

## MUSIC EDUCATION ISLINGTON

### SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

**Published: May 2023**

#### THE PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Music Education Islington, including Board of Governors, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students. It also includes contractors, workshop leaders, freelance artists and Senior School students on work placements.

Music Education Islington works with children and young adults as part of its activities. The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children at risk who take part in our various programmes;
- to provide parents, staff, partner organisations and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.

#### CULTURE OF SAFETY, EQUALITY AND PROTECTION

The Music Education Islington (MEI) team works with children, parents and the community to ensure we support children's rights and create and maintain the safest possible environment for children through our work.

We do this by:

1. Recognising that all children have the right to freedom from abuse and harm.
2. Promoting joint working with schools, cultural organisations, the local authority, and families in the interest of children's welfare.
3. Developing safe partnerships which ensure that staff delivering activity are carefully selected, vetted and have relevant qualifications and experience. Partner organisations and our own child protection policies and procedures will be regularly reviewed for effectiveness. Partner organisations will have access to training in safeguarding best practice via the Islington Safeguarding Children's Board (ISCB).
4. Ensuring that all partners in delivering activity are aware of, and accept responsibility for, helping to prevent the abuse of children.
5. Designating a Music Education Islington Safeguarding Lead, who takes responsibility for children's protection, safety and well-being.
6. Supporting all staff and partners in knowledge of how to bring concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

7. Responding quickly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse.
8. Providing staff, teachers, cultural partners, and children with the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have, where applicable.

## DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS

All safeguarding concerns and disclosures concerning Music Education Islington (MEI) activity within a school will be managed with the Schools' Safeguarding Policy and DSL as lead. The MEI and Islington Council Cultural Enrichment DSLs will support the school and partner organisation in recording and following through on any arising concerns.

### **Senior Organisational Lead for Safeguarding: Islington Council Cultural Enrichment Services**

Islington Council's Cultural Enrichment Team and takes responsibility for the service's overarching safeguarding arrangements. This team is accountable for policies and procedures that will ensure children's welfare is promoted in the provision of all services to children through the Cultural Enrichment Team.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead for Music Education Islington**

On an operational level and day to day basis, **Mirjam James** is Designated Safeguarding Lead for Music Education Islington, and any concerns should be reported to her.

**Mirjam James** – Manager, Music Education Islington

[mirjam.james@gsmid.ac.uk](mailto:mirjam.james@gsmid.ac.uk)

07784016369

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead's role and responsibilities**

It is the role of the Music Education Islington Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to act as a source of support and guidance on all matters of child protection and safeguarding within the setting. In the absence of the DSL, staff should report any concerns to the **Deputy Safeguarding Lead** who will act in accordance with this policy and the 6<sup>th</sup> Edition of the London Child Protection Procedures and will report back to the DSL.

### **Deputy Safeguarding Lead**

In the absence of Designated Safeguarding Lead for Music Education Islington, responsibility will be taken by **Kate Walker**, as Deputy Safeguarding Lead for MEI.

**Kate Walker** – Project Officer, Music Education Islington

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In cases where the Music Education Islington DSL is not available, handover of communications surrounding any potential concerns must take place. The Designated and Deputy Safeguarding Leads will make regular provision for discussion around pertinent safeguarding issues.

All partner organisations should know who the Music Education Islington Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is and how to contact them. The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead is to refer any concerns as soon as they arise to local authority children's social care in line with the Referral and Assessment Procedure. This is the task of Children's Social Services who have the legal responsibility. But it is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that concerns are shared and appropriate action taken.

### **The DSL is responsible for:**

1. Liaising with the Children's Social Care
2. Ensuring that all partners receive appropriate child protection training so that they are up to-date with current legislation, policy and practice and are able to respond sensitively and appropriately to any child protection concerns.
3. Ensuring that all partners new to the setting receive induction training to enable them to understand and adhere to the setting's policies, including reporting and whistle-blowing procedures.
4. Ensuring that child protection referrals are made using the format agreed by Islington Children's Social Care or the format required by other boroughs if the child is not an Islington resident
5. Ensuring the partners and venues child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures are maintained, up-to-date and are disseminated and adhered to by all staff.
6. Agree a mechanism with the leadership team of LBI to ensure the procedures are adhered to (e.g. file audits, training audits, annual safeguarding reports etc.)

## **PROCEDURES**

All cultural partners should be familiar with the leaflet [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#). (HM Government, March 2015) and London Child Protection procedures [escalation policy](#). An amended document supplied by the Islington Safeguarding Children's Board can be found [here](#).

