

# **Child Safeguarding Policy**

Gloucestershire Academy of Music

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Designated Safeguarding Officers:

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# 1 Child Safeguarding Policy

## 1.1 Introduction

Everyone who participates in Gloucestershire Academy of Music (GAM) is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. GAM has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, tutors and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

The GAM is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone attending the Academy accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of Gloucestershire Academy of Music and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

**A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children's Act 1989)**

## 1.2 Policy statement

Gloucestershire Academy of Music is committed to the following statements:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, race, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in music in a fun and safe environment
- all reasonable steps should be taken to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- all staff recruitment will follow 'safer recruitment' guidelines, ensuring that employees who work with children will be suitable for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and child protection procedures
- working in partnership with parents and children is essential for the protection of children

- safeguarding is everyone's business and that there is an expectation that staff will pass on to the appropriate manager and local authority any welfare concerns that may arise in the course of their duties

### **1.3 Monitor and review the policy and procedures**

The implementation of procedures will be regularly monitored and reviewed. The child protection officers should regularly report progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements gaps and areas where changes are required to the management committee.

The policy will be reviewed every year or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation.

## **2 Promoting Good Practice**

### **2.1 Introduction**

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities in music education everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of employees or participants at Gloucestershire Academy of Music to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child, as explained in section 4.

This section will help you identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.

### **2.2 Good Practice**

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and action:

- always work in an open environment where possible (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- make the experience of music education fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity
- always put the welfare of the young person first

- maintain a safe and appropriate distance from students (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child)
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given
- Involve parents/carers wherever possible
- gain written parental consent for any travel arrangements
- be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people
- always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- recognise the developmental needs and capacity of the young person and do not risk sacrificing welfare in a desire for Gloucestershire Academy of Music or personal achievements. This means avoiding excessive practising or competition and not pushing students against their will
- secure written parental consent for Gloucestershire Academy of Music to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given
- carry out a risk assessment for every off-site event and location
- keep accurate attendance registers for all GAM activities
- adult learners attending courses or ensembles alongside children will be supervised by the music leader at all times and will be briefed on our safeguarding practice
- any adult learner who is involved in coaching and supporting children in an unsupervised capacity is required to undergo our safer recruitment and DBS checks (see below)
- ensure that during residential holiday courses there are always male and female members of staff available
- ensure that during residential holiday courses, adults should not enter a young person's room or invite young people to their rooms

## 2.3 Poor Practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel:

- unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others
- taking young people alone in a car on journeys, however short
- taking young people to your home where they will be alone with you
- sharing a room with a young person
- engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- organising activities for children on GAM courses which involve physical risk without a) full prior permission of the parents and b) having carried out a site visit and prepared a risk assessment
- allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching of any form
- allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun
- using terms of endearment to a young person
- reducing a young person to tears as a form of control
- allowing allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- doing things of a personal nature that the young person can do for themselves

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situation e.g. transporting a young person in your car, this should only be carried out with the **full understanding and consent of the parent/carer** and the young person involved.

If during your care you accidentally hurt a young person, the young person seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to another colleague and make a written note of it. Parents should also be informed of the incident.

## 3 Defining Child Abuse

### 3.1 Introduction

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

The main types of abuse are: **physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, online abuse, child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation (FGM), bullying and cyberbullying, child trafficking, radicalisation and grooming**. The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person.

Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood

Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

### 3.2 Types of Abuse (for a detailed list, see GAM Safeguarding Policy, full version)

### 3.3 Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment

Some people use music events with young people as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people. All teachers must be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to Gloucestershire Academy of Music's Designated Safeguarding Officer.

All parents and students should be made aware when teachers use video equipment as a coaching aid.

