

JUNIOR ACADEMY

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

OCTOBER 2019

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

In order to comply with recent legislation in child protection it has been necessary to publish the policy below and the attached procedure, both of which should be read in conjunction.

1. The Royal Academy of Music ('Academy') has a role to play in the safeguarding and protection of children from abuse. The Children Act 1989 defines a child as a person under the age of 18. For practical purposes, such students study in the Junior Department, and unless otherwise specified 'student' means 'Junior Department Student' for the purposes of this document.
2. The Academy believes the discharge of its moral responsibilities mean that it must ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to ensure child protection. In circumstances where a child abuse concern is raised, the Academy will consider carefully and in particular will consider whether it requires the involvement of an external agency.
3. The principal areas in which the Academy has a child protection responsibility, given the nature of its work are as follows:
 - Staff appointment procedures;
 - Procedures to help identify suspected abuse and to take appropriate action, whether suspected by a member of Academy staff or another adult.
4. Instances of abuse may result from action by a member of Academy staff or another student but may be caused by individuals (whether adults or children) unconnected with the Academy, including family members. Suspicions of abuse will be acted upon by the Academy regardless of the possible source, although cases may be turned over to other authorities, including the student's school, where appropriate.

CATEGORIES OF ABUSE

5. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them

or, more rarely, by a stranger. The definitions below are from Working Together to Safeguard Children (Department of Health, 1999).

6. Physical abuse - Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen syndrome by proxy.

7. Emotional abuse - Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

8. Sexual abuse - Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (eg rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

9. Neglect - Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

10. Bullying - Bullying is behaviour which hurts or causes distress by taking unfair advantage of another person in some way, making him or her feel uncomfortable or threatened. It is likely to be repetitive in nature.

THE APPOINTMENT OF STAFF

11. Most appointments in the Junior Department will involve unsupervised, sustained one-to-one contact with students and/or accompanying children on concert tours. Where appropriate, as part of its staff appointment processes, the Academy will make additional checks on applicants. The checks will encompass obtaining and checking references, verification of birth certificate and educational/professional qualifications, interview questions about unexplained gaps in employment history. In respect of teaching posts and certain other posts a police check will be required. This will be carried out when a conditional offer of appointment is made. The applicant will be informed of this procedure and asked to agree to it in writing. Applicants will be told that refusal to permit checks will prevent further consideration of their application. Where an applicant has a criminal record this will not automatically debar appointment, but if any of the checks suggests that the appointment may pose a risk to children then appointment will not be made.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

12. There are occasions when students accuse teachers or other members of staff of physically or sexually abusing them. The Academy will treat such accusations seriously. In responding to such

accusations the Academy will try to keep the damaging effects of false allegations to a minimum. In some cases these allegations are false or unfounded. For an innocent person to be subject to what may be a lengthy period of investigation, which may include suspension and/or the threat of arrest, is a serious ordeal which can result in long term damage to a person's health and career.

13. If a student alleges serious or gross misconduct, physical (including sexual) abuse against a member of teaching or administration staff, where the nature of the alleged offence suggests that a student may be at risk, the member of staff may be suspended from duty by the Director of Junior Academy. The suspension should normally be on full pay. The reasons for the suspension should be clearly defined, as should its length, although where criminal charges are pending this will not always be possible. It will be made clear to any suspended member of staff that the suspension does not imply any guilt and will not prejudice any disciplinary hearing. If the allegation appears to involve criminal liability the Director will inform the Deputy Principal.

14. The Academy's normal staff disciplinary procedure will be used to consider cases. If necessary, special arrangements will be made to enable the presentation of a student's evidence while ensuring the protection of the student and/or avoiding further distress.

15. Any dismissal as a result of misconduct involving child protection issues or a resignation because of such misconduct that would otherwise have led to dismissal will be reported to the DfEE or other government agencies in accordance with law.

16. In some circumstances, the allegation may involve criminal proceedings. This need not prevent a staff disciplinary process from being followed. However, there may be circumstances when it is more appropriate to delay the staff disciplinary process from being concluded until legal proceedings are concluded.

