an integral part of dance, musical theatre and other classes.

Music should be maintained at a level that allows teachers to communicate effectively with students.

Where activities involve prolonged or unusually high sound levels, the associated risk should be assessed and appropriate controls introduced.

21. Smoking

Smoking is not permitted anywhere inside the Top Hat Theatre School building.

Any external arrangements must be managed so that they do not create additional fire or safety risks.

22. Drugs and Alcohol

Top Hat Theatre School operates a strict policy prohibiting the possession, use or consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs on the premises or during Top Hat activities.

Staff must not attend work or teach while impaired by alcohol or drugs.

Any concern involving a student will be dealt with in accordance with relevant safeguarding and behaviour procedures.

Where appropriate, parents/carers will be informed when concerns involve a student under 18.

23. Contractors and Visiting Teachers

Any contractor or visiting teacher working at Top Hat is expected to comply with relevant health and safety requirements.

Visiting teachers must:

- follow Top Hat procedures;
- report hazards;
- supervise students appropriately;
- use equipment safely;
- understand emergency arrangements.

Where teachers are self-employed or working as contractors, Top Hat will ensure that appropriate insurance and professional requirements are confirmed before they undertake work.

24. Public Liability and Insurance

Top Hat Theatre School maintains appropriate public liability insurance.

Any teacher, contractor or locum engaged by Top Hat must have appropriate insurance arrangements where required.

Top Hat will not knowingly engage a teacher or contractor to undertake work where legally required insurance or qualifications are absent.

Insurance documentation will be retained and reviewed as appropriate.

25. Consultation and Communication

Top Hat will encourage staff and volunteers to raise health and safety concerns.

Staff should feel able to report:

- hazards;
- unsafe practices;
- equipment defects;
- accidents;
- near misses;
- concerns about student safety;
- concerns about working conditions.

Reports should be made to the Principal or senior member of staff.

Where appropriate, staff will be consulted about changes that may affect their health and safety.

26. Training and Competence

Top Hat will provide appropriate information, instruction and training to enable staff and volunteers to carry out their responsibilities safely.

Training may include:

- health and safety induction;
- fire safety;
- first aid;
- safeguarding;
- activity-specific training;
- equipment use;
- emergency procedures.

Training records will be maintained where appropriate.

Health and safety training required as a control measure should be provided appropriately and treated as work-related training. HSE guidance confirms that employers must provide the information, instruction and training necessary to protect workers' health and safety.

27. Monitoring and Review

Top Hat will monitor the effectiveness of its health and safety arrangements.

This may include:

- reviewing accident and incident records;
- reviewing risk assessments;
- checking equipment;
- checking facilities;
- reviewing training;
- monitoring fire-safety arrangements;
- responding to staff concerns;
- reviewing changes to activities or premises.

This policy will be reviewed **at least annually**, and sooner where there are significant changes to the premises, activities, legislation or identified risks.

28. Breaches of this Policy

Failure to follow health and safety procedures may place students, staff and others at risk.

Depending on the circumstances, breaches may result in:

- additional training;
- formal or informal warnings;
- removal from an activity;
- disciplinary action;
- suspension of duties;
- termination of employment or engagement;
- termination of enrolment where appropriate.

Serious breaches will be dealt with appropriately and may be referred to external authorities where required.

29. Related Policies and Risk Assessments

This policy should be read alongside Top Hat Theatre School's:

- Fire Risk Assessment;
 - Safeguarding Policy;
 - Anti-Bullying Policy;
 - Equality, Diversity & Equal Opportunities Policy;
 - Behaviour Policy;
 - First Aid procedures;
 - Accident Reporting procedures;
 - Parent/Carer Code of Conduct;
 - relevant activity-specific risk assessments.
-

30. Policy Statement

Top Hat Theatre School is committed to maintaining a safe, healthy and supportive environment for everyone who attends or works at the school.

We recognise that effective health and safety is a shared responsibility.

Every member of the Top Hat community has a role to play in identifying hazards, following safe procedures and looking after the safety of others.

DREAM. BELIEVE. ACHIEVE.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if circumstances, safeguarding guidance or legislation require it.

Signed: 

Name/Role: Julie McKenna Company Director

Date: 15.9.2026

Next review: September 2027