



BRISTOL PRE-CONSERVATOIRE

**SAFEGUARDING POLICY TO PROTECT
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Reviewed January 2025

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This policy recognises the following guiding principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children without exception have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All staff, freelance employees and volunteers have a responsibility to report concerns

Our responsibilities:

1. It is the responsibility of every paid and unpaid adult involved with the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire to ensure that all young people can engage with the organisation in a safe and enjoyable manner
2. The Bristol Pre-Conservatoire recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all students involved in music education by protecting them from physical, emotional or sexual harm and from neglect or bullying of any kind
3. Bristol Pre-Conservatoire is resolute in providing the highest possible standards of care. The policy and procedures apply to all those who are subject to the jurisdiction of the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire (whether in a paid or voluntary capacity)
4. The tutors of the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire recognise that they have a responsibility:
 - To safeguard and promote the interests and well-being of young people with whom they are working
 - To ensure that all adults who work with young people are aware of their roles and responsibilities and that opportunities to train in this aspect of their work are made available to them
 - To take all reasonable practical steps to protect young people from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment
 - To respect young people's rights, reasonable wishes and feelings
 - To take all reasonable steps to ensure that individuals involved with the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire are aware of situations which may compromise their responsibility or position

Procedures laid down in this policy will offer safeguards to the students with whom we work, and to our professional permanent and freelance staff. It is recognised that any procedure is only as effective as the ability and skill of those who operate it. Bristol Pre-Conservatoire is therefore committed to the effective recruitment and appropriate training of all our staff and tutors ('tutors' refers to all adults working within Bristol Pre-Conservatoire, including workshop leaders, visiting artists and musicians). This will enable them to work together with parents/carers and other organisations to ensure that the needs and the welfare of the students remain paramount.

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Key principles

1. Anyone under the age of 18 should be considered as a child for the purposes of this document.
2. The welfare of the child is paramount.
3. All children, whatever their age, gender, culture, ability, language, religious beliefs, racial origin, and/or sexual identity should be able to enjoy participating in the work of the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire in an educational and fun environment, safe from abuse of any kind.
4. It is the responsibility of child protection experts to determine whether abuse has taken place, but it is everyone's responsibility within the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire to report their concerns.
5. All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
6. Participants over the age of 18 and no longer in formal education will be risk-assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Legal and procedural framework

The practices and procedures are based on the principles contained within UK and international legislation and Government guidance, and have been designed to complement procedures on the Keeping Children Safe website, taking the following into consideration:

- The Children and Social Care Act 2017
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Keeping Children Safe (<https://bristolsafeguarding.org/children>)

If a safeguarding concern arises or an allegation is made it should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer by the DSO within one working day of an incident arising and prior to any further investigation taking place.

The LSCB that should be contacted is the one closest to the child's home address. If Bristol Pre-Conservatoire requires advice or guidance, they can contact their local LSCB or the NSPCC.

Bristol Safeguarding Children Board

First Response: 0117 903 6444 – if urgent referral, immediate risk of significant harm.

Otherwise refer at: [Child or Young Person Reporting Concern form](#)

Outside office hours 01454 615165 Emergency Duty Team-

BSCB website: <https://bristolsafeguarding.org/children-home/>

NSPCC Tel: 0808 800 5000 **Email:** help@nspcc.org.uk **Web:** www.nspcc.org.uk

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Recognising abuse in a music education organisation

Abuse is a powerful and emotive term. It is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by individuals and often by those they know and trust.

People working with children hold this trust and may be at risk of abusing their relationship with children and young people.

In order for Bristol Pre-Conservatoire to provide children with the best possible experiences and opportunities, it is imperative that all members of staff operate within an accepted ethical framework and demonstrate exemplary behaviour. This not only safeguards the welfare of young people and ensures that music education makes a positive contribution to their development, but also protects all personnel from false allegations of abuse or poor practice.

It is not always easy to differentiate poor practice from abuse, albeit intentional or unintentional. It is not, therefore, the responsibility of employees or volunteers at Bristol Pre-Conservatoire to determine whether or not abuse is taking place.

It is, however, their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and to act if they have a concern about the welfare of a young person.

We recognise the four main types of abuse as:

1. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve 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 ill-treatment of a child. (Definition taken from Department of Health et al, 1999, p.5-6)

Within the context of a music education organisation, emotional abuse may occur when tutors

- Provide repeated negative feedback
- Repeatedly ignore a child's efforts to progress
- Repeatedly demand performance levels above those of which the young person is capable

2. Abuse by neglect

This occurs when a child's essential needs for food, warmth and care fail to be met. Failing to or refusing to provide respect and affirmation could also be deemed as neglect.

