

Royal Northern College of Music
<b>Child Protection Policy</b>
Policy & Procedure
Department: Safeguarding
Document owner: Academic Registrar
Approval Committee: Executive Committee / Board of Governors
Introduced: July 2002
Revised: October 2023
Period of Approval: Annual
Review Date: November 2024

RNCM  
ROYAL NORTHERN  
COLLEGE of MUSIC

## 1. **Policy Statement**

1.1 There may be occasions where, through their work and social and corporate responsibility and outreach activities, individuals working for or with the College will work, or otherwise come into contact, with children.

1.2 The College is committed to:

- Ensuring the safety and welfare of children;
- Raising awareness of issues relating to the safety and welfare of children and the promotion of a safe environment for children;
- Raising awareness of the different types of abuse, aiding the identification of children at risk of abuse and providing procedures for reporting concerns;
- Ensuring suspicions and allegations of abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- Ensuring staff are aware of and understand their responsibilities regarding child protection, including those set out in this policy;
- Ensuring staff are aware of and understand the role of the College's Designated Senior Person (DSP), Designated Senior Person-Deputy (DSP-d) and Child Protection Liaison Officers (CPLO);
- Ensuring staff are aware of and understand the importance of confidentiality;
- Providing appropriate training for staff in relation to child protection, including regarding the responsibilities of staff set out in this policy.

1.3 This policy seeks to support the College and its staff in meeting the commitments outlined above.

1.4 The College is mindful, and will remain mindful when implementing this policy, of its legal obligations. The College adheres to the principles outlined in the Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004 as amended by Children and Social Work Act 2017, and guidance issued by the Government regarding child protection (including *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (Department for Education and Skills, 2021) and *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government, 2018)).

## 2. **Scope of the Policy**

2.1 This policy applies to all individuals working for or with the College, including all workers and employees (at all levels and grades and including trainees, homeworkers, part-time and fixed-term employees, casual workers and agency staff), officers, governors, consultants and contractors (collectively referred to as 'staff' in this policy). This policy applies to all work and activities undertaken, including at the College's premises and elsewhere.

**Please note:** the teaching of any student (under 18 or those over 18) from the tutor's or student's home or away from College premises is **not** permitted.

- 2.2 References in this policy to 'child' and 'children' are to persons under the age of 18. The College also recognises that some adults are also vulnerable to abuse and accordingly the procedures may be applied (with appropriate adaptations) to allegations of abuse and the protection of vulnerable adults.

### **3. Role and Responsibilities**

- 3.1 **All staff** should ensure that they read this policy and understand the standards expected of them and their responsibilities under the policy. All staff have a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of children and to take appropriate steps (including those set out in this policy) to ensure that suspicions and allegations of abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. Staff must be aware that there is a process for making referrals to Children's Social Care either because a child is in need (Section 17 of the 1989 Children's Act) or is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm (section 47). Staff should report any concerns to the Designated Senior Person or, in the case of an emergency, Children's Social Care directly.
- 3.2 **The Board** is responsible for ensuring that the College provides a safe and secure working environment in which to study for those children and vulnerable adults for whom it has a duty of care, which includes ensuring that the College's policies and procedures for child protection meet statutory requirements. To assist in this process, the Board appoints a 'nominated governor for safeguarding' to maintain an overview of safeguarding arrangements, primarily via liaison with the 'Designated Senior Person' (DSP).
- 3.3 **The Executive Committee**, in pursuance of its function as the principal policy-making authority of the College, is responsible for ensuring appropriate supervision for students under the age of 18 including safeguarding arrangements. The Academic Registrar chairs the Safeguarding Working Group and details of the full membership of the group are contained within the Terms of Reference.

Any member of staff can make a referral directly to children's social care if there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child.

#### **3.4 Designated Senior Person (DSP)**

The DSP is the Executive Projects Officer of the College. The role of the DSP is to take lead responsibility for managing child protection issues and cases. This involves providing advice and support to other staff, making referrals to and liaising with the local authority and working with other agencies as required. Information relating to individual child protection cases is confidential, although some information may be shared with relevant College staff and appropriate agencies where a legal justification exists. The College will, at all times, act in accordance with its obligations in respect of confidentiality and under the Data Protection Act 1998.

