



Top Score Music Academy Child Protection Policy

Introduction

Top Score Music Academy is fully committed to ensuring the care, welfare and safety of the young people receiving tuition from the Academy. We will seek to carry out this responsibility in a caring, supportive and safe environment. We value young people as individuals, with unique gifts and talents and we aim to foster the personal, social and musical development of each young person in our care. We therefore dedicate ourselves to take all necessary and reasonable measures to protect young people in our care from all kinds of harm.

We will endeavour to safeguard young people in our care by:

1. Having an effective recruitment and selection procedure including referral to the Access NI procedure
2. Establishing child protection guidelines through a code of behaviour for all staff
3. Developing effective procedures to deal with concerns, disclosures of abuse or allegations
4. Sharing relevant information about child protection and good practice with children, parents and staff, keeping them informed of what we do and what they can expect from the Academy. This may also mean sharing information about concerns with agencies that need to know and involving parents and children appropriately
5. Providing effective support for staff through training and guidance provided by the Keeping Safe Project
6. Reviewing this policy and procedures every 3 years.

The principles of the Children (NI) order apply to this policy.

1. Recruitment & Selection

Top Score Music Academy will ensure that the following procedures for recruitment and selection of tutors are fully implemented:

- All applicants must supply information regarding personal details, past and current teaching/volunteer experience and any skill/qualification relevant to the post
- A declaration of any, or no, criminal record
- Tutors will be expected to give permission for checks to be done through the Access NI Service. Any position involving access to children will require use of the Access NI system and a person will not be engaged until clearance has been received
- On-going training is provided for and taken up by all those in positions of trust with young people

Once accepted, all tutors will undertake training so that they are less likely to become involved in actions which can lead to harm or be misunderstood. This training will include:

- Induction – to familiarise tutors with the Academy’s Child Protection Policy and Code of Behaviour, as well as other relevant policies
- Child Protection Training – awareness raising and best practise.

2. Code of Behaviour

As the majority of the music teaching at Top Score Music Academy is conducted online in a group basis, tutors must take all reasonable care to ensure their pupils’ safety and their own. They should conduct their teaching as openly as possible so that misunderstandings cannot occur. Parents should be encouraged to remain in the lesson especially when the child is young or is new to the tutor. Communication between tutor, child and parent/care is important to the musical development of the child and should be seen as a partnership.

When face-to-face tutoring occurs, tutors are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with children and young people. However, on occasions when physical contact is unavoidable, such as providing comfort and reassurance for a distressed child or repositioning an arm in correcting technique, such a contact should only take place with the consent of the child or young person.

It is not good practice and not normally permissible to take children alone in a car or minibus on journeys however short. Where this is unavoidable, it should be with the consent of the parents and the Director of the Academy.

Tutors should be especially vigilant when adult students are in potential contact with students under 18 sharing lessons, including online. There is a particular responsibility on adult students to be fully aware of the Academy’s duty of care towards young persons under 18, especially with regard to data protection issues, e.g. no photographs to be taken. Any serious breach will result in the cessation of tuition.

Tutors should not meet with children outside of organized lessons, unless it is with the knowledge and consent of the parents and the Director of the Academy.

Tutors should never:

- Put a child down, call them names, raise their voice to a child (issues of discipline should always be discussed with the child and his/her parent/carer)
- Engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games, including horseplay
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments about, or to, a child, even in fun
- Let allegations a child makes go without being addressed and recorded
- Do anything of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.

3. Reporting Procedures

Concerns about a child/young person can arise through a variety of ways e.g.

- a child may disclose information to the tutor
- a tutor may observe a mark or injury on a child
- a parent may be concerned about the behaviour of a child or a member of staff
- a member of the public can raise a concern.

The Director of Academy is the Designated Person. Dr Declan Plummer presently holds this position. The designated person has responsibility for:

- coordinating action within the Academy
- advising any tutor who seeks their advice
- liaising with Health and Social Care Trusts and other Agencies about suspected or actual cases of child abuse
- ensuring that procedures are followed
- ensuring training is provided in child protection issues to all tutors and that this training is reviewed on a regular basis.

The procedures are outlined in the Appendix. The report may be verbal but should be followed up with completion of the incident form. No individual should deal with any issue alone but in consultation with the Designated Person. Strict confidentiality should be adhered to and information shared on a need-to-know basis.

4. Sharing Information

The name(s) of the designated person(s) within the Academy responsible for dealing with issues relating to child protection, accidents and complaints, will be made known to all individuals associated with the Academy.

Information will be available to, and exchanged between, those involved in reporting procedures. However, some information is confidential and will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

Parents: Parents can obtain a copy of Top Score Music Academy's Child Protection Policy from the Academy's website or emailing the Academy.

Tutors: It is our policy to brief tutors on child protection issues and to ensure that they respond appropriately to any concern that a child may have and pass on their concerns to the Designated Person within the Academy.

Children and young people: Children who take part in our classes should be made aware that any concern they have will be dealt with following the standard procedures and that tutors are required to pass on information of a concerning nature to the Designated Person.

5. Support & Training of Tutors

Tutors need to be aware of their responsibility to their pupils in terms of ensuring they are protected from harm when attending lessons run by the Academy. Tutors will be supported through child protection training, which will be provided every 3 years. This is a requirement of their contract. Existing tutors will be required to up-date their child protection training every 3 years and provide evidence of such. The Academy will facilitate up-date training. Each tutor will receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy and the procedures and it is each tutor's responsibility to ensure they are familiar with the contents.