In a music education organisation, neglect may occur when:

- Children are left alone without proper supervision
- A child is exposed to unnecessary heat or cold without adequate sustenance or protection
- A young person is exposed to an unacceptable risk of injury

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3. Physical abuse

This occurs when individuals, including sometimes children themselves, deliberately inflict injuries on a child, or knowingly do not prevent such injuries. It includes injuries caused by hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting or using excessive force. It also occurs when individuals give young people alcohol, or inappropriate drugs, or failing to supervise their access to these substances.

In a music education organisation, physical abuse may occur when:

- Tutors or helpers expose children and young people to over-rehearsing, over-working or fatigue
- Tutors or helpers expose children and young people to alcohol, or give them the opportunity to drink alcohol below the legal age

4. Sexual abuse

Girls and boys are abused by adults, both male and female, who use children to meet their own sexual needs. Examples include forcing a child to take part in sexual activity such as sexual intercourse, masturbation or oral sex, or showing children pornographic material.

In a music education situation; sexual abuse may occur when:

- Tutors working with children and young people engage in inappropriate physical contact that is or could be deemed to be sexual in nature
- Children are exposed to inappropriate language or discussion of a sexual nature, or are given access to inappropriate material (i.e pornography) either knowingly or unknowingly
- Tutors suggest that sexual favours can help (or refusal hinder) a musical career

Bullying

Bullying is not always easy to define and will not always be an adult abusing a young person. It is often the case that the bully is a young person. There are three main types of bullying.

- Physical, e.g. hitting, kicking, theft
- Verbal, e.g. racist or homophobic remarks
- Emotional, e.g. persistent negative feedback

Bullying behaviour may also include:

- Other forms of violence
- Sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing
- Ridiculing, humiliation
- Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Unwanted physical contact or abusive, offensive comments of a sexual nature
- Cyber-bullying and bullying through misuse of mobile phones; e.g. abusive messaging through social networking sites, forums, instant messaging services, text message, email and phone calls (see later section)



The competitive nature of music makes it a potential environment for the bully. This may manifest itself in some of the following ways:

- A parent who pushes too hard
- A workshop leader who adopts a 'performance at all costs' philosophy
- A person who intimidates others
- A workshop leader who is over-disciplinarian and officious

Indicators of abuse outside of the music education setting As responsible adults working with children on a regular basis, it is an important function of our duty of pastoral care, to be aware of the indicators of abuse.

These indicators are not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of them is not proof that the child is being abused.

Emotional Abuse

- Low self-esteem
- Decline in concentration levels
- Continual self-deprecation
- Emotional immaturity
- Extremes of behaviour

Neglect

- Constant hunger or tiredness
- Poor personal hygiene
- Poor state of or inappropriate clothing
- Frequent lateness or absence from the coaching sessions
- Low self-esteem
- Poor peer relationships

Physical abuse

- Current unexplained injuries
- Inappropriate excuses to explain injury
- Untreated injuries
- Fear of returning home
- Aggression towards others

Sexual Abuse

- Unexplained radical changes in behaviour
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- Distrust of adults
- Inappropriate language



Sometimes changes in behaviour can relate to other significant events in a young person's life, such as bereavement, internal family difficulties or bullying. Working in partnership with parents/carers and engaging in positive communication will help to ensure that reasons for changes in behaviour can be identified and action taken to support the young person.

It is NOT the responsibility of those working in Bristol Pre-Conservatoire to decide that abuse is occurring, but it IS their responsibility to act on any concerns.

Levels of awareness / Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP)

It is understandable that people who are well-motivated, loving and caring individuals with a deep commitment to music and its practice are reluctant to believe that children may be suffering harm in a music education environment or at home. It may be difficult to accept that children could be at risk because of the way the organisation is being run and the attitudes of those involved. Levels of awareness need to be raised without creating an atmosphere of anxiety or suspicion.

However, a basic principle should be that:

If anybody at Bristol Pre-Conservatoire becomes aware of anything which causes them to feel uncomfortable, they should talk to the Designated Safeguarding Person: Chris Green, Programme Manager.

This means being aware of the **attitudes** of staff, tutors and volunteers and of the **interactions** between them and the children, and with each other. Certain modes of behaviour by an individual or individuals may be excused by the comments: *"He/She has always behaved like that"* or *"We've come to expect that sort of behaviour and attitude from X, they are the same every year"*.

