

Westmorland Youth Orchestra

Safeguarding Policy

Approved by committee October 2019

Updated 31 January 2020 and 17 May 2021

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Updated 25 October 2024

The purpose and scope of this policy statement

Westmorland Youth Orchestra works with children and young people as part of its activities. These include feeder, ensemble and theory groups as well as the main orchestra.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children and young people who attend Westmorland Youth Orchestra and its feeder, ensemble and theory groups as well as its staff and volunteers.
- to provide parents, staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.

This policy statement applies to anyone working on behalf of Westmorland Youth Orchestra, including the conductor, the committee, the tutors, paid staff and volunteers.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from nspcc.org.uk/childprotection.

We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.
- staff and volunteers should have a safe working environment and be respected at all times.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of people involved with WYO is paramount
- all children and adults, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children and adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children, young people, staff and volunteers safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a nominated safeguarding lead
- developing safeguarding policies and procedures which reflect best practice
- using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- implementing a code of conduct for staff and volunteers

- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- recording and storing information professionally and securely.

Related policies and procedures

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures, including:

1. Procedures for rehearsals and concerts
2. Procedures for responding to concerns about a child or young person's wellbeing
3. Dealing with allegations of abuse against a child or young person
4. Role of the designated safeguarding officer
5. Managing allegations against staff and volunteers
6. Safer recruitment policy and procedures
7. Code of conduct for staff and volunteers
8. Anti-bullying policy and procedures
9. Photography and image sharing guidance
10. Child protection records retention and storage policy
11. Whistleblowing

Contact details

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NSPCC Helpline

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We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice **annually**.

This policy was last reviewed on:25 October 2024.....(date)

WYO Safeguarding Procedures

1. Procedures for rehearsals and concerts

A register is taken at all WYO rehearsals and concerts:

The purposes of the register are to

- list all players and tutors present
- check that players have returned after the break.
- check names in the event of a fire evacuation
- The Musical Director or his nominated representative is responsible for ensuring that the register of players to be filled in at the start of the session, with late arrivals added as appropriate. They shall also be responsible for removing the register from the building in the event that the building has to be evacuated.
- The register will also be taken after the break in rehearsals. Any unexplained absences should be noted by the Music Director and immediately investigated. Any absence that cannot be explained should be discussed with the orchestra member of staff for the relevant section. The Music Director and that member of staff shall then take such steps as seem appropriate in their professional judgement to establish the safety and wellbeing of the missing person.
- The up-to-date player database is available on the orchestra tablet at all rehearsals. The data is password protected.

Breaks

Older teenagers have always been allowed to leave the Castle Street Centre during the rehearsal break with their parents' permission. In practice, however, the majority of orchestra members stay in the building.

From academic year 2019-20 onwards parents will be advised that all children with parental permission to leave in the break must do so in groups of two or more. A register will continue to be taken on their return. Parents will also be advised that, though a number of responsible adults are present throughout, it is not practical to supervise their children closely during the break.

Fire procedures

Orchestra members will be reminded at the start of every term about the fire procedures for the Castle Street Building.

First Aid

An incident book for accidents will be provided at all rehearsals and concerts as well as advisory slips to be given to the parents of anyone who bumps their head.

Concerts

Where possible, new concert venues will be visited by an adult member of WYO prior to a concert to ascertain the facilities there. If it is not possible to visit, information will be gathered by telephone. A letter to parents/carers will give details of the venue, arrangements for transport and meals. If players will be unsupervised at any time, this will be mentioned in the letter. If transport is by coach, adults will travel with the players. At least one of these adults (excluding the driver) must have been DBS checked.

2. Procedures for responding to concerns about a child or young person's wellbeing

If a child tells a member of staff about abuse that they have suffered or that another child has suffered abuse then they should:

- Stay calm and listen to what is being said
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – but only those who need to know about it. Do not promise to keep secrets
- Allow the child to continue at his/her own pace
- Ask questions for clarification only, and avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Tell the child what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared
- 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
- Pass a written record to the designated safeguarding lead, or any member of the Management Committee who will in turn decide what action to take.
- Keep the discussion confidential, following the procedure for reporting concerns, aside from this do not discuss with others.

Having received the report the safeguarding leader should decide what action to take:

Option one: No action taken- the concern does not constitute a safeguarding concern. Safeguarding leader to record decision made and reasons for it.

Option two: Uncertain? Leader to consult with Children's Social Care or the NSPCC Helpline and to record action and decision taken. Cumbria multi-agency safeguarding hub (including out of hours) 0333 2401727. NSPCC helpline (24 hours) 0808 8005000.