6. Review

Top Score Music Academy is committed to reviewing this document every 3 years.

APPENDIX 1

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse occurs when the behaviour of someone in a position of greater power causes harm to a child and it can happen in person or online. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or a failure to act or to provide proper care (or both) on the part of the carer; e.g. a person who has actual custody of a child (such as a parent or foster parent), a staff member in the College setting, an acquaintance or a stranger who may be an adult or a young person.

“An abused child is a boy or girl under the age of 18 who has suffered or may suffer significant harm”.

Categories for concern are defined in the Children (NI) Order 1995:

NEGLECT

The actual or likely persistent or significant neglect of a child, or failure to protect a child from exposure to any danger, including cold and starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child’s health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

PHYSICAL

Actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child, or wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child. The involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violates the social taboos of family roles. The child may be dependent and/or developmentally immature.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Actual or likely persistent or significant emotional ill treatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment. This category arises where it is the main or only form of abuse.

Signs of abuse might be physical or observed more in behaviour and would be explored in a training session.

Recognising that children have rights as individuals and to being treated with dignity and respect:

Both the staff and students of Top Score Music Academy must be aware of the rights of children. In case of adults this will enable them to make more informed decisions regarding their own behaviour and the monitoring of the behaviour of others. In the case of children, awareness of their rights gives them the ability to develop an understanding of what is acceptable and how to protect themselves.

What rights do children have?

The minimum standard rights of children (anyone under 18 years of age) have been established through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is a binding international treaty that the UK government signed at the United Nations, committing itself to give children the rights and protections written in the convention.

There are many rights written into the convention, including rights relating to:

- Children having access to information, especially any information that would make life better and safer for them.
- Children may have a say in their education Protection from violence, abuse and exploitation

Top Score Music Academy tutors should consider how their role with children should encompass the recognition of these rights in terms of a child's musical development.

APPENDIX 2

Accident / Incident Form

In any case where an allegation is made or concerns are present a record must be taken using this form. This will only be kept by the Designated Officer. Copies will not be kept by any other member of staff. Please record legibly recording only facts.

Not opinions.

Name of Child:	
Age and Date of Birth:	
Parents name/person with responsibility:	
Address:	
Telephone No:	
Date of Incident/Concern:	
Reporting Person:	
Reporting Person's Contact Details:	
Nature of Concern: <i>(What has prompted these concerns? Include dates and times of specific incidents if possible, other persons present etc.)</i>	
Action taken and when:	
Date:	

Guidelines for Listening to Children Disclosing Abuse:

- Listen to the child, rather than questioning them directly. Offer them reassurance without making promises and take what the child says seriously.
- Children may be frightened by the threat of violence to themselves or other members of their family, or of being taken away from or breaking up their family.
- Tutors should reassure young people who disclose in these situations that by doing so they are protecting themselves and possible other children from further abuse.
- Never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events. Do not overreact. Explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell. Do not question or interrogate the child.
- Record the discussion accurately as soon as possible after the event, even if it is information you do not understand fully or like writing down. This is of vital importance.
- Contact the designated person(s) within the College. The designated person(s) may then discuss the concern/suspicion with Social Services and, if appropriate, make a direct contact.
- Make direct contact with Social Services if the designated person(s) is not available or if it is inappropriate to approach them.
- Record any discussion or actions within 24 hours.

Useful Numbers / References

- Social Services – 02890507000 (after 5pm and at weekends 02890565444)
- NSPCC Helpline Freephone – 0808 800 5000 (24Hours)
- Police Service NI – 90 650222 or 101
- Childline 0800 1111
- Contact Youth/Lifeline 0808 808 8000
- Women's Aid helpline 0808 802 1414, 028 9024 9041
- Keeping Safe Project (child protection training) 028 9268 0840
- For Designated Officers course please book directly at <http://keepingsafeset.hscni.net>

APPENDIX 3

Top Score Music Academy guidance for online lessons.

Before and during lessons

- Ideally tutors should set up a separate Zoom, Skype (or equivalent) account for online teaching, to be used exclusively for the purpose of lessons. Any profile picture will be appropriate and personal information will not be shared via this account. Background will be neutral.
- Both tutors and students will dress and behave in the same appropriate manner as they would in face to face lessons.
- The parents' or guardians' own account should be used if possible rather than a child's, to deliver lessons. Parents may set up a separate account for their child under their control.
- The pupil must take lessons in a room with an open door and parents/guardians must provide that one of them or a trusted adult shall be in the same premises as the pupil while the lesson takes place.
- During GROUP tuition, all of the participants should be visible throughout the lesson. Any exception from this requires the express permission of the tutor.
- Lessons may be suspended in the following circumstances: If there is inappropriate attire or if any of the provisions of this policy are not complied with the tutor will explain why the lesson will be suspended. The lesson can resume when the pupil is suitably attired and all provisions are complied with. Children should not send any material to tutors by whatever platform. Only parents/guardians are permitted to send anything to tutors, and it must strictly related or connected to the provision of music lessons.

Recording lessons:

- Lessons should not be recorded without written permission from both tutor and student (if adult) or parent/guardian.
- If recordings are considered helpful, they should ideally be made by the student/parent/guardian.
- Recordings must not be shared with any other party.
- Recordings will be deleted securely as quickly as possible if the tutor, student or parent/guardian withdraws consent.