

ESM Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

The Excelsis School of Music ('the ESM') is a privately owned business which provides professional music tuition and educational services to adults and children of any age or ability. This policy and guidance is specifically focused on children. For the purposes of this policy and guidance a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

This policy and guidance should be observed by all members of staff at The Excelsis School of Music.

Nearly all staff members (teaching and non-teaching) of ESM will have frequent contact with children in the course of their professional activities. The ESM acknowledges that it has a responsibility to promote best practice and the highest standards of conduct among its staff in relation to the safety of children. It also recognises that good safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are also in place to all ESM staff members, as they can help protect them from misunderstandings or erroneous allegations.

The ESM is committed to practices which protect children from harm.

Background

All ESM staff members who have access to or contact with children must:

- recognise and accept they have a responsibility to protect any children within their sphere of work and care;
- develop awareness of the issues which can cause children harm and have knowledge of and be able to recognise signs of the four most common types of abuse (emotional, physical, sexual, neglect);
- be aware of 'grooming' behaviour (the befriending of children as a precursor to abuse); and
- immediately report any concerns using the ESM's procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns.

The ESM in turn will endeavour to safeguard children by:

1. adopting a Safeguarding Code of Practice for all ESM staff members;
2. adopting a procedure for reporting safeguarding concerns; and
3. reporting concerns to the relevant authorities.

N.B. The Principle of ESM is committed to keeping the ESM Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Code of Practice under constant review.

The Policy

It is the ESM's policy that:

1. All ESM staff members accept responsibility for the welfare of children with whom they come into contact in the course of their work, and that they will report any concerns about a child or somebody else's behaviour, using the procedures laid down.
2. There is a Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) within the ESM who will take action following any expression of concern and the lines of responsibility in respect of child protection are clear.
3. The Principle knows how to make appropriate referrals to statutory child protection agencies.
4. All ESM staff members who come into contact with children in the course of their professional activities must adhere to the ESM Safeguarding Code of Practice, the procedure for reporting safeguarding concerns and have regard to any other relevant guidance issued by the ESM. Failure to comply with these obligations may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the ESM Disciplinary Procedure.
5. Information relating to any allegation or disclosure must be clearly recorded as soon as possible, and there is a procedure setting out who should record information and the time-scales for passing it on.
6. The Children Act 1989 states that the 'welfare of the child is paramount'. This means that considerations of confidentiality which might apply to other situations should not be allowed to over-ride the right of children to be protected from harm. However, every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned when an allegation has been made and is being investigated.

7. This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be referred to or included in recruitment, training and policy materials, where appropriate, and this policy will be openly and widely made available to staff members and parents/ guardians of pupils and will be actively promoted within the organisation.
8. A culture of mutual respect between children and ESM staff members will be encouraged, with adults modelling good practice in this context.
9. It is part of the ESM's acceptance of its responsibility of duty of care towards children that ESM staff members who encounter child protection concerns in the context of their work will be supported when they report their concerns in good faith.

Our Code of Practice

1. Inappropriate physical contact with children must be avoided. Physical contact is only appropriate in very limited circumstances.
2. It is not good practice to take children alone in a car on journeys, however short, unless with the prior consent of the child's parent or guardian, and then only in exceptional circumstances.
3. Do not make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child, even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted. Inappropriate remarks include innuendo, swearing, and discussing their or your own intimate relationships.
4. Other than in exceptional circumstances, do not communicate directly with children by email or text messages and only then with the prior consent of the child's parent or guardian. If electronic communication is necessary best practice would be to communicate directly with parents or guardians.
5. Never communicate with children via Twitter, Facebook or other social media.
6. Do not engage in behaviour which could be construed as 'grooming' a child (for example giving a child money, presents or favours or talking or behaving in an inappropriate or unprofessional manner towards children).
7. Do take a disclosure of abuse from a child seriously. It is important not to deter children from making a 'disclosure' of abuse through fear of not being believed, and to listen to what they have to say. If the allegation gives rise to a child protection

concern it is important to follow the ESM's procedure for reporting such concerns, and not to attempt to investigate the concern yourself.

8. Always report any concerns immediately to the ESM's Designated Safeguarding Person regarding the conduct of another ESM staff member in relation to children or vulnerable adults.
9. Remember that those who abuse children can be of any age (even other children), gender, ethnic background or class, and it is important not to allow personal preconceptions about people to prevent appropriate action taking place.
10. Good practice includes valuing and respecting children as individuals, and the adult modelling of appropriate conduct - which will always exclude bullying, shouting, racism, sectarianism or sexism.

Guidance on responding to a child making an allegation of abuse

1. Stay calm.
2. Listen carefully to what is said and show that you are taking it seriously.
3. Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets.
4. Tell the child that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it.
5. Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace.
6. Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
7. Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
8. Tell them what you will do next, and with whom the information will be shared
9. Make no judgement about what you have heard.
10. Record in writing what was said, using the child's own words as soon as possible - note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.
11. Remember that whilst you may have been the first person encountering an allegation of abuse it is not your responsibility to decide whether abuse has

occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies, following a referral from the Designated Safeguarding Person in the organisation.

How to report your concerns - reporting procedures for ESM staff members

ESM members could have their suspicion or concern raised in a number of ways, the most likely of which are:

1. the conduct of another music professional or adult;
2. a child 'disclosing' abuse;
3. bruising or evidence of physical hurt;
4. unusual behaviour by a child.

If an ESM staff member has such concerns they should report them immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Person within the organisation in the first instance.

If a child in your care has suffered a serious injury as a result of abuse, seek medical attention immediately and then inform your Local Authority Children's Social Care Department. You can seek advice from the NSPCC free 24-hour Child Protection Helpline **(0808 800 5000)**.

ESM staff members are always able to contact the ESM's Designated Safeguarding Person if they wish to discuss any safeguarding concerns, however they arise. ESM staff members must report to the ESM's Designated Safeguarding Person immediately any concerns they may have about the conduct of another ESM staff member in relation to children.

The most common examples of the types of concerns that must be reported immediately are:

- someone has behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- someone has possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- someone has behaved towards a child in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

In the instance where The Principal is not the DSP, the DSP will consider the concerns raised and refer them immediately to The Principal. The Principal will consider the matter and then, if appropriate, refer it to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or, after taking appropriate advice (which may include discussing the circumstances on a confidential basis with professional advisers), decide either to deal with the matter internally or not to take any further action. If further information comes to light at a later stage which warrants a referral to the LADO, The Principal will make this referral.