If the behaviour is contrary to Bristol Pre-Conservatoire policy and procedures, meaning that children are potentially at risk, **then action MUST be taken**. Adults must also be alert to any unusual incidents or activities which take place where staff, tutors or volunteers are putting themselves in a vulnerable position.

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) is to:

1. Know which external child protection agency to contact in the event of a child protection concern coming to the notice of the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire
2. Provide information and advice on child protection within the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire
3. Ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of a referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing under confidential cover
4. Liaise with local children's social care services and other agencies, as appropriate
5. Keep relevant people within the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire informed about any action taken and any further action required; for example, disciplinary action against a member of staff



6. Ensure that a proper record is kept of any referral and action taken, and that it is kept safely and in confidence
7. Advise the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire of safeguarding and child protection training needs
8. Liaise with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) to review the operation of the Safeguarding Policy regularly to ensure the procedures are working and that it complies with current best practice

Roles and responsibilities

In order that the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire Safeguarding Policy is implemented effectively, there has to be a recognition that Bristol Pre-Conservatoire, together with and not in isolation from support organisations and authorities, must work to ensure that young people enjoy their chamber music tuition in a safe environment.

The role of Bristol Pre-Conservatoire

1. To produce a Safeguarding Policy
2. To regularly monitor and update the Safeguarding Policy
3. To manage the implementation of DBS disclosure
4. To provide training programmes for all adults who have regular contact with young people
5. To produce relevant resources to support the Safeguarding Policy
6. To ensure all appropriate individuals and bodies are informed of disciplinary decisions that result from reported incidents and ensure these are acted upon
7. To appoint a Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) who will act as the first point of contact for concerns about the welfare of young people. There should be a deputy DSP who can act in his/her absence if an emergency arises
8. To accept that all staff have a responsibility in this area and be prepared to respond to any indication of poor practice or abuse in line with Bristol Pre Conservatoire policy and to put in place structures and systems to ensure that this is followed in practice
9. To adopt and implement a policy of Best Practice for all adults working with young people
10. To ensure that all relevant members who have **regular supervisory** contact with children or a **management responsibility** for those working with young people undertake a Disclosure & Barring Service check



Responding to disclosure, suspicions and allegations

In all cases of reported poor practice/abuse, the following principles must always be adopted:

- **Stay calm** – do not rush into inappropriate action. React calmly in order not to alarm the young person
- **Reassure** the child that they have done the right thing in telling you and that you know how difficult it must be to confide
- **Listen carefully and sympathetically** to what the child says and show that you take them seriously. Allow the child to continue at his/her own pace
- **Keep questions to a minimum** - the law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested. Only ask questions to clarify
- **Ensure you clearly understand** what the child has said in order that the information can be passed on to the appropriate agencies. 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
- **Consult with the Designated Safeguarding Person**, ensuring that you communicate all the information accurately. It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding 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
- **Do not promise to keep secrets**. Find an early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others
- **Maintain confidentiality** – complete an incident report form. All incidents will be treated with an “open mind” and be handled in a fair and equitable manner. Confidentiality must be maintained until a case is proven
- **Ensure the safety of the young person** – if urgent medical attention is required, then call an ambulance, inform doctors of the concerns and ensure they are aware that there may be a child protection issue.

DO NOT:

- Panic – or allow your feelings to be evident
- Make promises you cannot keep – explain that you will need to tell other people. Do not take sole responsibility
- Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily
- Delay
- Speculate or make assumptions
- Approach the alleged abuser

In all cases, if you are unsure of what to do, you can gain help from the NSPCC 24-hour freephone helpline (0808 800 5000) or by visiting <https://bristolsafeguarding.org/children-home/contact/report-a-concern/>. The Appointed Safeguarding Person will keep up-to-date telephone numbers for local Social Services Departments.

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Recording abuse

Information passed to external agencies must be as helpful as possible. It will be necessary to make a detailed report at the time of disclosure. The report should contain the following details:

- The young person's name, address, date of birth, race, ethnic origin, and any disability they may have
- Nature of the allegation
- A description of any injuries/bruising
- Any observations about the behaviour/emotional state of the young person
- Times, locations, dates
- The young person's account in their own words of what has happened
- Actions that have been taken as a result of your concerns
- Whether the person writing the report is expressing opinion, fact or hearsay
- Sign and date
- Keep a copy
- Keep a record of the name and designation of a Children's Social Care member of staff or police officer to whom concerns were passed

Action to take if a young person informs you that he/she is concerned about someone's behaviour towards them in the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire setting

Follow the procedures as laid down below:

1. Make a full record of what has been said, heard and seen as soon as possible
2. Bristol Pre-Conservatoire Designated Safeguarding Person (or his/her deputy) should be informed immediately
3. The Designated Safeguarding Person should report the matter to the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire Director
4. Forward a written report on action taken to the Designated Safeguarding Person and Bristol Pre-Conservatoire Director
5. If an individual is identified by the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire as being responsible for poor practice on subsequent occasions, then the Designated Safeguarding Person, in consultation with the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire Director, will refer the issue onwards.

