

## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

### **Introduction**

The Notting Hill Academy of Music (NHAM) believes that it is always unacceptable for a child, young person or vulnerable adult to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, by commitment to practice which protects them.

NHAM's Designated Safeguarding Officer is the Principal: Ewan Grant who can be contacted at: [ewan@nottinghillacademyofmusic.com](mailto:ewan@nottinghillacademyofmusic.com). Any concerns involving safeguarding can be directed through the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

### **We recognise that:**

- the welfare of the child/young person/vulnerable adult is paramount
- all children/vulnerable adults regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- working in partnership with children, young people/vulnerable adults, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

NHAM recognises that it has a moral and statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of its students. This document offers guidance and outlines procedures that should be followed in all cases of suspected abuse and situations of serious risk.

It applies to all students under the age of 18 or those over 18 who are considered to be 'vulnerable adults'.

- A child is anyone under the age of 18 years up to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday
- A 'vulnerable adult' is a person aged 18 years or over who is, or may be;
- In need of community care services by reason of learning or other disability, age or illness, is unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation (*Who decides? 1997 Lord Chancellor's Department and 'No Secrets' 2000*)
- Whether a person is vulnerable will depend upon surrounding circumstances and/or environment. Each case is judged individually and on its own merits.

### **The purpose of this policy is:**

- to provide protection for the children and vulnerable adults who receive NHAM services.
- to provide staff with guidance on procedures they should adopt if they suspect a child or vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of, serious harm.

This policy applies to all staff employed by NHAM.

### **We will seek to safeguard children and vulnerable adults by:**

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- adopting child/vulnerable adult protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for NHAM staff.
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.

- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, young people, vulnerable adults their parents/carers and staff.
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents/carers appropriately.
- providing effective management for staff through supervision, support and training.

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

## **What is Abuse?**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

## **Categories of abuse**

### **Physical abuse**

- Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child or vulnerable adult.

### **Emotional abuse**

- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child/vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve conveying to children/vulnerable adults that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving them 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. These may include interactions that are beyond the person's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child/vulnerable adult participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children/vulnerable adults frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or their exploitation or corruption. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment, though it may occur alone.

### **Sexual abuse**

- Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not they are 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/vulnerable adults in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming them in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

## **Neglect**

- Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their 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 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.

(Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2015, Appendix A)

## **Other forms of abuse associated with vulnerable adults include:**

### **Financial Abuse**

- including theft, fraud, exploitation, the misuse of possessions or benefits and pressure applied in relation to financial transactions.

### **Discriminatory Abuse**

- that is based on a person's disability, including harassment.  
The effects of child abuse/adult abuse are wide-ranging and profound. They vary accordingly to the type of abuse and how long it has been endured but can include:
  - behavioural problems
  - educational problems
  - mental health problems
  - relationship difficulties
  - drug and alcohol problems
  - suicide and self-harm
  - in extreme cases, death following abuse.

There is a statutory duty on local authorities to take steps to protect children and the police have powers so that they can act to protect them where necessary. The police and Children's Social Care have the primary legal responsibility to protect children and investigate allegations of abuse.

## **In relation to vulnerable adults, the government set out six key principles which apply to all sectors and settings:**

- Empowerment - People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- Prevention - It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- Proportionality - The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- Protection - Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- Partnership - Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- Accountability – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

## **Recognising Abuse**

It is recognised that some staff and students will have little, if any, contact with children/vulnerable adults at work and consequently may not be in a position to recognise abuse.

Abuse can and does occur both within families and in institutional or community settings. It is acknowledged that some individuals seek to use voluntary and community organisations to gain access to children/vulnerable adults, and that it is necessary to have an open mind when the possibility arises that a member of staff or a student attending the NHAM is suspected of abuse or inappropriate activity.

