

Safeguarding Children and Young People Procedures

For Lone-Working / Independent Music Therapy Practice

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1. If I am worried about a child or young person

I will not wait for proof before taking a safeguarding concern seriously.

I will consider:

What have I seen, heard or been told?

Why does this concern me?

Does the child or young person need immediate protection?

Who needs to know?

If the child or young person is receiving music therapy through a school or organisation, I will normally report the concern to the organisation's DSL without delay.

However, if I believe the child or young person is in immediate danger, or if I believe the organisation's response is not sufficient to protect them, I will contact the appropriate safeguarding authority or police directly.

2. If a child or young person tells me something concerning

If a child or young person tells me that they are being harmed or are worried about their own or another person's safety, I will:

1. Stay calm.
2. Listen carefully.
3. Take them seriously.
4. Allow them to speak in their own words.

5. Avoid asking unnecessary or leading questions.
6. Not investigate the allegation myself.
7. Explain that I cannot promise to keep information secret.
8. Explain that I may need to tell someone who can help keep them safe.
9. Record what was said as accurately as possible.
10. Take action without unnecessary delay.

I may say:

“I’m glad you told me. I believe you. I may need to tell someone whose job is to help keep you safe.”

I will not:

- promise secrecy;
 - tell them that everything will be fine;
 - investigate the allegation;
 - confront an alleged perpetrator;
 - ask them to repeat the disclosure unnecessarily;
 - express disbelief;
 - blame them;
 - delay taking action.
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3. Recording a safeguarding concern

I will make a written safeguarding record as soon as reasonably possible after a concern or disclosure.

The record will include:

- the child or young person’s name;
- date and time;
- where the concern arose;
- what I observed;
- what the child or young person or another person said;
- the child’s or young person’s own words where possible;
- relevant facts;
- actions taken;
- who I contacted;
- advice received;
- decisions made;

- reasons for decisions;
- any follow-up action.

I will distinguish between:

Fact: what I saw, heard or was told.

Opinion: my interpretation or professional concern.

I will avoid speculation.

4. Confidentiality and information sharing

Confidentiality is important in therapeutic work, but confidentiality is not absolute.

If I believe information needs to be shared to protect a child or young person, I will share the necessary information with the appropriate person or agency.

I will explain the limits of confidentiality to children, young people and parents/carers as appropriate.

I will not:

- share safeguarding information casually;
- discuss safeguarding concerns with friends or other families;
- post information about concerns on social media;
- include unnecessary personal information in records.

Where safeguarding requires information to be shared, I will share relevant information promptly and securely.

5. Parents and carers

Where appropriate, parents or carers will be informed about safeguarding concerns.

However, I will **not automatically inform a parent or carer** if doing so could:

- place the child or young person at greater risk;
- compromise a police investigation;
- compromise a children's social care assessment;
- increase the risk of intimidation or retaliation;
- otherwise be contrary to the child's or young person's best interests.

If I am unsure whether to inform a parent or carer, I will seek advice from children's social care or another appropriate safeguarding professional.

6. Child-on-child abuse

Children and young people can cause harm to other children and young people.

I will take concerns seriously where they involve:

- bullying;
- sexual harassment;
- sexual violence;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- intimidation;
- threats;
- exploitation;
- discriminatory behaviour;
- online abuse;
- sharing intimate images;
- coercion or pressure.

I will not dismiss harmful behaviour as “just banter”, “just playing” or “children being children”.

7. Online safeguarding

If music therapy involves digital communication or online sessions, I will take reasonable steps to protect children and young people from online harm.

I will:

- use appropriate professional accounts and platforms;
- avoid unnecessary contact outside therapy;
- avoid personal social media contact;
- maintain appropriate privacy settings;
- consider who else may be present during an online session;
- consider whether the child or young person is in a safe environment;
- follow relevant organisational procedures;
- record and report online safeguarding concerns.

If a child or young person tells me about online abuse, grooming, exploitation, threats or harmful content, I will treat this as a safeguarding concern.

8. Domestic abuse

I recognise that children and young people can be harmed by seeing, hearing or experiencing domestic abuse.

If I become concerned that domestic abuse is affecting a child or young person, I will treat this as a safeguarding concern.

I will not confront an alleged perpetrator or place the child, young person or family at greater risk.

9. Neglect and wider welfare concerns

Safeguarding is not limited to obvious abuse.

I may become concerned because a child or young person:

- repeatedly appears hungry or inadequately clothed;
- describes unsafe conditions at home;
- appears persistently distressed;
- has unexplained injuries;
- shows significant changes in behaviour;
- describes frightening or unsafe experiences;
- appears to be experiencing neglect;
- is exposed to domestic abuse;
- appears to be experiencing exploitation;
- has other unmet welfare needs.

I will consider whether the child or young person needs early help or a statutory safeguarding response.

Where I am unsure, I will seek advice rather than waiting for the situation to become more serious.

10. Prevent and radicalisation

I recognise that safeguarding includes protecting children and young people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.

If I become concerned that a child or young person may be at risk of radicalisation, I will seek appropriate safeguarding advice and follow local Prevent and safeguarding procedures.

I will not attempt to investigate or challenge the child or young person myself.

11. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

If I become aware that a child or young person has undergone, or is at risk of undergoing, FGM, I will follow the appropriate safeguarding and police procedures.

I will seek advice immediately where necessary.

Where a mandatory reporting duty applies to me as a regulated professional, I will comply with that legal duty.

12. If the concern is about another professional

If I become concerned about someone who works with children and young people, I will not attempt to investigate the matter myself.

This includes concerns that a professional:

- has harmed a child or young person;
- may have harmed a child or young person;
- may have committed a criminal offence involving a child or young person;
- has behaved in a way that may indicate they pose a risk of harm;
- has behaved in a way that raises questions about their suitability to work with children and young people.

I will seek advice from the appropriate Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and cooperate with any safeguarding process.

13. If the concern is about the DSL

If my concern is about the school's DSL, manager or another person who would normally receive safeguarding concerns, I will not report the concern only to that person.

I will seek advice from an appropriate alternative safeguarding lead, children's social care, the LADO or the police, depending on the nature of the concern.

The safety of the child or young person takes priority over organisational hierarchy.

14. If I am unsure what to do

I will seek advice.

It is appropriate to ask for safeguarding advice when I am unsure whether a concern meets the threshold for referral.

I will not ignore a concern because I am uncertain.

15. Safeguarding action summary

If a child or young person tells me something:

LISTEN → REASSURE → DON'T PROMISE SECRECY → RECORD → REPORT → ACT

If I have a concern:

NOTICE → RECORD → SEEK ADVICE → SHARE → FOLLOW UP

If there is immediate danger:

CALL 999