### **Procedures to follow if you suspect that a child is at risk of harm**

Please see Appendix 1 for information on identifying potential harm.

We have a statutory duty to notify agencies if we have a concern about children's safety and welfare (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018).

- Where there is a concern about a child's welfare or wellbeing or a concern that a child is in need of protection, this should be recorded on the concern form (Appendix 2) and then passed on to the 1) the Music Education Islington Designated Safeguarding Lead for action, **as well as** 2) the child's schools' DSL (if an in school activity);
- These running records should be kept securely in an incident log book maintained by the Music Education Islington Team;
- All staff and volunteers are aware that they must report concerns immediately;
- All records of concerns, emails, notes of phone conversations and actions are filed confidentially and securely in an incident log book maintained by the Music Education Islington Team ;

- Partners and internal staff know that when they have concerns about a child's welfare they need to:
  - Focus on the needs of the child – their physical and emotional welfare
  - Be sensitive
  - Talk it over with one of the Designated Members of Staff
- The flowchart for '*What to do if you are worried about a child/young person*' is included in this policy. This Safeguarding Policy is accessible to all partners, schools and parents;
- Concerns will be discussed with parents unless this would put the child at further risk of serious harm;
- Unless we are advised otherwise by Children's Social Care the incident forms will be shared with parents.

## MANAGING A DISCLOSURE

**We believe that effective safeguarding arrangements should aim to meet the following two key principles:**

- **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for our services to be effective each individual and organisation should play their full part; and**
- **A child centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.**

**Any disclosure<sup>1</sup> must be raised with both the School and Music Education Islington Designated Safeguarding Leads.**

All staff have a responsibility to:

- identify the symptoms and triggers of abuse and neglect including new and emerging threats, including online abuse, grooming, sexual exploitation and radicalisation; and
- to share that information and work together to provide children with the support they need.

**Staff should:**

- Stay calm and listen to the child, and bring school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and Senior management into the conversation as soon as is practically possible. The school's DSL should lead the management of concerns.
- Ask questions for clarification only. Avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Tell them who you are going to tell so that they can be made safe – children may fear that what they have said will be passed on to everyone and they need to know that this will not be the case.
- Control expressions of panic or shock.
- Use the child's level of language or vocabulary.
- Offer comfort bearing in mind the age and needs of the child.

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<sup>1</sup> A disclosure is here considered to be a situation where a child or young person under your supervision reveals an instance of abuse or neglect.

- If the child has disclosed sexual abuse, ask them when it happened but nothing more. Whether a child is asked this question will depend upon the child's age and understanding.
- Tell them that they were right to tell you and it was not their fault and they are not bad.
- Do not give false reassurances to the child but tell them that you will do your best to protect or help them.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, record in writing what was said using the child's own words where possible. Record the date, time, setting, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and other people present. Sign and date the record. Record any subsequent events and actions.

A child may recall former abuse once in a safe situation. Although they may be under no current threat to their safety, any disclosure must be raised with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead **and** Music Education Islington Designated Safeguarding Lead and followed through appropriately. The school's DSL will update the Music Education Islington DSL on further information and actions needed, as soon as a referral is made.

### **Concerns not related to a disclosure**

You may also have concerns about a child's welfare where there has not been any disclosure or allegation. In the best interests of the child / young person, these concerns should be raised with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and followed through appropriately.

