

Child Protection: Policy on Safeguarding the Welfare of Children

The policy recognises that the Children Act 1989 places specific duties on agencies to co-operate in the interests of vulnerable children:

1. This policy acknowledges that:

- Child abuse exists and can present itself in any of its forms, physical, emotional, neglect or sexual, alone or in combination
- Children may be abused and/or neglected by their parents, carers, guardians or other trusted adults as well as by strangers
- Abuse may be perpetrated by individuals, groups or networks of individuals
- Children may also be abused by other children
- Bullying is a form of abuse

2. Children and young persons under the age of 18 of all races, religions and cultures, with or without disabilities, from any model of family life have an equal right to protection from abuse.

3. Local authorities have the legal responsibility for the protection of children and normally have policies in place for those working with children within the authority. CM employees and students have a responsibility to be aware of the specific child protection policies of the councils and/or boroughs within which they work as part of a programme of study.

4. CM recognises the lead responsibility of its partner organisations to report all allegations of abuse to the Social Service Departments of the Authorities in which the allegation has occurred.

5. Record keeping is essential in relation to child protection issues. Records will be kept of all incidences related to child abuse, both allegations and concerns. These records will be kept in a separate file by the team leaders, with designated lead responsibility for workshops incorporating work with children and young people, and copied to the designated Officer for child protection (normally the Head of Instrumental Music).

6. To ensure compliance with LA policies, CM will ensure that all students/employees who will work with children, as part of their studies/responsibilities, complete a disclosure application form and undergo a Criminal Records Bureau Check. Employees will be individually responsible for paying the cost of police checks.

7. CM will undertake to observe principles of confidentiality in all procedures related to child protection.

8. CM will provide guidance and support, including a Code of Conduct and rules and regulations, to all employees/students working with children and young people.

CHILD PROTECTION

GUIDANCE NOTE (1)

Police Checks for Employees and Students Working in Independent and Community Organisations.

Why is it necessary for me to have a police check?

Working for CM, you will probably be involved in schools or workshop programmes where you will be working with children and young persons under the age of 18, for whom there are legal safeguards against the risk of abuse. The local authorities are the legally responsible bodies, and these normally have policies in place which require all those individuals working with children within the authority undergo a police check. This includes tutors, employees and work experience students of CM.

So, the check is to protect children and young people?

Primarily yes, but it protects you too.

What are Police Checks?

There are currently two kinds of Police checks available:

1. Police National Computer Checks

This check will indicate any convictions that the named adult has received. The check can be accessed through any Police station by the adult concerned and costs £10.

2. Criminal Records Bureau Check (enhanced police check)

This check covers three different areas of information:

(i) a criminal record check;

This will indicate any convictions for offences for the named adult (as above);

(ii) criminal intelligence check;

This check interrogates any wider intelligence that the Police hold on the adult, for example, drug/alcohol misuse, mental health/domestic violence issues that have come to the notice of the Police.

(iii) general registry check:

This check indicates any criminal investigation that has been undertaken in relation to the named adult that has not resulted in a prosecution. The lack of prosecution may be for a number of reasons, for example, the investigation may not have been presented to court for prosecution because of the lack of corroborative medical evidence. This is not unusual in sexual abuse situations where there has been no physical injury as a result of the abuse. This area of intelligence is therefore particularly important in relation to the safety of children. Social Services and the Police are also aware of a high number of child abuse investigations which are not presented to the court for prosecution as the child/young person is not willing or able to give evidence in court against the alleged perpetrator. This does not mean that the alleged abuse has not taken place. This check also highlights any intelligence about patterns of behaviour in relation to the named adult, for example, whether there is any grooming behaviour or whether certain age or gender would seem to have been targeted.

Which check does CM require?

The Criminal Records Bureau Check.

Why does CM do the more detailed check?

It is the policy of some of the councils and boroughs with whom we work that all their employees and volunteers undergo the enhanced check, so it would be required that CM employees/students working in these councils or boroughs have done so. (The reason they have adopted this policy is because it is known from experience that sexual abusers will work to gain the trust of other adults and parents in

order to gain access to vulnerable children, grooming the family to trust them as well as the child. Abusers are also opportunistic and would take advantage of an emergency/untoward situation where, for example, the parent or colleague supervisor is not around even for a short time).

Who is responsible for ensuring employees' checks are done?