### **Physical signs that may indicate that someone is being, or has been, abused:**

- unexplained or suspicious injuries, particularly if such an injury is unlikely to have occurred accidentally
- an injury for which the explanation appears inconsistent
- bruising/burns/cigarette burns/fractures which are unexplainable
- genital injuries/infections/bleeding or discomfort
- sudden speech disorders, delayed development, failure to grow
- constant hunger, stealing food, frequently dirty, smelly,
- untreated medical conditions or lack of treatment for illness or injury

### **Behavioural signs that may indicate a child/vulnerable adult has been abused or is being abused:**

- inappropriate sexual awareness or sexually explicit behaviour
- the child appears distrustful of adults
- unexplained changes in behaviour
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outburst
- running away, not wanting to go home
- cover up clothing to hide injuries
- flinching when approached, fear of adults, fear of men or women
- depression, low mood, self-harm, eating disorders
- sexualised language, play, lyrics, drawings or knowledge
- nightmares, bed wetting
- behaving increasingly secretively, possessing unexplained amounts of money, gifts
- drug and alcohol abuse, suicide
- excessive lack of confidence, need for approval, attention or affection
- missing classes, appointments, being continually late
- difficulty forming relationships, no friends

The recognition of abuse is not easy and it is not the place of staff and students to make such a judgement. However, it is their responsibility to act on concerns to safeguard the welfare of the child/vulnerable adult. If you feel uneasy about something you have seen or heard which could be deemed to be abuse, seek advice from the NHAM Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or a member of the Safeguarding Team.

## **Doing nothing is not an option**

In some cases of suspected abuse parents/carers may not be informed first. This is the decision of the DSO.

Reasonable physical restraint to prevent a child/vulnerable adult from harming itself, another person, or from causing serious damage to property is not deemed to be abuse.

### **How to respond to signs or suspicions of abuse**

All NHAM staff should report their concerns to a member of the NHAM Safeguarding Team or the Education Administrator/Registrar, there will always be a member of the designated safeguarding team on duty to respond to any allegations/suspicions/concerns of abuse. The Safeguarding Team includes the Principal, who is the Designated Safeguarding Officer. All members of the team will receive training to carry out these roles and this will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

### **Responding to allegations of abuse against a member of staff or another student**

Any allegation made against a member of staff or another student will be treated seriously and investigated immediately. The DSO will take appropriate action to safeguard the welfare of the child/young person, vulnerable adult or any others who it may affect. If necessary, the police will be notified.

### **How to respond to a child/young person or vulnerable adult telling you about abuse**

There are some basic principles in reacting to suspicions, allegations, and/or disclosures.

#### **What to do:**

- stay calm
- listen, hear and believe
- ask open ended clarification questions only
- give the child/young person/vulnerable adult time to say what they want
- reassure and explain that they have done the right thing in telling. Explain that only those people who need to know will be informed
- act immediately in accordance with the procedure in this policy
- record in writing as near verbatim as possible what was said as soon as you can
- report to the Designated Safeguarding Officer
- record the events in a report.

#### **What not to do:**

- do not over-react. It is extremely unlikely that the child/young person/vulnerable adult is in immediate danger
- do not probe for more information, questioning the child/young person/vulnerable adult may affect how their disclosure is received at a later date
- do not make assumptions, paraphrase and do not offer alternative explanations
- do not promise confidentiality to keep secrets or that everything will be ok (it might not)
- do not try to deal with it yourself
- do not make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- do not 'gossip' or disclose any information with colleagues about what has been said to you
- do not make the child/young person/vulnerable adult repeat the story unnecessarily

It is the duty of anyone who works with children/young people/vulnerable adults to report disclosure of abuse.

It is not for staff to decide whether or not a suspicion or allegation is true. All suspicions or allegations must be taken seriously and dealt with according to this procedure.

If the disclosure is made by a parent/guardian/carer, you should follow the same procedure and refer them to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

***Individual staff should never deal with abuse disclosures in isolation and should always refer to the DSO with responsibility for child/vulnerable adult protection. However, a key guidance in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'(2015) is the explicit statement that "in exceptional circumstances, such as in emergency or a genuine concern that appropriate action has not been taken, staff members can speak directly to children's social care".***

**No member of staff should give a student their personal phone numbers, email address or home address.**

### **Once a referral is made to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)**

The DSO will make an initial assessment of the allegation; consult with the staff involved and other designated staff as appropriate. This will usually involve speaking to the student at the earliest opportunity. A first priority is to ensure that the student is not in any immediate danger. Designated staff will seek medical attention for the student if the student is suffering from a serious injury.

The student may be asked to repeat the disclosure they have made. Every effort will be made to communicate with the student in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preference. This is especially important for students with a disability or those whose preferred language is not English.

The student will be asked if there are younger children or any vulnerable adults who might also be at risk. However, the DSL will avoid asking leading questions and will not attempt to investigate the allegations. A written account will be made of the disclosure and the context and the student may be asked to sign it.