## **RECORDING AND REPORTING**

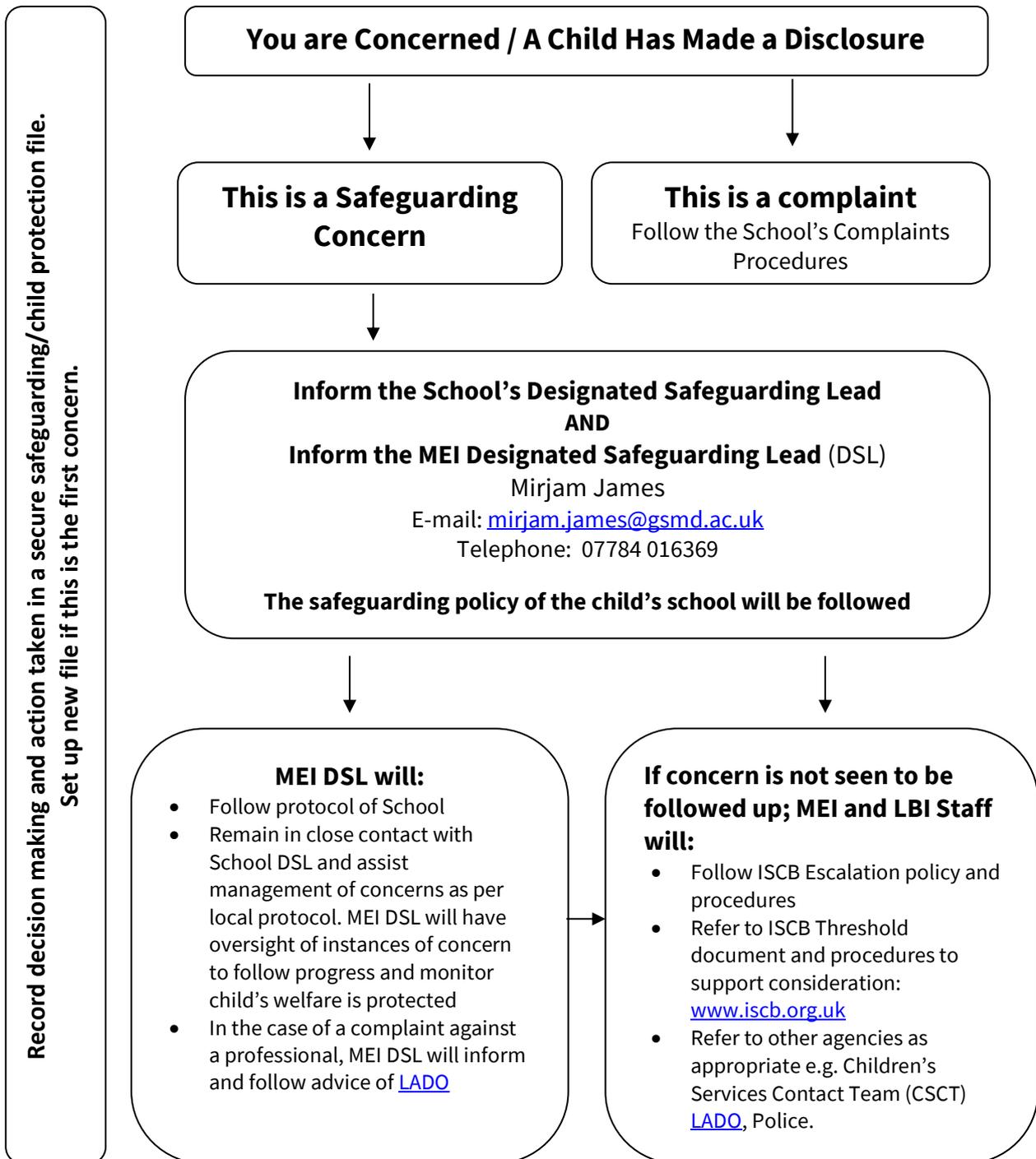
Recording is central to safeguarding and protecting children. It is not always possible to know whether a small or vague concern held today may increase as the days or weeks pass and later form the substance of a child protection referral. For this reason, it is vital that concerns are recorded accurately so that they can be monitored and emerging patterns noticed.

Any incidents / disclosures / suspicions of safeguarding concerns should be referred to the DSL on the day the incident occurs, or the disclosure is made. The Safeguarding Incident and Disclosure Form (please see Appendix 2) needs to be completed and sent to the MEI Designated Safeguarding Lead within 24 hours of the incident/disclosure.

The following charts detail the steps to follow in the event of concerns or a disclosure during Music Education Islington activity.

