

Child Protection and safeguarding

Guidance for music tutors, leaders and organisations

Safeguarding children - the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm - is everyone's responsibility.

In all our work the welfare of the child/young person is paramount. All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse – and to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare

When working as a music tutor or leader, or providing music opportunities for children and young people you need to make sure that you fully understand your responsibilities and how to apply and work within safe practices.

Whether you are working as an independent freelance tutor, as a volunteer, or for an organisation you should have a written Child Protection / Safeguarding policy. You need to check that you are following it, and what you should do in a range of situations.

When you are working as a freelance professional or volunteer for an organisation you should ask to see their child protection policy and make sure you know who you are reporting to on any issues relating to child protection.

You should also ensure that you keep up to date with safeguarding and child protection through your own continuing professional development.

IMPORTANT: if you are a member of a professional association such as ISM, you may be required to adopt their specific guidance and policies to avoid invalidating your liability or other insurances.

When you are teaching one to one, in groups, or leading workshops and other activities, children and young people are deemed to be **in your care**.

You need to take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and security of all the children in your care.

1. Child protection

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare, and refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes concern that a child is being maltreated through emotional or physical abuse, neglect or sexual abuse or exploitation, bullying, or may be self-harming.

You should:

- take **all** suspicions and/or allegations of abuse or risk to children seriously, respond swiftly and appropriately using your child protection procedures
- support the timely sharing of information, with relevant authorities, when there are concerns about a child's welfare

It is your duty under the Children Act to report any suspicions to the relevant authority.

When being employed by a school, organisation, programme or project make sure you know who the **Designated Safeguarding Person/Officer/Lead** is, and how to contact them. This is the person who has been trained to receive child protection concerns within the organisation and may be for example a head teacher, youth worker, or venue manager. If you have any concerns you should contact that person as soon as possible. If that person is not available, **you should not leave concerns unreported**. Contact the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) team, the police, or the NSPCC

If you believe a child or young person is at risk of significant harm, neglect or injury, report your concerns to the Wiltshire Council Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0300 4560108 (out of hours 0845 60 70 888)

If you are worried about a child, even if you are unsure you can contact NSPCC professional counsellors 24/7 for help, advice and support. Call 0808 800 5000 or email help@nspcc.org.uk

You are advised to keep written notes of any concerns, with dates, times, names, notes of any conversations, and any other relevant information.

2. Creating a safe learning environment and avoiding accidents

Make sure your teaching and workshop activity and equipment used is covered by insurance. (Public Liability Insurance)

Carry out a risk assessment on all planned teaching, use of instruments, equipment, activities, and venues. Set out what the risks are and how they will be mitigated or eradicated – and who is responsible.

Carry out regular checks on instruments and equipment used.

Make sure you have been given relevant, appropriate information from parents, carers, and support staff regarding children and young people's specific medical, dietary, allergy, educational, or care needs.

Ensure children are not allowed to roam unattended and that they are collected by a responsible adult.

Have access to a phone or other way of summoning assistance during lessons / sessions.

Consider how you can create a physical learning environment that enables each learner to achieve their maximum potential and minimises any risks to them and their peers.

Consider how the layout of a room can enable each learner to achieve their maximum potential and minimises any risks to them and their peers. This includes the positioning of things such as stands, cables and equipment as well as disabled access. It is good practice, where possible, to teach/lead without positioning yourself between the young people and the exit of the room you are in. In any room, you should ensure that the exit for children is unobstructed either by people or by objects and particularly by yourself. The same also applies to emergency exits.

In the unfortunate situation of sessions/lessons being held in a room that other people cannot see into, tutors should:

- leave the door open when possible and practical to do so

- positively invite the music teacher/head teacher/school secretary/parent/carer/ project manager to visit at any time
- establish a "knock and walk in" rule rather than having pupils waiting outside

If you consider the room / venue you are teaching in to be unacceptable for children and young people you should register your concern in writing with the head teacher or head of centre / contractor and suggest acceptable changes as soon as possible.

