

## **Safeguarding Policy**

As an organisation working with young people, Bath Strings Academy (BSA) through its employees, contractors and volunteers is committed to practices that safeguard and promote the welfare of young people.\*

### **Statement of Intent**

It is the policy of Bath Strings Academy to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from all forms of abuse including physical, emotional and sexual harm (see Appendix 1). This organisation is committed to creating a safe environment in which young people can feel comfortable and secure. Staff and volunteers in this organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of issues which cause children and young people harm.

### **Safeguarding principles**

BSA will safeguard children and young people by –

- Valuing, listening to and respecting young people;
- Establishing and maintaining an environment in which the welfare of the young person is paramount.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Ensuring that BSA policies and procedures protect young people from harm regardless of their gender race, ability/disability, sexuality, gender reassignment, religion or beliefs;
- Securing parental consent in writing for BSA to act in loco parentis; to include, if the need arises, to administer emergency first aid and/or medical treatment.
- Assessing risk in relation to all its activities, focusing on prevention and minimising risk. Ensuring that all BSA employees, contractors and volunteers are aware of this Policy and comply with it.
- Ensuring that before any employee, contractor or volunteer commences their engagement with BSA that appropriate checks as to their suitability to work with young people have been carried out and are satisfactory. No person shall be engaged if they are deemed to be a risk to young people.
- Providing effective management oversight for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- Reviewing BSA child protection policy and good practice guidance on an annual basis.

\* A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children Act 1989). The use of the term “young person” throughout this policy includes not only a child but all BSA Musicians whether they are under the age of 18 or not.

## **Guidelines for all Bath Strings Academy staff and volunteers**

In line with these principles BSA is committed to the following good practice:

Staff and volunteers must at all times show respect and understanding for individual's rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the ethos and principles of Bath Strings Academy.

### **a. RESPECT**

Staff and volunteers are committed to

- Treating children and young people with respect and dignity.
- Always listening to what a child or young person is saying.
- Valuing each child and young person.
- Recognising the unique contribution each individual can make.
- Encouraging and praising each child or young person.

### **b. LEADING BY EXAMPLE**

Staff and volunteers will

- Provide an example which we would wish others to follow.
- Use appropriate language with children and young people and challenge any inappropriate language used by a young person or child or an adult working with young people.
- Respect a young person's right to privacy.

Staff and volunteers will never:

- Permit, accept, encourage or ignore abusive or discriminatory behaviour by another person or group of people.
- Trivialise the feelings, concerns or beliefs expressed by any BSA Musician or young person, which may include suspicion of abuse or discrimination.
- Allow allegations made by a BSA Musician to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Promote a particular belief, religion or political standing.
- Call, text or exchange email addresses with a BSA Musician for personal purposes outside of BSA business.

### **c. ONE TO ONE CONTACT**

- It is recognised that some BSA teaching may require individual musician – tutor coaching sessions, but employees, contractors and volunteers are advised to avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with a single musician away from others, and encouraged to work in an open environment avoiding private or secret situations.
- One-to-one meetings should take place in public or semi-public areas, such as classrooms or common rooms; leave the door open and/or ensure that other staff know that the meeting is taking place.

### **d. PHYSICAL CONTACT**

- Staff and volunteers should encourage and maintain a safe and appropriate physical distance from BSA Musicians. If tutors feel that it is necessary to touch a young person in the context of tuition in order to rearrange finger positions or assist with posture for example, they must ask permission from the young person first.
- Outward displays of affection are only appropriate in the case of comforting a young person and should normally occur only when another adult is present, or in a public area.
- Reasonable force may be used to restrain a young person in self defence or because of imminent risk of injury. Before intervening staff or volunteers should tell the young person to stop, and what will happen if they do not stop. Make it clear that physical contact may be necessary. Keep communicating about what is happening.

### **Staff and volunteers should never**

- Engage in over-familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards or contact with or in front of a BSA Musician or young person (i.e. physical, verbal, sexual, horseplay; rowdy or boisterous play, even in fun), or allow / encourage fellow employees to do the same.
- Allow, or engage in, inappropriate touching of any kind.