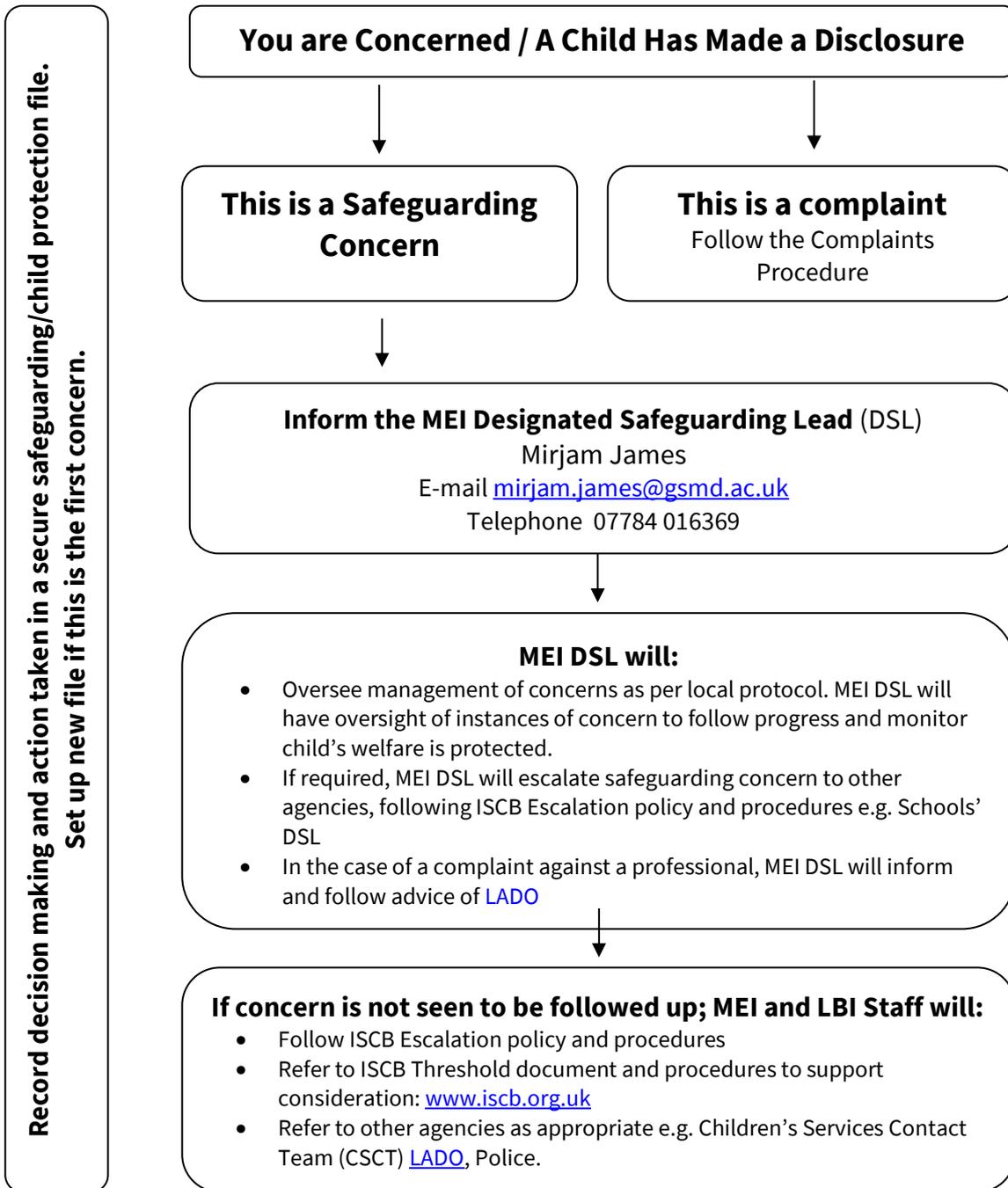
# Music Education Islington (MEI) Delivery and Handling Concerns In School Activities

Before delivering a service to a school or group as part of MEI, tutors, contractors and partner organisations will ensure awareness of the school's DSL and safeguarding policy.



# Music Education Islington (MEI) Delivery and Handling Concerns Music Centres and Out of School Activities

Before delivering a service to as part of MEI, all tutors, contractors and partner organisations will ensure awareness of the venue's DSL and safeguarding policy.



## SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

All members of staff will regularly access appropriate safeguarding training for their group (depending on their responsibility) as set out by Islington Safeguarding Children Board in [Competence Still Matters](#) and ensure their knowledge is up to date on safeguarding issues. The Cultural Enrichment Team will ensure that the training made available will enable staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity, and to respond in a timely and appropriate way.

## SAFER RECRUITMENT

Safe recruitment and selection practice is vital to safeguarding and protecting children. Please refer to the [Safer Recruitment Policy](#) for more detailed information.

- All staff and volunteers are carefully selected. Music Education Islington's recruitment procedures are in line with the LSCB safer recruiting guidelines.
- DBS checks are carried out in accordance with legislation for all staff, student on placements, volunteers and agency supply workers before they are allowed to work with us.
- DBS disclosures are recorded in staff files.
- All new members of staff, volunteers, students on placement and agency staff complete the induction process and sign to agree they have understood our policies, procedures and basic safeguarding practices.

