

Child Protection Policy

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to protect from harm all children and other vulnerable people who use the services of Forth School of Music [FSM] (“Our” or “Us” or “We”). This includes the children or adults who use Our services and the children, and young people, who support Us as volunteers and/or junior teachers.

1.2 This policy sets out the principles that guide Our approach to child protection. It applies to anyone working on Our behalf, whether paid or unpaid, including teachers, students, parents or other volunteer helpers such as chaperones.

2. Legal Basis

2.1 This policy has been drawn up based on child protection legislation and guidance that seeks to protect children in Scotland. A summary of the key legislation is available from <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/scotland/>.

3. We Believe

3.1 Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind.

3.2 We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to operate in a way that protects them.

4. We Recognise

4.1 The welfare of children is paramount in all work We do and in all decisions We take.

4.2 All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.

4.3 Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.

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

4.5 We have a duty of care to safeguard from harm all children and young people who attend Our lessons or who use any other service We provide.

5. Our Commitment to Child Protection

5.1 We seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them;
- appointing a nominated child protection lead;
- adopting child protection best practice through Our policies, procedures and code of conduct for Our teachers and volunteers;
- providing effective supervision, support and training for teachers and volunteers to know about and follow Our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently;
- recruiting and selecting teachers and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made;
- recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance;
- making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern;
- using Our procedures to manage any allegations against teachers and volunteers appropriately;
- fostering an anti-bullying environment and having policies in place to help Us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise;
- ensuring that We provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, teachers and volunteers; and
- building a safeguarding culture where teachers and volunteers, children, young people treat each other with respect.

6. Protecting Vulnerable Groups

6.1 FSM places paramount importance on working in compliance with the Protecting Vulnerable Groups membership scheme (the “PVG Scheme”) managed and delivered by Disclosure Scotland. The PVG Scheme helps Us to ensure that people whose behaviour makes them unsuitable to work with children are not able to work with Us.

6.2 All individuals who work for Us, either as self-employed contractors (teachers) or volunteers, are required to have a PVG Scheme Membership.

6.3 We request and hold PVG Scheme records from Disclosure Scotland for all our teachers to ensure they are lawfully allowed to work with children. We always protect the rights and privacy of the people involved by abiding by our policy on the safe handling of disclosure information.

7. Complaints and Incident Handling

7.1 Any complaint or incident to be reported under this policy should be reported immediately to the most senior member of FSM staff who is in charge of the class or event and to the duty child protection lead at info@forthschoolofmusic.co.uk indicating that an abuse of a child or vulnerable person’s welfare may have taken place.

7.2 On receipt of a complaint the FSM will investigate and handle the complaint in line with our policies and guidance on a) managing concerns about or allegations made against teachers or volunteers; b) managing concerns about or allegations made against a child or young person; and/or c) responding to concerns about a child’s welfare.

8. Duty of Teachers and Volunteers

8.1 All adults, including volunteers and parent helpers, who are in contact with children and young people whilst working for FSM are required to be familiar with this policy and the supporting documents set out in Section 12.

9. Good Practice

9.1 FSM adheres to the following principles of good practice in relation to the protection of children.

9.2 We will always:

- put the welfare of each child first;
- give enthusiastic and constructive feedback;
- make music fun, enjoyable and promote fair play;
- be an excellent role model and example for children;
- treat all children equally and with respect and dignity;
- work in an open environment (e.g. avoid private unobserved situations);
- recognise the development needs and capacity of children and young people;
- keep a written record of any accident/injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given;
- treat any physical contact with due sensitivity and care and with due regard for the wishes of the student in line with our safe touching policy in Section 11;

9.3 We will never:

- reduce a child to tears as a form of control;
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child;
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching;
- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games;
- allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon; or
- do things of a personal nature for children or young people that they can do for themselves.

10. Use of Photographs and Recordings

10.1 FSM will always seek consent from the parent/guardian for photographs of their children who attend FSM lessons and classes to be used for demonstrative and/or promotional purposes. All handling of images is strictly in adherence with Our Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice.

10.2 The photos used for promotional may be posted on the following:

- FSM Facebook Page
- FSM Instagram Feed
- FSM Website

10.3 Parents have the right to withdraw their consent at any time or ask for any image to be removed, and can do so by contacting info@forthschoolofmusic.co.uk

10.4 Written consent will always be sought if FSM would like a photograph that includes your child, to appear in a local article for advertising purposes.

10.5 There will be occasions when FSM may record parts of the lesson or class to aid in musical development and exam practice. The recordings will not be accessible by the general public and will be deleted after the event.

10.6 We are committed to only using pictures and film publicly which is less than two years old and/or whilst the student remains with us (whichever is the least amount of time) unless permission has been explicitly sought to do otherwise.

10.7 Any images of children that are taken on a teacher's personal device will be immediately deleted once it is transferred and securely stored on FSM servers.

11. Safe Touch Policy

11.1 As members of the Independent Society of Musicians (ISM) and Musicians' Union (MU), Our teachers abide by their safeguarding and child protection guidelines. These state that students' consent, or, where pupils are under 18, both pupils' and parents' consent, is needed for touch to be used to teach correct instrumental technique.

11.2 Teachers are required on occasions to make physical contact with a student to illustrate or adjust a posture or physical alignment – this allows musical progression and understanding.

11.3 The touch could include guiding fingers, hands, arms and feet into suitable positions for correct posture, stance and, in the case of piano lessons, pedalling.

11.4 We recognise that such physical contact is a complex area and We also fully recognise our responsibilities for safeguarding students and teachers and for protecting their welfare.

11.5 The following principles and procedures are in place to fulfil Our obligations:

- Contact by the teacher is made with awareness to the needs of each individual/to assist the student in correcting placement.
- All teachers will treat any physical contact with due sensitivity and care and with due regard for the wishes of the student.
- Contact will never be forced.
- Teachers will be mindful of location and avoid situations where they are isolated with a student – all classes are held in studios and performance areas which are open or which have windows present.
- Students should be encouraged to discuss any worries with any teacher.
- Both students and teachers should report any concerns to the Protection Offer (FSM Director)

12. Supporting documents

12.1 This policy should be read alongside Our organisational policies, procedures, guidance notes and other related documents, including:

- Terms and conditions for users of FSM services
- Safe handling of disclosure information policy
- Handling complaints or allegations against made against staff and volunteers
- Handling complaints or allegations against made against children
- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Code of conduct for children and other users or FSM services
- Role description for the child protection lead
- Guidance on photographs and filming
- Adult to child supervision requirements and ratios
- Teacher induction, training, supervision and support
- Data protection in relation to all customers and students
- Guidance on safeguarding children in the music classroom