## 4 Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

### 4.1 Introduction

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Gloucestershire Academy of Music in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns

through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person. This applies **EITHER** to allegations/suspicions of abuse occurring within Gloucestershire Academy of Music **OR** to allegations/suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

4.2 **Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse** (for details, see GAM Safeguarding Policy Full Version)

4.3 **Recording Information** (for details, see GAM Safeguarding Policy Full Version)

#### 4.4 Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations **MUST** be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

Gloucestershire Academy of Music expects its members and staff to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child **immediately** with the person in charge and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

If the nominated Gloucestershire Academy of Music designated safeguarding officers are not available, you should take responsibility and seek advice from the NSPCC helpline, the duty officer at your local social services department or the police. Telephone numbers can be found at the end of this document or online.

Where there is a complaint against an employee or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation.

- **Criminal** in which case the police are immediately involved
- **Child protection** in which case the social services (and possibly) the police will be involved
- **Disciplinary or misconduct** in which case, Gloucestershire Academy of Music will be involved

As mentioned previously in this document, Gloucestershire Academy of Music is not expert in child protection and it is not our responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for child protection.

Social services have a legal responsibility under The Children Act 1989 to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the child and family (where appropriate), gathering information from other people who know the child and making inquiries jointly with the police.

**NB: If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern**

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by an employee or a volunteer should be reported to the designated safeguarding officers at Gloucestershire Academy of Music. They will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- the matter will be referred to Gloucestershire County Council's children's helpdesk on 01452 426565 or to Gloucestershire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0800 5420202
- the parent/carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from MASH
- the chair person of your organisation should be notified to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings
- if a designated welfare officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the other DWO or to a GAM board member who will refer the matter to Gloucestershire MASH.

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made sometime after the event. Where such allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to social services. This is because other children receiving music education or outside it may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children.

#### **4.5 Concerns outside the immediate environment of Gloucestershire Academy of Music (e.g. a parent or carer)**

- Report your concerns to a designated safeguarding officer
- If the welfare officer is not available, the person being told or discovering the abuse should contact Gloucestershire MASH (see above) immediately
- Social Services and the DSO will decide how to inform the parents/carers
- The DSO should also report the incident to the Gloucestershire Academy of Music's Board who should ascertain whether or not the person/s involved in the incident plays a role in the organisation and act accordingly
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis

#### **4.6 Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The designated welfare officer
- The parents of the child

- The person making the allegation
- Social Services/police
- Gloucestershire Academy of Music Chair
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

#### **4.7 Internal Inquiries and Suspension**

- Gloucestershire Academy of Music's DSO will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the Gloucestershire Academy of Music's Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases the Gloucestershire Academy of Music Disciplinary Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

## **5 Recruiting and Selecting Personnel with Children**

### **5.1 Introduction**

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers, both full and part time. To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children the following steps are taken when recruiting.

### **5.2 Controlling Access to Children**

- Consent should be obtained from the applicant to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children should be obtained. These references MUST be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo)
- CVs/Applications are scrutinised and any gaps in employment/training explored with the prospective employee

### 5.3 Interview and Induction

All employees and volunteers are required to undertake an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers receive formal or informal induction during which:

- Their qualifications are substantiated
- The job requirements and responsibilities are clarified
- Child Protection Procedures are explained and training needs identified e.g. basic child protection awareness

### 5.4 Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations
- recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse
- respond to concerns expressed by a child
- work safely and effectively with children

Gloucestershire Academy of Music requires:

- All staff and volunteers who have access to children to undergo a DBS check
- All employees and volunteers to undertake relevant child protection training or undertake a form of home study, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of positive culture towards good practice and child protection
- All staff and volunteers to receive advisory information outlining good/bad practice and informing them what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person
- All staff and volunteers to be identified by the wearing of the official GAM lanyard

Gloucestershire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)  
0800 5420202

[www.glofamiliesdirectory.org](http://www.glofamiliesdirectory.org)

[www.gscb.org.uk](http://www.gscb.org.uk)

NSPCC

Helpline 0808 800 5000

[help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

Gloucestershire County Council Social Worker advice  
Child at immediate risk, phone Front Door 01452 426565 (option 1)  
Practitioner Advice Line 01452 426565 (option 3)