### **Our requirements for partner organisations working with and delivering activity as part of Music Education Islington are:**

- Each partner cultural organisation delivering activity as part of Music Education Islington will provide MEI staff with a signed copy of this policy as an agreement to follow its instructions during MEI activity.
- We expect organisations to have or work towards development of their own safeguarding policies. While working on MEI activity, organisation staff will follow this MEI safeguarding policy and procedure.
- Organisations will have a Designated Safeguarding Lead for their organisation who is certified and can provide us with a copy of their training certificate.
- DBS checks have been carried out as per requirements in accordance with legislation for all staff, student on placements, volunteers and agency supply workers before working on MEI delivery, with DBS details being able to be provided to MEI staff on request.
- All new members of staff, volunteers, students on placement and agency staff will be aware of, have understood, and follow this policy, its procedures and basic safeguarding practices.

## RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF/VOLUNTEER

Despite all efforts to recruit safely there will be occasions when allegations are made of abuse against children by staff or volunteers. All staff must be vigilant in relation to inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, or any other person working with the children. Examples include inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual roles and

responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images. Staff should behave in accordance with the [Code of Conduct](#).

All concerns about staff should be reported immediately to the Music Education Islington Designated Safeguarding Lead and the [whistle-blowing policy](#) should be followed.

In all cases of allegations against staff and volunteers the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Music Education Islington will notify the Director for Guildhall Young Artists & Safeguarding, Guildhall School Principal and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for the City of London (and/or the Local Authority in which the incident took place).

The DSL will liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who will manage any allegation in line with the Islington Safeguarding Children's Board (ISCB) policies and procedures.

All staff have a duty to protect children from abuse and keep children safe. Staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned even if they find it difficult to believe what they have seen or heard. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the best interests of the child.

- If any worker is concerned that no action is being taken, it is their responsibility to report the matter directly to the LADO.
- All staff accept responsibility to share concerns about the actions or attitudes of colleagues with the DCP or DDCP, who will deal with the concerns appropriately.
- Music Education Islington staff understand what is meant by the term 'whistle-blowing' and their responsibilities with regards to it, and are able to raise concerns with the DCP.
- Staff must give management details of any incident, order, determination, conviction or any other possible issue which may impact on their suitability to work with children. If any such event should lead to disqualification; appropriate action will be taken to ensure the safety and well-being of children in the setting.

## CHILDREN HARMING OTHER CHILDREN

It is part of our duty of care that we make sure children are protected from harm from other children. As Music Education Islington organises activity for children who have severe and complex needs, biting, pushing, scratching and hitting may occur at times.

If you think that a child is targeting another child it is important to raise this with the School Safeguarding Lead, and Music Education Islington DSL immediately.

In recording and reporting incidents it is important that the identity of the child that did the hurting is not disclosed. This is part of our duty of confidentiality to all children and families. If a parent asks who has hurt their child, staff should show understanding of their upset, anger or pain, but explain that we are not able to share identifying information.

## E-SAFETY AND USE OF DIGITAL DEVICES

We recognise that the welfare of the children/young people who come into contact with our services is paramount and governs our approach to the use and management of information communications technologies.

**Our policy aims are laid out below, and specific guidelines are provided in our [Code of Conduct](#) and [Safeguarding Protocol for Remote Teaching](#).**

### **Our aim is to:**

- Protect children and young people who take part in Music Education Islington activity and who make use of information technology (such as mobile phones, games consoles and the internet) as part of their involvement with us.
- Provide staff and volunteers with the principles that guide our approach to e-safety.
- Protect professionals.
- Ensure that, as an organisation, we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use information technology.

We recognise that the welfare of the children/young people who come into contact with our services is paramount and governs our approach to the use and management of information communications technologies

Mobile phones and digital devices can present a number of problems when not used appropriately:

- Phones and personal devices can allow internet access and bypass the centre security settings and filtering.
- Mobile phones with integrated cameras could lead to child protection, bullying and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images of children or staff.

### **Cameras**

It is not the intention to prevent parents/carers from taking pictures, but to ensure that photographic practices are monitored and to reduce the risks of inappropriate photography/filming. Appropriate consent will be required before and activity filming or photography takes place.

No one is permitted to photograph or record images in the following areas:

- Changing areas
- Toilet areas

### **Mobile phones**

- Staff should not have mobile phones with them whilst working with children.

- Staff mobile phones should be kept in bags and used only when staff are on break time in the staff room or outside the setting.

### **Remote Teaching**

In the current climate, many of Music Education Islington's activities have moved to an online format. We recognise that teaching online brings new challenges and risks to children and have produced an additional Protocol for Remote Teaching.

