

Explanatory/Guidance notes

Introduction

As an organisation, St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. wants to provide the best possible care for children and young people and support all associates and volunteers through appropriate procedures and guidelines. It also wants to reassure parents that the organisation is child centred.

St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. has a legal and moral duty to ensure the safety of all children and young people and to protect them from all forms of abuse, harm or exploitation. The most effective way to do this, and promote good practice, is to have the safeguarding policies, procedures and guidelines in place as contained in this document. Policies, procedures and guidelines increase peace of mind for everyone:

Who is a child?

A child is a child until they have reached their 18th birthday (Children (NI) Order 1995).

The rights of a child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an agreement between countries which sets out the basic rights all children should have. Almost every country in the world has signed the agreement. The UK Government ratified the UNCRC in 1991. This means that the Government has a responsibility to make sure that all children have basic rights.

St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. has ensured this safeguarding policy is relevant to the ethos, activities and structure of the organisation. It incorporates the following:

- **Children/young people**
 - Ensuring that the welfare of children and young people is treated as a priority and ensuring that all children and young people are treated equally, and their views are heard.
- **Parents**
 - Reassuring parents that St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. views the child's welfare as paramount and welcomes parental participation.
- **Associates/volunteers**
 - Giving associates and volunteers clear direction, thereby ensuring confidence in what they do. This policy also helps to protect them as well as the children and young people in their care. The potential for abuse will be minimised and a positive atmosphere will be created, facilitating a rewarding and enjoyable experience for all concerned.

This policy includes the following as required by Standard One:

1. A written policy statement of the organisation's intention to keep children and young people safe from harm

A policy is a governing principle of an organisation that requires those connected with the organisation to provide a consistent response to a given situation. A safeguarding policy outlines the organisation's commitment to practise good safeguarding in order to protect all students. It applies to everyone associated with the organisation.

The organisation's safeguarding policy starts with an overarching policy statement, outlining the organisation's intention to keep children and young people safe from harm while in its care, followed by an outline of the procedures and guidelines which all involved in the organisation will follow in order to protect the children and young people.

2. An outline of the procedures and guidelines that the organisation will implement to meet this commitment, in line with the minimum standards

The safeguarding procedures will describe the practice to be followed to uphold the policy in the organisation. These will be made known to children, young people, parents, associates and volunteers at the point of joining St. Columb's School of Music Ltd.

Procedures in this safeguarding policy include:

- Recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers
- Effective management of associates and volunteers
- Reporting concerns, disclosure of abuse and/or allegations

In addition to robust safeguarding procedures, clear guidelines are outlined in this policy. The guidelines detail how the policy objectives will be upheld. They include:

- Code of Behaviour for associates and volunteers
- Sharing information appropriately with parents, children and young people, associates and volunteers
- General safety and management of activities.

3. The safeguarding policy is supported by other organisational policies, procedures and guidelines.

In addition to the safeguarding policy, St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. has a range of additional and related policies in place. These policies are linked and cross referenced to ensure consistent practice in protecting children and young people.

4. The person(s) with responsibility for approval of the policy is named

The person(s) responsible for approving the safeguarding policy is named in the policy, so everyone in the organisation is aware who they are and what responsibility they have. This means that s/he signs and dates the policy statement and ensures that it is displayed.

5. The person(s) with responsibility for implementing and reviewing the policy is named

The person(s) with responsibility for implementing and reviewing the safeguarding policy is named in the policy, so that everyone is clear whose responsibility this is and who they can discuss or share their comments with.

6. There is reference to a review of the policy at least once every 3 years

A safeguarding policy including all related procedures and guidelines needs to be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure it remains up to date and continues to be relevant to the work and activities of the organisation. As a minimum, reviews should be carried out at least once every three years and necessary updates made. However, a review will need to take place at an earlier stage if there are changes in practice or legislation, or where there is a change in the organisation's operational procedures.

7. The policy outlines how all involved in the organisation are informed about the policy, including children, young people, parents, associates/volunteers and the advisory board.

Everyone involved with St. Columb's School of Music Ltd., including children and young people, will have a copy (or access to a copy) of the safeguarding policy statement, which will be prominently displayed. As well as protecting children and young people in the organisation, a safeguarding policy also benefits parents, associates, volunteers and the organisation itself.

It is important to establish and maintain appropriate contact with the parents of children and young people involved with the organisation. Parents will therefore be aware of the organisation's safeguarding policy.

Parents have the primary responsibility for the care and upbringing of their children, as do those with parental responsibility as defined by the Children (NI) Order. It is also important that associates and volunteers are informed about and understand the safeguarding policy and are familiar with its contents. Training will, therefore, be provided by St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. on this policy and its contents. Update training will also be provided if there are changes in practice or legislation, or where there is a change in the organisation's operational procedures.

The Directors have a responsibility to be aware of the policy and ensure that everyone involved with the organisation implements and takes ownership of it. They have ultimate responsibility for all actions carried out by an organisation. They will therefore ensure that this robust policy, procedures and guidelines for safeguarding children and young people are in place and are being implemented across the organisation.

This policy will be a working document with which everyone involved in the organisation is familiar, including the Advisory Board.