Option three: Refer to Children's Social Care and/or the Police within 24 hours. Put in writing within 48 hours. Record action and decision taken. Safeguarding leader to follow up after three working days if received no feedback on action taken by children's social care and to record outcome of any follow up contact.

3. Dealing with allegations of abuse against a child or young person

If a child tells a member of staff about allegations against another child they should:

- Listen to and record the allegations as per the procedure in the previous section.
- If allegations have been made against a child the member of staff should speak to the safeguarding leader who can advise on the best way to proceed. The member of staff should not confront the child about the allegations before taking advice, it may make the situation worse.
- For more advice about speaking to a child who may be behaving abusively, contact the NSPCC Helpline on [0808 800 5000](tel:08088005000) or help@nspcc.org.uk.
- If a member of staff notices a child behaving inappropriately they may need to talk to them about this immediately, in order to manage the behaviour. They should talk to them calmly and explain why their behaviour is unsuitable and what they can do to improve it and record this contact.

4. Role of the designated safeguarding officer

WYO will appoint one person to:

- Receive information from staff, volunteers or members who have safeguarding concerns, and record it
- Assess information promptly and carefully
- Be available for support and advice if disclosure, suspicion or allegation of abuse is reported.
- Be responsible for a confidential record for related information
- Liaise and consult with local statutory safeguarding agencies
- Liaise with the Chairman of the committee on areas of concern.

5. Managing allegations against staff and volunteers

There may be instances where there are concerns about the behaviour of a member of staff towards a child/ren. The concerns may be very clearly abusive, e.g. hitting a child or subtler, e.g. isolating a child or sharing personal phone numbers. It might involve a breach of the WYO code of behaviour, or it could be an allegation made by a child, other staff member, or another adult.

In any of these circumstances the following procedure should be followed:

1. Staff are responsible for sharing their concern with the Safeguarding Lead who will explore the seriousness of the allegation/concern.
2. If the member of staff has behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child or possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or behaved towards a child in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children then the Safeguarding Lead and Committee Chairman together will be responsible for coordinating the management of the concern. This will include the decision-making about any immediate protective actions that are warranted: for example, informing and supporting the parents/guardian and child/ren; suspension from role; confinement; change of duties etc.
3. They will also determine if the police need to be contacted and/or the Local Authority Designated Officer. There may need to be one or more type of inquiry depending on the nature of the concern: a child protection inquiry, police investigation and/or a disciplinary process.
4. In dealing with any allegation the Safeguarding Lead needs to balance: the seriousness of the allegation; the risk of harm to children; possible contamination of the evidence and the welfare of the person concerned.
5. The Safeguarding Lead will require a written account from the member of staff hearing the allegation/concern and a summary of any available additional information including the names and addresses of any potential witnesses. Both documents should be signed and dated.
6. Investigations will be dealt with quickly, fairly and impartially. The member of staff should be informed about the allegation or concern as soon as possible but not before consultation with the Safeguarding Lead and children's social care/police where necessary, in respect of timing and content.

6. Safer recruitment policy and procedures

No prospective member of staff will have their contract confirmed until that person has been DBS checked. Volunteers (such as adult players) who have the potential to find themselves alone with children on a regular basis should also be checked.

7. Code of conduct for staff and volunteers

This behaviour code outlines the conduct WYO expects from all our staff and volunteers. The behaviour code aims to help us protect children and young people from abuse and reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations being made.

The role of staff and volunteers:

When working with or for children and young people, staff and volunteers are acting in a position of trust. They are likely to be seen as a role model and must act appropriately, placing the well-being of the performer above the development of the performance.

Responsibility: staff and volunteers are responsible for

- prioritising the welfare of children and young people
- providing a safe environment for children and young people. This includes having good awareness of issues to do with safeguarding and child protection and taking action when appropriate.
- staying within the law at all times
- modelling good behaviour for children and young people to follow
- challenging all unacceptable behaviour
- reporting all allegations/suspensions of abuse following our reporting procedures. This includes abusive behaviour being displayed by an adult or child and directed at anybody of any age.

Rights: staff and volunteers should

- treat children and young people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination
- understand that children and young people are individuals with individual needs
- respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems between yourself and others, and appreciate that all participants bring something valuable and different to the group/organisation
- challenge discrimination and prejudice
- encourage young people and adults to speak out about attitudes or behaviour that makes them uncomfortable.