- We will teach online using accounts set up using Guildhall School email accounts – not to use personal accounts.
- All teaching will take place on either Microsoft Teams or Zoom (as approved by Guildhall School and Islington Council).
- It is preferred that teaching and learning online takes place in a communal area in the home. Staff and participating children should not take part in an online session in their bedroom or room with a closed door.
- It is required for parent / guardian to be present at the start of each session, and remain in earshot for the duration of the session.
- Staff should not teach online from a public area where students could be visible to members of the public.
- We do not allow communication between students / staff via social media, personal email, text messaging, gaming or other app platforms. In cases where students have emailed the teacher, staff are advised to reply to the parent, copying in the student.
- We advise that lessons take during normal school hours or the hours when the activity is usually held in person.

### **Recording of Remote Lessons**

- Lessons will only be recorded when requested as part of an Islington School's Safeguarding policy.
- Video recording of lessons can NOT be shared online / via social media by parents or staff.
- Screen shots are not allowed (i.e still pics being taken during a live feed).

## APPENDIX 1: UNDERSTANDING AND IDENTIFYING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The four main categories of abuse are **physical, sexual, emotional abuse** and **neglect**.

### **Physical Abuse**

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

#### **Some possible signs of physical abuse:**

- Unexplained injuries, for example, bruising, bite marks, burns and fractures, particular if recurrent.
- Improbable explanations given for injuries.
- Several explanations provided for an injury.
- Refusal to discuss injuries.
- Untreated injuries.
- Withdrawal from physical contact.
- Admission of punishment which seems excessive or inappropriate
- Shrinking from physical contact or flinching
- Fear of going home or of a parent/carer being contacted
- Fear of undressing or changing or being changed
- Fear of medical help
- Aggression/bullying
- Over-compliant behaviour or a 'watchful attitude'
- Running away
- Significant changes in behaviour with no explanation
- Unexplained patterns of attendance
- Covering up i.e. wearing seasonally inappropriate clothing
- Signs of physical discomfort without explanation
- Female genital mutilation- partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or injury to the female genital organs

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development, and may involve: Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person; Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction; Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another e.g. where there is domestic abuse;

Serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger; Exploiting and corrupting children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Some possible signs of emotional abuse:**

- Continual self-deprecation, low self esteem
- Fear of new situations, beyond what would be appropriate
- Inappropriate emotional responses to new, difficult or painful situations
- Self-harm (this can present in young children as well as older ones)
- Compulsive stealing, scrounging
- Obsessive behaviours such as rocking or thumb-sucking
- Detachment – ‘Don’t care’ attitude
- Social isolation – does not join in and does not have friends
- Attention-seeking behaviour beyond what would be age appropriate
- Eating problems including lack of appetite or over-eating
- Depression, withdrawal
- Inability to concentrate
- Obsessive masturbation in public
- Acting out aggression between parents or talking about domestic violence at home
- Attaching inappropriately to strangers or people that they do not know well

**Sexual Abuse and Exploitation**

**Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

Sexual abuse includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, including online and with mobile phones, or in the production of pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

In addition; Sexual abuse includes abuse of children through sexual exploitation. Penetrative sex where one of the partners is under the age of 16 is illegal, although prosecution of similar age, consenting partners is not usual. However, where a child is under the age of 13 it is classified as rape under s5 Sexual Offences Act 2003

**Some possible signs of sexual abuse:**

- Continual or excessive masturbation.
- Asking if you will keep a secret if they tell you.
- Unexplained sources of money, sweets or presents.
- Reluctance to get changed for an activity.
- Chronic ailments such as stomach ache or headaches.
- Involving other children in sexual activity.
- Self-harm.
- Bruises, bites or marks on the body
- Scratches, abrasions or persistent infections in anal or genital regions
- Age-inappropriate sexual awareness, may be evident in play, drawings, vocabulary, writing or behaviour towards children or adults
- Attempts to teach other children about sexual activity
- Attempting to coerce other children into sexualised games or behaviours
- Refusal to stay with certain people or to go to certain places
- Aggression, anger, anxiety, tearfulness

**Child sexual exploitation** is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.

#### **Some possible signs of sexual exploitation**

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- Children who regularly miss school or education or don't take part in education

#### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and / or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse, maternal mental ill health or learning difficulties or a cluster of such issues. Where there is domestic abuse and violence towards a carer, the needs of the child may be neglected.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers);
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional, social and educational needs

