

Under 18 Safeguarding Policy Guildhall School of Music & Drama 2026/2027

1. Purpose and Scope of the Policy

Guildhall School of Music & Drama is committed to safeguarding and promoting the safety and wellbeing of all students, staff and visitors. This policy, and the accompanying procedures, outline the School's approach to meeting this commitment.

This Policy applies to all individuals working on behalf of the Guildhall School, including:

- Board of Governors and Trustees
- Senior Managers
- Paid staff and volunteers
- Freelance and agency workers
- Contractors and support staff (e.g. security staff, cleaners, caterers, builders)
- Students
- Workshop leaders and visiting professionals
- Visitors to the School
- Senior School students on placements / Graduate students as support staff

This Policy applies across the range of situations and settings in which the School might engage with children including (amongst others) teaching, research, volunteering opportunities, placements, widening participation activities and services open to the public.

This Policy applies to safeguarding **for children and young people under the age of 18 only**. Guildhall School has a significant number of students and participants under 18, particularly within the Guildhall Young Artists (GYA) programmes. The School has a separate Prevent and Safeguarding Policy for Adults at Risk available on our [website](#).

To meet our commitment the School aims to:

- Take a School-wide strategic approach to safeguarding, with oversight of policy and procedure by the Board of Governors;
- Provide relevant employees with information and training to support the application of this Policy and associated procedures;
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are followed, including carrying out appropriate Disclosure and Barring checks;
- Ensure that all School employees, students, apprentices, governors, contractors and visitors understand their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding;
- Work in partnership with appropriate individuals and agencies to promote safeguarding;

- Ensure that any safeguarding concerns are reported in a timely manner and that appropriate action is taken in line with this Policy and associated procedures; and
- Provide great quality advice and information about support and services to help protect children from abuse and harm, or respond to identified needs. This includes specialist safeguarding responses, preventative work, general support and targeted support that will help reduce risk, vulnerability and safeguarding incidents.

The School will be guided by the following overarching principles:

- **Empowerment:** support and encourage people to make their own decisions and ensure informed consent is obtained.
- **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:** endeavour to seek local solutions through services working with their communities.
- **Accountability:** accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice.

2. Definitions

To ensure clarity and consistency in safeguarding practice, the following definitions are used throughout this Policy:

Safeguarding

Safeguarding refers to the proactive measures taken to protect the health, wellbeing and human rights of relevant individuals, enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. It includes creating safe environments, identifying risks and responding appropriately to concerns.

Child/Children

A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18. Guildhall School has a significant number of students and participants under 18, particularly within Junior Guildhall and Guildhall Young Artists programmes.

Adult at Risk

An adult at risk is someone aged 18 or over who:

- Has care and support needs, and
- Is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and
- Is unable to protect themselves from harm due to those needs.

This may include individuals with physical or learning disabilities, mental health conditions, or those affected by substance misuse.

Abuse and Neglect

Abuse is a form of maltreatment that can be physical, emotional, sexual, or financial. Neglect is the failure to meet a person's basic physical and psychological needs. Both can occur in person or online and may be perpetrated by individuals or institutions.

Types of abuse include:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional/psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial abuse
- Neglect
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational abuse
- Domestic abuse & coercive control/stalking
- Online / AI abuse
- Peer on peer abuse / Bullying (online and/or in person)
- Sexual exploitation / Criminal exploitation

3. Legal framework

This Under 18 Safeguarding Policy, and the associated Adult Safeguarding Policy relating to adults at risk, is underpinned by key legislation and statutory guidance designed to protect children and adults at risk in England. These include:

- Care Act 2014 (Adult Safeguarding)
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Revised Prevent Duty Guidance (March 2024)
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 update
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Statutory guidance, September 2026)
- London Child Protection Procedures, 7th Edition (2022)

This Policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant Guildhall School and City of London policies, which can be found on our [intranet](#), including (but not limited to):

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Student Social Media Policy
- GYA and Open Programmes guidance documents
- Safeguarding Statement
- Safeguarding Risk Assessments for Events including U18 participants
- Adult Safeguarding Policy 2026
- Prevent Policy 2026
- Safer Recruitment policy (City of London)
- Whistleblowing policy (City of London)
- Code of Conduct: Staff and students
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Staff / Student Relationship policy
- Student policy on Harassment, Bullying and Sexual Misconduct
- Report and Support Portal
- External hire of school premises
- Online Teaching Safeguarding Protocol for adults and under 18's
- Tackling Violence against Women and Girls, July 2021 (www.gov.uk)
- Care Leavers and Looked After Children Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Guildhall School Student Social Media Policy 2022
- Policy for the admission of students under 18 years of age to the Senior School
- Student Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy 2023
- Maintaining Good Campus Relations (including Prevent) 2021
- Student of Concern process

4. Supporting Documents and Procedure

This Policy must be read in conjunction with the accompanying **Under 18 Safeguarding Guidance & Procedures** documents on our intranet. The guidance document provides practical advice / steps on implementing this U18 Safeguarding Policy and clarifies processes for responding to safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people. You can also request these documents from the Safeguarding Team (safeguardingteam@gsmd.ac.uk) or via [MyGuildhall](#).