3. Language, physical contact, communication, and social media

Physical Contact: Our advice is **do not make any physical contact with a pupil unless there is an extremely good teaching reason to do so.**

Wherever possible 'model' good practice (by doing it yourself) rather than physically manipulating a pupil's posture or playing technique. We advise tutors to encourage and congratulate pupils without physical contact and never do things such as tapping out the pulse of the music on any part of the pupil's body.

If it is considered **essential** to touch a pupil, for instance, to change a pupil's bow hold, teachers should:

- ask the pupils whether she/he minds the physical contact;
- announce their intention very clearly and involve the other pupils so they can see exactly what is happening e.g. "I want you all to watch how I am moving John's wrist";

Don't repeatedly use the same pupil as an example. Ask pupils to work in pairs or groups if possible.

When teaching breathing exercises, there is **no need to touch the pupil**. We advise all tutors NOT to ask pupils to touch them, and NOT to ask them to touch each other.

Any physical contact should be limited to and relevant to the exercise being demonstrated. Touching a pupil on any part of their body other than required for teaching is not justifiable and may be considered as grooming or assault.

Always explain what the exercise is and the way you are doing it.

Communication with Pupils and E-Safety including Social media

- Always act with compassion and impartiality
- Be sensitive in expressing criticism of pupils and avoid negative comments of any nature.
- Build positive relationships with praise and encouragement and do nothing to exploit or undermine the teacher/pupil relationship.
- Seek to boost your pupils' self-esteem and develop their confidence as musicians.
- Involve your pupils in their own learning so they can become autonomous learners.
- Respect the confidentiality of information relating to pupils unless its disclosure is either required by law or considered to be in the best interests of the pupil.

Communication between pupils and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites, social media and blogs.

Communications between you and young people you are working with should always be sent by you at a reasonable time of day. It is not acceptable to send emails to young people late at night for example. We suggest that you make communication methods and rules part of making an agreement with a school, organisation or parent.

We advise you to use an email address that is specific to your music teaching / leading work and separate to any other address you may use – in that way you can clearly distinguish between your working and personal correspondence. You should not connect with young people via social media such as facebook or Instagram.

- **Do not** keep pupils' mobile phone numbers on your phone or communicate directly with pupils unless explicitly agreed with parents. Any correspondence should remain clear, factual and professional should not include inappropriate language, symbols, abbreviations or emoticons.
- **Do not** give your personal contact details to pupils including personal e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers or your home address, unless the need to do so is agreed in writing (or emails) with the school / centre parents/carers.
- **Do not** include / tag/ connect with pupils on your social networking sites or visiting their social networking sites
- **Do not** take video or photos of pupils unless there is a specific reason AND school and parents have given written permission. Any video or photos must be deleted as soon as the purpose for which they were taken is complete.
- **Do not** share any personal information with a child or young person.

Ensure that all communication that does take place is transparent and open to scrutiny. Avoid any possible misinterpretation of motives and behaviour which could be construed as grooming.

If you don't do this, you could find that E-mail or text communications between an adult and a child or young person lead to concerns and possible investigation. This also includes communications through internet based web sites.

You should be aware of the importance of considering **any material** you post online and on social media. Publishing unsuitable material anywhere may affect your professional status. Be careful about specific and detailed private opinions about any individual, employer, school or organisation centres or agencies - especially any that may be considered threatening, hurtful or defamatory.

4. Your safeguarding checklist

You should consider safeguarding when planning your work. Think about the context and settings you will be working in, and what issues might arise. How would you deal with different situations – what would you do, who would you need to contact?

You could use this safeguarding checklist / action plan template as a tool:

SAFEGUARDING CHECKLIST / ACTION PLAN

Area for consideration: The setting / context in which you're working	What issues could arise in relation to one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child protection• Safe environment• Language, contact, communication• Record keeping, sharing information	How will you do deal with this? What will you do?	Who do you need to communicate with about this? ... and when?