**Some possible signs of neglect:**

- Constant or frequent hunger
- Small stature or growth or, in babies or young children, not meeting milestones with no medical explanation
- Poor personal hygiene – in babies or young children this might present as always having nappy rash or regularly being left in dirty, soiled clothes/underwear
- Frequently being sent to school or nursery when ill
- Inappropriate clothing (too large, too small, clothes for the opposite gender)
- Frequent lateness or non attendance
- Medical needs not met or treatment not sought
- Low self esteem, sense of unworthiness
- Poor social and peer relationships
- Constant tiredness or hunger
- Compulsive stealing or scrounging
- Constant lack of response or interest from parent/carer
- Under-achieving at school or nursery
- High and unusual levels of anxiety or being preoccupied

**Bullying**

Bullying can also be a type of abuse. Bullying is the abuse and/or intimidation by a person, people or an organisation against another or others. It may be a specific act or it may be institutional. It is an abuse of a perceived power relationship. Children can also bully other children. Bullying may include verbal abuse and intimidation, acts of physical or sexual abuse and coercion, e-bullying, through texting, filming on mobiles and posting on social networks. Whatever its form it is unacceptable. It must be challenged and appropriately addressed.

**Some possible signs of bullying:**

- Reluctance to attend activities previously enjoyed.
- Tearfulness, depression, erratic emotions, loss of concentration.
- Stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed-wetting, bruising, cuts scratches, damaged clothing, bingeing on food, alcohol or cigarettes.
- Shortage of money, frequent loss of possessions.
- Asks for money or starts stealing (to pay bully/ies)
- Drop in performance.

## **Domestic Violence**

The Home Office definition of Domestic violence and abuse was updated in May 2018 as:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological;
- Physical;
- Sexual;
- Financial;
- Emotional.

**Controlling behaviour** is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

**Coercive behaviour** is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim."

This definition includes so called *honour* based abuse, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

All agencies need to work together to identify and protect these children/young people.

It has been widely understood for some time that coercive control is a core part of domestic violence and it is important to recognise coercive control as a complex pattern of overlapping and repeated abuse perpetrated within a context of power and control.

The main characteristic of domestic violence is that the behaviour is intentional and is calculated to exercise power and control within a relationship. Seeing or overhearing violence to another person in the home has adverse effects on a child's development and welfare. Unborn children are also at increased risk; domestic violence is a prime cause of miscarriage, still birth, premature birth, foetal psychological damage, foetal physical injury and foetal death.

Children of all ages living with a parent, most often the mother, who is experiencing domestic violence, are vulnerable to significant harm through physical, sexual, emotional abuse and / or neglect.

## **Significant harm**

The legal definition of significant harm includes “the harm that children suffer by seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another, particularly in the home”.

Professionals should apply the London Safeguarding Children Board guidance to all situations of domestic violence, for example, where it is perpetrated by women or girls against men and boys, within same sex relationships and from a child.

Professionals should be aware of the possibility that adolescents could be experiencing violence within intimate partner relationship. Domestic abuse can also take place between young adults from the age of 16 years old.

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

The World Health Organisation defines FGM as: “all procedures (not operations) which involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons”

FGM is a criminal offence in the UK. It is also illegal to take a child abroad to undergo FGM. A child for whom FGM is planned is at risk of significant harm through physical and emotional abuse.

Where a child is thought to be at risk of FGM, practitioners need to act quickly before the child is abused through the FGM procedure in the UK or taken abroad to undergo the procedure.

### **Spirit Possession or Witchcraft**

Spirit possession is when parents, families and the child believe that an evil force has entered a child and is controlling them; the belief includes the child being able to use the evil force to harm others.

A child may suffer emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect if they are labelled and treated as being possessed with an evil spirit. Significant harm may occur when an attempt is made to ‘exorcise’ or ‘deliver’ the evil spirit from the child. Dismissing the belief may be harmful to the child involved.

### **Forced Marriage**

Forced marriage, as distinct from a consensual arranged one, is a marriage conducted without the full consent of both parties and where duress is a factor. Duress cannot be justified on religious or cultural grounds. A child who is being forced into marriage is at risk of significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Suspicious that a child may be forced into marriage include: A family history of older siblings leaving education early and marrying early; depressive behaviour including self-harming and attempted suicide; being kept at home by their parents; being unable to complete their education; a child always being accompanied including to school and doctors’ appointments; a child talking about an upcoming family holiday that they are worried about; a child directly disclosing that they are worried they will be forced to marry.

