Social Media Policy (Safeguarding)

1. Aim

- To make all staff and student aware of the issues that can arise when using Social Media.
- Ensure that Staff and Students are updated with precautions that should be taken whilst communicating on behalf of Shockout Arts.

2. Purpose

Shockout staff and students recognise we are now in a heightened position of trust, therefore it is paramount we all uphold this to the highest degree. We wish to ensure that everyone does not put themselves in any way in a position that can be misunderstood. Shockout is absolutely clear that you do not have any communication whatsoever with students on any social networking site such as Instagram, Facebook, Whatsapp, Snapchat, Tiktok, Twitter, or any other form of social media unless it has been directed by the Principal via the @weareshockout, social media channels.

1. Social contact with students

1.1   Staff must not establish or seek to establish any contact with a student, via any channels including social media.

1.1.1   All contact with students through personal contact channels is forbidden. All staff members should only use their Shockout email address to communicate with students and must not communicate with students on a personal email address, social media account or phone. All communication should be kept strictly to academic lessons, tutorials, one to one feedback sessions, SEND provisions, or safeguarding purposes using the formal correct channels of communication adhering to the communication policy.

1.1.2   Shockout recognise that staff members will come into contact with students outside of the studio building. However this should be limited and we expect staff to use their professional judgment in any social situation and to report to the Principal and Designated Safeguarding Leads, if any contact with a student that they are concerned about or could be misinterpreted by students.

2. Social Media

2.1   All references to social media are intended to encompass any form of online communication, including, but not limited to, social media platforms (e.g. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn etc), instant messaging platforms (e.g. WhatsApp/Facebook Messenger etc), dating sites/apps, Online chat forums and online gaming.

2.2 Shockout recognizes that because of the nature of the performing arts industry staff have active social media profiles, all staff members must ensure that no students follow them on their personal social media profiles and that any communication does not negatively impact their work for Shockout. To make it clear, all staff must avoid following/commenting/sharing personal online/social media/contact channels as this may result in students/parents being able to identify a staff members profile and could result in triggering disciplinarily proceedings and obstructing safeguarding regulatory best practice.

2.3 All staff personal social media profiles should be set with the highest level of security and privacy settings, in order to mitigate any potential issues that may arise from students/parents being able to access Shockout staff member's personal profile. Where a staff members profile relates to something other than themselves in person or company, i.e., a home, pet or business, and is therefore an open and easily accessible profile, extra care must be taken to ensure that themselves and Shockout are protected.

2.4 Ideally, Shockout staff should not be easily identifiable through online profiles, however in the performing arts industry this is extremely difficult to achieve, but where they are, staff members should consider whether this may, have a detrimental impact on the reputation Shockout. Any open profiles where staff, are identifiable must be reported to the Principal so that they are able to make a decision on whether the profile breaches this guidance.

2.5 Shockout students must not be encouraged to communicate with any personal social media accounts owned or managed by a staff member.

2.6 Staff members must not request or accept 'friend requests', 'follow', 'like' or 'share' personal messages from students or their parents/carers. It is recognised that an employee may already be acquainted with a parent/carer prior to a student joining Shockout. in these circumstances the staff member should inform the Principal and DSO's of the relationship and evidence when this level of engagement started. All social media contact with a student that has been established previous to the student enrolling at Shockout and

2.7 Proceed to deploy professional boundaries set by the organisation.

2.8 Staff members must use with careful consideration of any potential risks and/or issues that may arise from such contact, communication, engagement with existing or former students on social media once the student is no longer present at Shockout for a period of 3 consecutive years.

3 Online Dating sites

3.1 Shockout recognise that staff members may use online dating platforms and must take extra care to ensure that students and their parents/carers are not

able to access any personal profiles. As these are open profiles, it is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure that all personal content and/or images are in line with the most appropriate code of conduct. If a staff member is contacted by a student or their parent/carer through an online dating profile, they must inform the Principal and DSO's immediately.

Linked Policies
Safeguarding Policy
Communication Policy
Disciplinary Policy