If the student wishes to take the allegation forward, the DSO should support the student in contacting Children's Social Care, the Police or the NSPCC. When a student is not sure about taking the allegation forward, the DSO can, without necessarily identifying the person in question, discuss concerns with Children's Social Care or the police or with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Safeguarding contacts so that an informal decision can be reached. Contacts for the RBKC safeguarding team can be found here: <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/sharedservices/lscb/professionals/rbkcsafeguardingcontacts.aspx>

Following consultation, the DSO will ask for the student's views and whether they can understand the significance and consequences of a referral to Children's Social Care or the Police.

**However, it remains the responsibility of the DSO to take whatever action is necessary to ensure the student's safety and that of any other children or vulnerable adults who may be at risk. This may on occasion involve a referral against the wishes of the student involved.**

Where practicable, concerns will be discussed with a parent or guardian unless this may, either by delay or the behavioural response it may prompt, place the student at risk of harm. The student's view will also be considered in deciding whether to contact their parent/guardian. A written record will be made of any discussion with parents or guardians.

In the event of a decision to report, the DSO should inform the student of the proposed action and the reasons for the decision. Ideally this should happen before the appropriate agency is informed, unless doing so would place the young person at greater risk.

The DSO should contact the Safeguarding Team from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea by telephone in the first instance and record the date and time that this took place.

The DSO will agree with the recipient of the referral what the student and parents will be told, by whom and when. The DSO will make a confirmation of the referral in writing within 48 hours.

All concerns, discussions, decisions made and reasons for those decisions will be recorded. Written records will be kept confidential in a securely locked location and in accordance with the Data Protection Act. However, where the Police are involved then such records may need to be disclosed.

An NHAM Designated Person will be the college contact if Children's Social Care or the Police require further information about the student and if necessary, represent the NHAM at multi-agency strategy discussions or child protection case conferences.

There may be instances where more than one member of the designated staff will be involved in a particular Disclosure. On occasion, they may work collaboratively to deal with a case.

### **Role of the Notting Hill Academy of Music**

Within NHAM's duty of care it has a responsibility to act if there is a cause for concern and to notify the appropriate agencies so that they can investigate and take any action. NHAM has a responsibility to provide information to Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea safeguarding team about a student or family, if required for a child protection enquiry/assessment.

In addition, NHAM may also provide help or a specific service to a student as part of a protection plan agreed at a Child Protection Case Conference and could also contribute to reviewing a student's progress in this regard.

Therefore NHAM's response to its role in safeguarding the welfare of its students concerning abuse is:

- To appoint designated staff members with responsibility for child protection; this should include a member of the Principal
- To review and monitor the policy and its procedures annually
- To ensure that all new staff are checked with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- To ensure a risk assessment is undertaken in admitting a student who may pose a threat to others
- To reserve the right to refuse admission to any person who may pose a risk to young people or vulnerable adults
- To have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism ("the Prevent duty") under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act
- To have a Bullying and Harassment Policy and procedures for students to ensure that a young person who being bullied, groomed or subjected to inappropriate material via the internet, mobile phones or other modern technology, can be safeguarded and supported. To ensure

that students are aware of mechanisms for reporting bullying and abuse in college and on line

- To establish child protection protocols and effective communication with schools, when pupils on their rolls seek admission and attend NHAM and to ensure that all child protection files are transferred securely and as soon as possible
- To provide appropriate staff training at the recommended level (every second year for DSOs, regularly for other staff) to ensure staff are aware of the issue of protection from abuse and the procedures to follow starting from their initial induction, including providing staff with a copy of "Keeping Children Safe in Education 2015" and alerting them to "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015"
- To refer any young person or vulnerable adult to Children's Social Care or other appropriate agency e.g. the police or NSPCC, when the person requests it or the situation necessitates it, and to follow up concerns if dissatisfied with the response from Children's Social Care
- To ensure the person who discloses abuse is offered all possible appropriate support around the time of and after disclosure.
- To support staff who deal with a disclosure relating to safeguarding
- To keep records of a disclosure in a confidential file
- To make the policy & procedures available to all staff and students on the NHAM website.
- To raise awareness of the policy and procedures to those outside the NHAM via the prospectus and NHAM website
- To work together with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Safeguarding Team and Adult Protection Committees in the local area.