See **Appendix 2** regarding what can be classed as appropriate/inappropriate touching.

### **e. GENERAL**

Staff and volunteers should:

- Be aware that someone might misinterpret our actions no matter how well intentioned.
- Never draw any conclusions about others without checking the facts.
- Never allow ourselves to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking situations such as tantrums or crushes.
- Never exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues or make suggestive remarks or gestures about, or to a child or young person, even in fun.

### **f. RELATIONSHIPS**

Staff and volunteers who are involved in relationships with other members of staff or volunteers should ensure that their personal relationships do not affect their role within BSA or the work of BSA.

### **g. SHARING INFORMATION**

Good communication is essential in any organisation. In BSA every effort will be made to assure that, should individuals have concerns, they will be listened to and taken seriously.

It is the responsibility of the management to ensure that information is available to, and exchanged between all those involved in this organisation and its activities. Some information is confidential and should only be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis.

#### *Children & Young People*

Children and young people have a right to information, especially any information that could make life better and safer for them. BSA will act to ensure they have information about how, and with whom, they can share their concerns, complaints and anxieties.

When sharing information, BSA staff and volunteers will be sensitive to the level of understanding and maturity, as well as to the level of responsibility, of the people with whom they are sharing.

#### *Parents*

Parents / persons with parental responsibility are ultimately responsible for their children's welfare at all times, and they should be assured that their children are involved with a credible organisation.

We achieve this by

- Publicising information on all our musical activities
- Publishing a full copy of the Child Protection Policy on our website ([www.bathstringsacademy.org](http://www.bathstringsacademy.org) )

#### *Other Bodies*

A copy of our Child Protection Policy will be made available to any other appropriate body.

## **h. PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE**

All action is taken in line with the following legislation/guidance:

- South West Safeguarding and Child Protection Shared Procedures, [www.onlineprocedures.co.uk/swcpp](http://www.onlineprocedures.co.uk/swcpp)
- Safeguarding Children in Education September 2013
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2006.

In any case where an allegation is made, or someone in Bath Strings Academy has concerns, a record should be made. Details must include, as far as practical:

- Name of child or young person
- Age
- Home Address (if known)
- Date of Birth (if known)
- Name/s and Address of parent/s or person/s with parental responsibility
- Telephone numbers if available

Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns, or passing on those of somebody else? If so, record details;

- What has prompted the concerns?
- Include dates and times of any specific incidents
- Has the child or young person been spoken to?
- If so, what was said?
- Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser?
- If so, record details
- Who has this been passed on to, in order that appropriate action is taken? E.g. school, designated officer, children's social care
- Has anyone else been consulted?

## **i. DESIGNATED CHILD PROTECTION PERSONS**

- The designated person will immediately inform Children & Families Assessment Intervention Team (CAFAIT) by telephone. Telephone number: 01225 396312/313 Out of hours telephone number: 01454615165
- The telephone referral to CAFAIT will be confirmed in writing using the form marked C2, within a maximum of 48 hours, ideally 24 hours, with a copy to the designated person for child protection (insert name). Essential information will include pupil's name, address, date of birth, family composition, and reason for referral, name of person receiving the referral and any advice given. This written confirmation must be signed and dated by the referrer.
- Confidentiality must be maintained and information relating to individual children and young people/families shared with staff on a strictly need to know basis.

## **j. ALLEGED ABUSE BY STAFF, MANAGERS, VOLUNTEERS OR TRUSTEES**

- When an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, then the allegation must be passed to your designated person for child protection Michelle Falcon or their deputy Ruth O'Shea, or, if the allegation concerns them both, direct to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Your designated person for child protection should contact one of the Local Authority designated officers for consultation Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on **01225 396810** or if unavailable Head of Safeguarding, on **01225 396974** within 1 working day. The designated officer contacted will record a note of the consultation and will advise on the appropriate action that needs to be taken.