The Registrar is responsible for ensuring that all employees working in community settings, as part of the modules for which he is responsible, have undergone a policy check prior to engaging in that work. The Team Leaders are responsible for workshops or activities in which young persons under the age of 18 are included, are responsible for ensuring any employees in contact with these students have undergone a police check.

How often is the check done?

The current position is that you will need to undergo a check once every three years. You will need a current CRB certificate, dated within the last three years, to be able to work with children and young people during your time at CM.

I want to know more

For more information, contact: Sylvia Sayer, Registrar, sylvia.sayer@newham-music.org.uk

CHILD PROTECTION

GUIDANCE NOTE (2)

Defining, recognising and dealing with abuse

What is abuse?

The definitions of abuse outlined below are taken from 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', Department of Health 1999.

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.

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 who they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen's syndrome by proxy. Following recent publicised court cases the area of Munchausen's syndrome is currently under review (March 04)

Emotional Abuse:

This is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve 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.

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 (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production or, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

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, failure 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.

Organised Abuse

Organised or multiple abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abuser and a number of related or non-related abused children and young people. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse.

Organised and multiple abuse occur both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community, and within institutions such as residential homes or schools.

Note: Children whose situations do not currently fit the above categories may also be at significant risk of harm. This could include situations where another child in the household has been harmed or the household contains a known child abuser.

How do I identify child abuse?

Child abuse can take place in a number of different settings, of which the following are examples:

- * It is likely to occur most commonly where the young person knows the individual/s and is trusted. This can be a parent, carer, babysitter, sibling, relative, or friend of the child or of the family.
- * The abuser is sometimes someone in authority such as a teacher, youth leader, children's worker or church worker/leader.
- * The abuser is sometimes a paedophile or other person who sets out to join organisations to obtain access to children.

Employees in their work with children and young people have a responsibility to act if abuse comes to light and, as far as possible, to protect children from the possibility of being abused.

What are the signs of abuse?

Extreme care should be taken as misreading signs of abuse can result in significant harm or trauma to the child and their family. In general you will not have the expertise to diagnose child abuse but you do have a responsibility to be alert and aware of the signs.

Just because a child exhibits one of the signs listed below, this does not mean that they have been abused. Nevertheless, the presence of one or more of the signs, or their repeated presence, might raise concerns and you should share these with the Head of Instrumental Music and /or the Team Leader designated to deal with matters of child protection in the School/community setting where you are working.

Physical signs

- * any injuries, bruises, bites, burns, fractures, etc, which are not consistent with the explanation given for them
- * injuries that occur to the body in places that are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- * injuries that appear to have been caused by a weapon e.g. cuts, welts, etc
- * injuries that have not received medical attention
- * instances where children are kept away from the group inappropriately or without explanation
- * self-mutilation or self-harm e.g. Cutting, slashing, drug abuse

Emotional signs

- * changes or regression in mood and behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging. Also depression/aggression
- * nervousness/inappropriate fear of particular adults e.g. frozen watchfulness
- * sudden changes in behaviour e.g. under-achievement or lack of concentration
- * inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults e.g. excessive dependence
- * attention-seeking behaviour
- * persistent tiredness
- * wetting or soiling of bed or clothes by an older child

Neglect signs

- * regular poor hygiene
- * persistent tiredness
- * inadequate clothing
- * excessive appetite
- * failure to thrive e.g. poor weight gain
- * consistently being left alone and unsupervised

Sexual signs

- * any direct disclosure made by a child concerning sexual abuse
- * child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age inappropriate sexual play
- * preoccupation with sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- * a child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- * inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home

- * severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- * other emotional signs (see above) may be indicative of sexual or some other form of abuse

How should I respond to allegations/concerns regarding abuse?

1. You should report it immediately to the Head of Instrumental Music and/or the Team Leader or person in the school/community setting designated to deal with matters of child protection. You should not discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone else
2. Under no circumstances attempt to carry out any investigation into allegations or suspicions of abuse. It is the task of Social Services to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
3. Referrals may lead to:
 - a. no further action
 - b. directly to the provision of services or other help and/or
 - c. a fuller assessment of the needs and circumstances of the child, which may in turn lead to child protection inquiries
 - d. emergency action to safeguard the child
 - e. Child protection inquiries being undertaken

General Points

- * Keep calm - do not appear shocked or disgusted
Accept what the child says without passing judgement (however unlikely the disclosure may sound)
- * Look directly at the child
- * Be honest
- * Let them know you will need to tell someone else, don't promise confidentiality
- * Be aware the child may have been threatened and fear reprisals for having spoken to you
- * Never push for information or question the child as this can undermine any subsequent criminal, investigation. If at any point a child decides not to continue, accept that and let them know that you are ready to listen should they wish to continue at any time.