Relationships: staff and volunteers should

- promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect
- avoid favouritism
- be patient with others
- use special caution when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- ensure your contact with children and young people is appropriate and relevant to the work of the project you are involved in
- ensure that whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with fewer than three children.
- if a child specifically asks for or needs some private time with a member of staff or volunteer, ensure other staff or volunteers know where they and the child are.
- only provide personal care in an emergency and make sure there is more than one adult present if possible.

Respect: staff and volunteers should

- listen to and respect children at all times
- seriously, actively involving them in planning activities wherever possible
- In some cases it may be necessary to break confidentiality in order to follow child protection procedures; if this is the case it is important to explain this to the child or young person at the earliest opportunity.

Unacceptable behaviour: when working with children and young people, staff and volunteers must not

- allow concerns or allegations to go unreported
- take unnecessary risks
- smoke, consume alcohol or use illegal substances

- develop inappropriate relationships with children and young people
- make inappropriate promises to children and young people
- engage in behaviour that is in any way abusive
- act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- patronise or belittle children and young people
- make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and young people.

Upholding this code of behaviour: staff and volunteers should always follow this code of behaviour and never rely on their reputation or that of our organisation to protect themselves. If you have behaved inappropriately you will be subject to our disciplinary procedures. Depending on the seriousness of the situation, staff and volunteers may be asked to leave WYO. We may also make a referral to statutory agencies such as the police and/or the local authority child protection services. If staff and volunteers become aware of any breaches of this code, they must report them to the designated safeguarding officer. If necessary staff and volunteers should follow the whistle-blowing procedure and safeguarding procedures about child protection or related topics.

8. Anti-bullying policy and procedures

WYO recognises that:

- bullying causes real distress. It can affect a person's health and development and, at the extreme, can cause significant harm
- all people, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- everyone has a role to play in preventing all forms of bullying (including online) and putting a stop to bullying.

WYO will seek to prevent bullying by making sure that all adults present are alert to incidents which may constitute bullying, and that they will take appropriate action if necessary.

9. Photography and image sharing guidance

WYO will take photos, videos and audio recordings of rehearsals and concerts for publicity and archiving purposes. To ensure best practice in safeguarding and to comply with GDPR regulations we will follow these guidelines.

- WYO will seek written parental consent for photography when a child joins WYO or one of its feeder groups. Students over 16 years old can give their own permission but parents will still be contacted. This permission can be withdrawn at any time but please be aware that it may not be possible to retrieve images that are already in public circulation.
- Images and videos will be used to raise the profile of WYO, to attract new members, for concert publicity, fundraising activities and reporting to sponsors.
- WYO will use images, videos and audio recordings on their website, in the local and national press and on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.
- WYO will take all steps to ensure the images are used solely for the purposes intended.
- Children will not be named except in the case of featured soloists, conductors etc for which we will obtain additional verbal permission.
- Images and recordings will only be taken by WYO officials or those appointed by WYO. Clear written expectations will be given to professional photographers or the press who are invited to an event. Photographers will not have unsupervised access

to children. No photography sessions will be allowed outside the event or at a child's home without permission.

- WYO will keep hard copies of images locked securely and electronic images in a protected folder with restricted access.
- Some images, videos or recordings may be kept permanently once they are published and will be kept as an archive of WYO. Any other images and recordings will be stored/used for a maximum of seven years and after that time will be destroyed or, for large group images only, archived.

10. Child protection records retention and storage policy

If there is a concern about a child's welfare WYO will keep an accurate record of:

- the date and time of the incident/disclosure
- the date and time of the report
- the name and role of the person to whom the concern was originally reported and their contact details
- the name and role of the person making the report (if this is different from the above) and their contact details
- the names of all parties who were involved in the incident, including any witnesses to an event
- what was said or done and by whom
- any action taken to look into the matter
- any further action taken (such as a referral being made)
- the reasons why the organisation decided not to refer those concerns to a statutory agency (if relevant).

The record should always be signed by the person making the report.

If there is a concern about an adult working with children, WYO will keep clear and comprehensive records of all allegations made against adults working or volunteering with children, including:

- what the allegations were
- how the allegations were followed up
- how things were resolved
- any action taken
- decisions taken about their suitability to work with children.
- If the allegation is found to be malicious the details will be destroyed, but a basic record stating that a malicious allegation was made on a certain date will be kept.

11. Whistleblowing

The NSPCC whistleblowing advice line is available for help and advice in cases where

- concerns are not dealt with properly or may be covered up
- a concern that was raised hasn't been acted upon
- someone is worried that repercussions are likely to arise if they raise a concern.

0800 028 0285

help@nspcc.org.uk