- The DSP takes responsibility for the College's child protection practice, policy, procedures and professional development. The DSP ensures that the

reporting arrangements required by the Board are in place, which include an annual report.

- The DSP refers cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies. The DSP also acts as a source of support, advice and expertise within the College when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies. The DSP liaises with the Principal to inform him/her of any issues and on-going investigations and to ensure there is always cover for the DSP role.
- The DSP (and deputy and Child Protection Liaison Officers) should have appropriate training in order to be able to recognise signs of abuse and know when it is appropriate to make a referral. The DSP must have a working knowledge of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, the conduct of a child protection conference and must be able to contribute to these when required (including ensuring that the College's concerns and views are represented and taken into account during a child protection conference).
- The DSP ensures that all appropriate staff receive induction training covering child protection and an understanding of safeguarding issues including the cause of abuse and neglect. Staff should be able to identify the signs and indicators of abuse and should know how to respond effectively when they have concerns or when a disclosure is made to them.
- Records should be kept (by the HR Department) of all training (basic and advanced) including dates, provider and staff in attendance.
- The DSP ensures that the College's policies relating to safeguarding (Child Protection Policy and Disclosure and Barring Service Policy) are reviewed appropriately and in the case of Child Protection, annually. All staff and students should have access to and understand the Child Protection Policy. Regular briefings and updates should be provided at relevant staff meetings to ensure that staff are reminded of their responsibilities. The DSP should also ensure that parents of all students under 18 years old receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy which alerts them to the fact that referrals can be made and the College's role in this process.
- The DSP ensures that detailed accurate records are kept securely by the Designated Senior Person - Deputy for any children where there are safeguarding concerns. Records are confidential and should be kept separately from students' records.

### 3.5 **Designated Senior Person - Deputy (DSPd)**

The DSPd is the Head of Human Resources of the College. The role of the DSPd is to provide support to the DSP and undertake in their absence the duties as described above. The DSPd will also take lead responsibility for the Disclosure and Barring Service, ensuring that all relevant staff have appropriate clearance and that records are retained. The DSPd will ensure that the DBS is informed if any member of staff has been dismissed or removed from duties due to a safeguarding concern.

### 3.6 **Child Protection Liaison Officers (CPLO)**

CPLOs will be responsible for dealing with reports of any suspicions or allegations of abuse, in liaison with the DSP and/or DSPd. They will be known as such to staff and volunteers throughout the institution. The role of the CPLO involves:

- Receiving and recording information from staff, volunteers, children, vulnerable adults or parents who have safeguarding concerns;
- Providing detailed, accurate and secure written records of referrals/concerns to the Designated Senior Person Deputy;
- Assessing the information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information about the matter as appropriate;
- Acting as a source of support, advice and expertise within the institution where appropriate;
- Consulting initially with the DSP who may contact a statutory child protection agency (local children's services department, NSPCC) for advice. The DSP may then make a formal referral to the Local Children Services Authority, or in the case of an adult, contact the Adult Services Department. The CPLOs will liaise with the DSP to inform him/her of any issues concerning safeguarding and to ensure that there is always cover available for the CPLOs;
- Working with the DSP to ensure that the Child Protection Policy is reviewed, and updated, as required;
- Ensuring that parents/carers of students under 18 years old receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy.

## 4. **Recruitment**

4.1 The College will take appropriate steps, including in relation to the recruitment of staff, to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. The recruitment checks carried out by the College will include, where appropriate:

- An appropriate identity check
- An appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service check
- A check regarding eligibility to work in the UK
- Obtaining satisfactory references, with specific reference to child protection.

## **5. Definitions of Abuse**

5.1 The definition of abuse for the purpose of this policy (which is taken from *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (HM Government, 2021) includes:

### **5.2 Abuse**

A form of maltreatment of a child. 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 others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

### **5.3 Physical abuse**

A form of abuse which 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.

### **5.4 Emotional abuse**

Involves the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), 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, although it may occur alone.