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS ON PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND CHILD PROTECTION

17. Members of teaching staff who are members of the Incorporated Society of Musicians are referred to the guidance provided in its information sheets: M2/6, Professional Conduct with School-aged Children and M2/7, Child Protection: the Law.

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURE

This procedure sets out what should be done to respond when an allegation or suspicion of child abuse is raised.

1. Suspicions of abuse may be raised from a number of sources, including the student, and in a number of ways. Sources include:

- A student disclosing information about him/herself;
- When a student is asked if everything is alright, the student discloses abuse;
- Behaviour or physical marks on a student (eg bruises, welts, lacerations);
- A student discloses through his or her academic work that they are being abused;
- A third party discloses that they know a student is being abused.

2. It is most important that staff respond appropriately when suspicions are raised and that the Academy's child protection procedure is always followed. If a student starts to disclose abuse, members of staff should take the following action:

- Reassure the student that he or she is right to tell and is not to blame;
- Confidentiality: do not promise confidentiality, explain that you have to make sure that the student is safe and you may need to ask other adults to help you do this. You can tell the child who you will need to tell and when you will do this;
- Questioning the student should be kept to the minimum necessary to understand what is being alleged. Inappropriate questioning can cause problems for the subsequent investigation and any Court proceedings. Never ask leading questions as this may invalidate a student's testimony in court, for example never say 'did they do 'x' to you?' rather say 'tell me what happened';
- Listen carefully and repeat the student's words. When the student is finished make sure he or she feels secure; explain what you are going to do next;
- Report: a full written report should be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information, including the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the student who has allegedly been abused: the address and telephone number of the complainant and of the student (if available); the student's date of birth/age; the date and time of the alleged incident; the date and time of the report; the nature of the alleged abuse; a description of any injuries observed (but see 'examination' below); the account which has been given of the allegation which should, as far as possible, be in the student's own words;
- Follow-up: make arrangements with the student to speak to them later: they have chosen you as an adult they can trust;
- Examination: do not attempt a detailed examination to remove a student's clothes to look further at any injury. A student should only be examined by a doctor.

3. Immediately and without delay the member of staff to whom the disclosure has been made must inform the Director of the Junior Department what has happened. The Director of the Junior Department is the Academy's Child Protection Officer and leads any case teams established. The Director of the Junior Department will immediately inform the Registrar, as senior management representative on the case team, and the Deputy Principal, RAM. In the absence of the Director of the Junior Department the Operations Manager will take on the role of case team leader. As soon as any absent member of staff returns they will be informed about the case. Information about the case will initially be confined to these individuals.

4. The following will form the case team: Director of the Junior Department (case team leader), Registrar, the person responsible for the initial report. The case team will meet immediately to look at the evidence and to decide a course of action, which will be documented. As part of their consideration, the case team will consider whether the allegation concerns issues of abuse or whether, in fact, the allegation does not meet the definitions of abuse and is more properly considered as a complaint about the Academy's services. Any case that includes a suspicion of abuse will be treated first as a case of suspected abuse. This decision making process for suspected abuse cases will be as follows:

- Is the incident/allegation/suspicion so clear that it is obvious that an immediate referral should be made?

- If the issue is clearly one which has no substance but it is not immediately apparent whether a referral should be made, consideration will be given to seeking the advice of the police and/or social services on a no names basis if necessary; if the matter is inconclusive and the police and social services do not consider that an action is required at that point, consideration should be given to whether others such as the school or parents should be notified of the concern.
5. Any suspicion, allegation or actual abuse of a child by a member of staff shall be reported to the Director of the Junior Department as soon as possible. If within two hours of the initial concern arising it has not been possible to do so, the matter must be referred to the Registrar. Where the suspicion, allegation or actual abuse concerns the Director of the Junior Department, the matter shall be reported to the Registrar.

John Hutchins

Director, Junior Academy

(Reviewed October 2019)