In case of abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Person should take the following action:

- If the young person requires immediate medical attention, an ambulance must be called and the doctor should be informed that the concern is related to child protection
- Refer the allegation to police or Children's Social Care Services. They will give advice relating to the contacting of parents/guardians
- Inform the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire Director and forward a written report

Non-action is not an option. The welfare of the young person/s is paramount.

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The Bristol Pre-Conservatoire Director will:

- Decide whether any individual accused of abuse should temporarily be suspended pending further Social Services or police enquiries
- Assess all individual cases under the appropriate misconduct and disciplinary procedures irrespective of the findings of the Social Services and police. There may be three types of investigation:
 1. Criminal
 2. Child Protection
 3. Disciplinary or misconduct

The results of Children's Social Care and police investigations will inform the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire Disciplinary investigation.

Where allegations are unfounded, the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire will work in a professional manner to ensure that the person concerned is given appropriate support to continue his or her work in music.

Action to take if you become aware through your own observations or through a third party of possible abuse occurring at a young person's home or in some other setting (outside of Bristol Pre-Conservatoire)

If this happens, you should:

- Ensure the safety of the young person – if he/she requires immediate treatment, call an ambulance, inform the doctors of your concerns and ensure that they are aware that this is a child protection issue. Bristol Pre Conservatoire procedures should then be followed:
- Report your concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Person
- The Designated Safeguarding Person may seek advice from local Social Services or the NSPCC. If there is any delay in receiving advice, contact must be made with Social Services
- If a formal referral is made, make it clear to Social Services or the Police that this is a Child Protection referral
- All police forces have dedicated Child Abuse Investigation Teams (CAITs) which deal with allegations of abuse within the family setting and by people in a position of trust. In a real emergency, dial 999
- Parents/carers should only be contacted following advice from Social Services

In all cases, please always remember the following:

It is more difficult for some young people to disclose abuse than others. Young people from ethnic minorities may have regularly experienced racism, which may lead them to believe that certain groups, including those in authority roles, do not really care about their wellbeing.



Young people with disabilities may have to overcome additional barriers before feeling that they can disclose abuse. They may rely on the abuser for their daily care and not know of alternative sources of care. The abuse may be the only attention/affection they have experienced. There may be communication differences and they will almost certainly have to overcome prejudices which block their willingness to believe that they are being abused. Adults may use a young person's medical condition to explain away indicators which would otherwise be concerning.

These groups of people need us to be extra vigilant and to give thought as to how we respond. In all cases, every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis. This will include the following people:

- The Designated Safeguarding Person
- The Director of the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services and police
- The parents/carers of the young person alleged to have been abused

Bristol Pre-Conservatoire's online presence:

- The point of contact on the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire website and social media platforms will be the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire postal address, email address and the telephone numbers of key members of staff. Staff or pupils' home information will not be published.
- Pupils' full names will not be used anywhere on the website or on social media platforms, particularly in association with photographs.
- Written permission from parents or carers will be obtained before photographs or videos of pupils are published on the website or on social media.
- The Designated Safeguarding Person will take overall editorial responsibility of Bristol Pre-Conservatoire's online presence and ensure that content is accurate and appropriate.
- The copyright of all online material will be held by Bristol Pre-Conservatoire, or attributed to the owner where permission to reproduce has been obtained.

Conclusion

In all instances where issues of safeguarding and child protection are involved, staff must endeavour to act within the guidelines of this policy. If any member of staff at Bristol Pre-Conservatoire is in a situation in which they believe a safeguarding issue may arise and feels unable or uncertain of how to proceed, he/she must consult the Designated Safeguarding Person or the Bristol Pre-Conservatoire Director immediately. It is not enough to cite lack of awareness or uncertainty in these areas as a justification for good practice.

Please refer any comments or concerns to Jonathan James, Bristol Pre Conservatoire Director or Chris Green, Programme Manager.