Helpful things to say or show

- * Show acceptance of what the child says
- * 'I take what you are saying very seriously'
- * 'I am pleased that you have told me. Thank you for telling me'
- * If appropriate, 'it isn't your fault and you are not to blame at all', 'I am sorry that happened to you'
- * 'I will help you'

Things not to say

- * 'Why didn't you say something before?'
- * 'I really can't believe it'
- * 'Are you sure this has happened?'
- * 'Why?' 'Where?' 'When?' 'Who?' 'What?' 'How?'

- * Don't make false promises to the child - like confidentiality - be honest now, any lies will be further abuse and betrayal
- * Never make statements such as 'I am shocked!' or 'don't tell anyone else'.

Concluding the conversation

- * Reassure the child that they were right to tell you
- * Let the child know what you are going to do next and tell them that you will let them know what is happening at each stage.

What to do after the Conversation

- * Make notes about the conversation as soon as possible after the discussion. Record exactly what the child said and when he or she said it and what was happening immediately beforehand e.g. (description of the activity). Note the time, date and place of the conversation and the name of any other person present. If the initial note is hand-written, keep it if it is subsequently typed up.
- * Inform the designated Child Protection employee, immediately. You will be advised of this prior to the placement.
- * The designated Child Protection employee should contact the Social Services Area Office.
- * Do not be tempted to try to investigate further the claims - this could lead to contamination of the evidence and could jeopardise any Police investigation and criminal prosecution activity.

What are the boundaries when I am with children?

You are responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries and/or ensuring that meeting your own emotional needs is not dependent on your relationships with children and young people. Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors. Touch should be related to a child's needs not your own. Touch should be age appropriate and generally be initiated by the child rather than you. Avoid any physical activity, which is, or may be construed as, sexually stimulating the adult or child. For example, fondling, touching private parts of the body. If you do have to touch the child to move a hand position for example ask very clearly and demonstrate what you mean on your own body first.

CONDUCTIVE MUSIC CIC

Summary of procedures in relation to Police Checks & Criminal Convictions

INTRODUCTION

As part of the policy in relation to the welfare of children, CM requires all students and employees who work with children to undergo an enhanced police check by the Criminal Records Bureau. The procedures are as follows.

WORK EXPERIENCE STUDENTS OR PROJECT LEADERS

All potential applicants will be notified at the time an offer of a place is made that they will be required to undergo a disclosure for all criminal record information.

In the event of the check disclosing a criminal record of any kind:

Disclosures of criminal activity will be considered by board of directors. A decision will be made about the continuation of the students programme or the adjustment of the students programme if a conviction related to child abuse has emerged.

Annual monitoring

Returning persons will be required to sign an annual self declaration indicating that they have had no criminal conviction

Withholding of information

CM reserves the right to terminate any relationship if it becomes apparent that she/he has deliberately withheld or falsified information in relation to any convictions.

EMPLOYEES

All employees whose work will take them into contact with children are required to undergo a disclosure for all criminal record information. It is the responsibility of the Head of Instrumental Music appointing the member of staff to make this known to them, and to ensure that they have completed a disclosure form on appointment or, in the case of current staff, well in advance of contact with children.

In the event of the check disclosing a criminal record of any kind:

Disclosures of criminal activity will be considered by the board of directors. A decision will be made about the continuation of employment or the adjustment of the range of duties if a conviction related to child abuse has emerged. Consultation with employee unions will take place as necessary

Annual monitoring

Employees will be required to sign an annual self declaration indicating that they have had no criminal conviction It is the responsibility of the Head of Instrumental Music to ensure this is signed and placed on the staff member's file.

Withholding of information

CM reserves the right to terminate employment of a member of staff if it becomes apparent that she/he has deliberately withheld or falsified information in relation to any convictions.

Dr. Enrico Bertelli, Director

Dr. Emily Robertson, Director

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