Where a suspicion or allegation of forced marriage or intended forced marriage is raised, there may be only one opportunity to speak to a potential victim, so an appropriate initial response is vital. Professionals should not minimize the potential risk of harm or attempt to be a mediator. Professionals should see the child immediately, on their own, in a secure and private place and contact insert agency name designated safeguarding lead.

### **Honour Based Abuse**

The Metropolitan Police definition of so-called honour based abuse is: 'a crime or incident, which has or may be committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community'. Honour based abuse cuts across all cultures and communities.

The perceived immoral behaviour which could precipitate a murder include: Inappropriate make-up or dress; the existence of a boyfriend; kissing or intimacy in a public place; rejecting a forced marriage; pregnancy outside of marriage; being a victim of rape; interfaith relationships; leaving a spouse or seeking divorce.

A child who is at risk of honour based abuse is at significant risk of physical harm (including being murdered) and/or neglect, and may also suffer significant emotional harm through the threat of violence or witnessing violence directed towards a sibling or other family member.

Murders in the name of 'so-called honour' are often the culmination of a series of events over a period of time and are planned. These include: House arrest and excessive restrictions; denial of access to the telephone, internet, passport and friends; threats to kill; pressure to go abroad. There tends to be a degree of premeditation, family conspiracy and a belief that the victim deserved to die.

When receiving a disclosure from a child, professionals should recognise the seriousness / immediacy of the risk of harm. Professionals should not minimize the potential risk of harm or attempt to be a mediator. Professionals should see the child immediately, on their own, in a secure and private place and contact the agency's named child protection person.

### **Vulnerability of Disabled Children**

Research indicates that children with special educational needs or disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse. This may be for the following reasons:

- Attitudes and assumptions can lead to the denial or failure to report abuse
- Reluctance to challenge carers – misplaced empathy
- Seeing abuse as attributable to the stress and difficulties of caring for a disabled child
- Beliefs that abuse does not impact on disabled children in the same way
- Double standards – unsatisfactory situations accepted for disabled children
- Dependency – exposure to a wide range of carers for personal and intimate care
- Isolation – easier for abuse and neglect to remain hidden
- Lack of participation and choice in decision making – disempowered and less likely to complain

- Especially vulnerable to bullying and intimidation
- Behaviours misconstrued as part of child's disability
- Communication barriers – may make it difficult to tell others what is happening
- Judgements made about a child's ability to communicate not based on accurate information and specialist advice
- Child's preferred method of communication not recognised / equipment and / or facilitation not available
- Communication aids don't contain the necessary words to help a child describe an experience of abuse

**In addition to the above some possible signs of abuse for disabled children are:**

- Bruising on sites that may not be concerning on a non-disabled child
- Not getting enough help with feeding
- Over or under medicating
- Poor hygiene and personal care arrangements
- Rough handling / excessive restraint
- Lack of stimulation
- Unwillingness to learn a child's means of communication
- Ill-fitting equipment / invasive procedures which are unnecessary or carried out against the child's will

**APPENDIX 2:  
MUSIC EDUCATION ISLINGTON SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT & DISCLOSURE FORM**

Date concern arose:

Child /Young Person At Risk Full Name:

Date of Birth:

Address of Child At Risk:

Parent/Carer Contact Details (where relevant):

**RECORD THE FOLLOWING IN THE CHILD'S OWN WORDS (where possible)**

Date of the Alleged Incident:

Who was involved?

Where did it happen?

Any visible injuries observed? YES / NO

If yes, where are the injuries located and what do they look like?

Any other observations which will assist risk assessments?

## ACTIONS TAKEN

Who did you report this concern to?

Date you reported the concern:

Are the parents/carers of the child/young person aware of the disclosure or concern? YES / NO

Is the child at immediate risk of harm? YES / NO (Please provide reason for this)

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Check to make sure your report is clear now – and will be clear to a new reader in the future.

Please pass this form on the same day to the MEI Designated Safeguarding Lead, with a copy to the child's school Designated Safeguarding Lead (if working as part of in school service) WITHIN 24 HOURS of the date the concern was reported.

In the absence of the MEI Designated Safeguarding Lead, please copy to the Senior Organisational Lead for Safeguarding: Islington Council Cultural Enrichment Services.

Signature of Staff Member:

Name of staff member <sup>2</sup>(printed):

Position:

Date:

Time:

*Received by:*

*Date:*

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<sup>2</sup> Includes temporary, support staff, contractors, volunteers, students on work placements.