#### **k. TRAINING**

- The designated person and his/her deputy must receive training every 2 years in Child Protection.
- All staff and volunteers shall have access to appropriate training on a regular basis, at least every 3 years.

#### **l. RECORD-KEEPING**

- All records, information and confidential notes will be kept in separate files in a locked drawer or filing cabinet.
- Only the designated Persons will have access to these files.

#### **m. DISCLOSURE**

- Never guarantee absolute confidentiality, as Child Protection will always have precedence over any other issues.
- Listen to the child, rather than question him or her directly.
- Offer him / her reassurance without making promises, and take what the child says seriously.
- Allow the child to speak without interruption
- Accept what is said – it is not your role to investigate or question.
- Do not overreact.
- Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgement.
- Advise that you will try to offer support, but that you must pass the information on.
- Explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell.
- Record the discussion accurately, as soon as possible after the event,
- Use the child's words or explanations – do not translate into your own words, in case you have misconstrued what the child was trying to say.
- Contact the Designated Person, Michelle Falcon, for advice / guidance.
- The Designated Person may then discuss the concern / suspicion with the relevant organisation, and, if appropriate, make a direct referral.
- If Designated Person is not available, or it is inappropriate to approach them, the volunteer /member of staff with the concern should make direct contact with the relevant organisation themselves.
- Record any discussions or actions taken within 24 hours.

#### **n. FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further information about what to do if you are worried a child is being abused, see the B&NES LSCB website, <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/children-young-people-and-families/child-protection/local-safeguarding-children-board>

The South West Safeguarding and Child Protection Shared Procedures can be accessed at:  
[www.swcpp.org.uk](http://www.swcpp.org.uk)

## Appendix 1 - Types of abuse

**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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

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

**Emotional abuse:** is the persistent emotional maltreatment 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. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, 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 maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

## **Appendix 2: Appropriate and Inappropriate Touch** - Guidance for those working with young people in the Performing Arts.

Please read the below examples of Appropriate and Inappropriate touch very carefully.

### **APPROPRIATE**

- Context dependent touch within a controlled and supervised environment (e.g. demonstrations for dance, music, drama, craft or singing)
- Administration of first aid (with parental consent and only by a trained first-aider)
- Assistance to avoid embarrassment (e.g. offering to help a child to their feet if they fall)
- Support and guidance for performing arts such as drama, dance, circus and musical theatre (e.g. lifting / positioning / spotting)
- Offering comfort to a distressed child, in response to the child's needs
- Preventing injury (e.g. catching a falling child, appropriate restraint)
- Handshake and 'hi-fives'
- Group hug with all the children / group at the end of class / following a performance as a means of congratulations
- Undertaking personal care (e.g. for very young or disabled children) only with the full consent of parents / guardians and, if possible, by a worker of the same gender. In an emergency, personal care should only be undertaken with the full consent of a leader / supervisor and parents / guardians should be fully informed as soon as possible, if it was not possible to contact them beforehand

### **INAPPROPRIATE**

- Touch which is without consent from the young person
- Touch which is unnecessary
- Touch which is unexplained
- Touch which is out of context
- Touch which is out of a normal environment
- Touch which is in response to adult's needs
- Sustained and prolonged 'appropriate' touch
- Kissing
- Touch of breast, groin or buttocks
- Horseplay (adults – child; between peers)
- Sexual gestures
- Slapping / hitting (even in jest)
- Holding hands (unless in context e.g. assisting very young children with crossing the road)
- Hugging unless it is to comfort a young person in which case the staff member can use one arm and hug them from sitting or standing to the side of them with an arm over their shoulder and their hand the top of their arm. Under no circumstances should staff hug young people facing them. Staff should ask permission before they hug a young person.

This policy has been formulated with reference to Bath and North East Somerset Council (Child Protection Policy for Community Organisations and Groups), National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain (2017 Safeguarding Policy) and The Culture Company (2013 Child Protection Policy).