### **5.5 Sexual abuse**

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

## 5.6 **Neglect**

Involves the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is 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); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## 5.7 **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

Both CSE and CCE both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunities to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

## 5.8 **Peer-on-peer abuse**

Includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, physical abuse, sexting and initiation/hazing type violence/rituals. The College will not tolerate these behaviours. Incidents will be thoroughly and appropriately investigated. Support will be offered to the victim, perpetrator and other children affected through the College's usual wellbeing services. Investigations will be undertaken following the procedure in section 6, paying particular attention to the age and developmental stage of the child. Although peer-to-peer abuse is generally gendered (i.e. more likely that girls are victims and boys are perpetrators) investigations must be fair and unbiased. Students are provided with age-appropriate expectations of behaviour.

5.9 In addition, there are a number of specific safeguarding issues which can arise, including via peer on peer abuse, which are covered by this policy, including:

- bullying (including cyberbullying)
- child sexual exploitation
- drug and alcohol taking
- fabricated or induced illness
- faith abuse

- female genital mutilation
- forced marriage and relationship abuse
- gangs and youth violence
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls
- hate
- mental health
- radicalisation
- sexting
- trafficking
- Upskirting.

5.10 The above is a non-exhaustive list and there may be other forms of abuse, or examples of abuse, which require action under this policy.

## 6. Procedure

6.1 If a member of staff has suspicions or is concerned that a child has been abused or is at risk of abuse they must immediately inform a CPLO (if there is a suspicion that a member of staff may be abusing a child this must be reported immediately to the Principal). The member of staff will be asked to complete a written record of the suspicions or concerns using Form CP1 (**Appendix 1**) and pass this to the CPLO as soon as possible.

6.2 Members of staff should report any such suspicions or concerns regardless of the potential cause(s) or source(s) of such abuse and must not carry out their own investigations.

6.3 The CPLO who is informed of the suspicions or concerns will assess the information disclosed and take appropriate action. The CPLO will, together with other appropriate senior staff (where appropriate), assess whether the suspicions or concerns should be referred to social services and/or the police and/or the College's Human Resources Department for consideration. Any decisions taken, including the reason(s) for the decisions, will be clearly recorded. Where a decision is made to refer the suspicions or concerns to social services and/or the police, the CPLO will complete Form CP2 (**Appendix 2**).

6.4 If a child discloses issues to a member of staff which indicate potential abuse, the member of staff should:

- Listen carefully and stay calm;
- Not interview the child or challenge any information disclosed, but question normally and without pressure, in order to be sure that they understand what the child is telling them;
- Not examine a child for signs of abuse or invite them to show signs of abuse;
- Not put words into the child's mouth;
- Reassure the child that by telling them, they have done the right thing;

- Inform the child that they must pass the information on, but that only those that need to know about it will be told;
- Not promise to keep the information disclosed confidential (as it may be necessary for this to be disclosed internally and/or to the relevant authorities and appropriate external agencies on a need-to-know basis);
- Inform them of to whom they will report the matter;
- Note the main points carefully;
- Make a detailed note as soon as possible of the date, time, place, what the child said, did and their questions using Form CP1 (**Appendix 1**) and immediately inform a CPLO of the matters disclosed (and provide the CPLO with the completed Form CP1).

## **7. Confidentiality**

- 7.1 Members of staff must be mindful, and remain mindful, of the importance of ensuring that confidentiality is, where possible, maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated by staff on a need to know basis only.

## **8. Related Policies and monitoring and Review of Policy**

- 8.1 The College policies listed below are also relevant in seeking to ensure the safety and welfare of children:
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
  - Disclosure and Barring Service Policy
  - Induction Policy
  - Policy on relationships between College staff and students
  - Policy on physical contact between College staff and students
- 8.2 The College's Executive Committee shall be responsible for reviewing this policy to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.

**APPENDIX 1**

**FORM CP1  
STRICTLY RESTRICTED  
CHILD PROTECTION RECORDING FORM**

For

a) Disclosure between.....and.....

or

b) Cause for concern raised by.....

Date and time.....

**Persons Present:**

**Circumstances:**

**Disclosure/Concern:**

Signed .....

Date/time .....

Report passed to CPLO .....

Report passed to relevant authority by..... on.....

**APPENDIX 2**

**FORM CP2  
STRICTLY RESTRICTED  
CHILD PROTECTION LIAISON OFFICER  
REFERRAL/ACTION**

**Name of Child**.....**DoB**.....

Date and Time	Record of Conversation	Action