Policies and procedures are reviewed annually to ensure alignment with current legislation and best practice.

5. Parental/Carer Engagement

The School recognises the importance of engaging with parents and carers of children. Clear communication will be maintained regarding student welfare, safeguarding concerns,

and participation in activities. Consent will be obtained for off-site trips, performances, and any activity involving heightened risk. Emergency contact details must be kept up to date. Parents/carers will be informed promptly of any safeguarding concerns involving their child, unless this would place the child at immediate risk, in which case the Safeguarding Team will liaise with Children's Services and/or the Police to determine appropriate timing.

6. Residential and Overnight Stays

Where children are involved in residential programmes, tours, or overnight stays, the School will ensure appropriate supervision ratios, risk assessments, and safeguarding protocols are in place. Accommodation arrangements will be age-appropriate and gender-sensitive. Staff responsible for supervision will be trained in safeguarding and emergency procedures. Parents/carers will receive full information and consent forms prior to any overnight activity.

7. Online Safety and Digital Safeguarding

The School is committed to protecting children in digital environments. Online teaching platforms will be secure and monitored. Staff must follow the Online Teaching Safeguarding Protocol on our intranet, including guidance on appropriate communication and recording of sessions. The School will respond to incidents of online abuse (such as cyberbullying/ online grooming) or inappropriate content swiftly and effectively.

8. Safer Working Practices for Staff

All staff, volunteers and visiting professionals working with children must adhere to the School's Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policies. This includes maintaining appropriate professional behaviour and boundaries, avoiding one-to-one unsupervised situations unless risk-assessed, and ensuring any physical contact is necessary and appropriate. Staff must not engage in personal relationships with students or communicate with them via personal accounts or devices, and should use institutional communication channels (their gsmd.ac.uk staff email address) at all times with a parent copied in. Any breach of conduct will be addressed in line with School procedures and may result in disciplinary action and, where appropriate, referral to external agencies such as the LADO. Please see our U18 Safeguarding Guidance & Procedures via [MyGuildhall](#).

9. Reporting Obligations

All members of the Guildhall School community have a duty to report safeguarding concerns promptly. Delays to report a safeguarding concern or incident may potentially increase risk and may impact on implementing prompt actions to safeguard via preventative measures.

When and how to report: If you believe a child may be experiencing harm, abuse, neglect, or exploitation, report the concern immediately following **the accompanying Under 18 Safeguarding Guidance & Procedures** documents on our intranet.

Reports should be factual, timely, and handled with sensitivity. Do not investigate the matter yourself—record what was seen, heard, or disclosed and any actions taken and then pass it on to the appropriate safeguarding lead contact.

10. Roles and responsibilities

All members of the Guildhall School community have a shared role in supporting the School in safeguarding and promoting the safety and wellbeing of those covered by this Policy, and in following this Policy and the associated procedures.

Roles with particular Under 18 Safeguarding responsibilities at the School are:

- Head of Safeguarding (Adults & U18s)
- Director of Guildhall Young Artists & Safeguarding (Adults & U18s)
- Department Safeguarding Contacts for Adult Students / DSLs for Adults
- Student Services staff (Adults)
- Safeguarding Advisor for GYA (U18s)
- Designated Safeguarding Leads for GYA / Open Programmes (U18s)

11. Oversight and monitoring compliance

The Board of Governors holds overall responsibility for ensuring effective safeguarding measures are in place across the Guildhall School. All Governors undergo appropriate DBS checks and safeguarding training and receive this policy for reference.

Two Lead Safeguarding Governors are appointed to provide strategic oversight of safeguarding matters, including the welfare of students at risk.

The Director of Guildhall Young Artists & Safeguarding submits an annual safeguarding report to the Principal for review and submission to the Board, covering staff training, anonymised case data, and quality assurance processes. This enables the Board of Governors to monitor the School's safeguarding performance and compliance.

The Head of Safeguarding provides regular updates to the Director or Principal, including case reviews and risk assessments, which are shared with the Senior Executive Committee. The Head of Safeguarding also liaises with internal safeguarding contacts, and external partner agencies to support policy development, training, and record keeping.

12. Policy review

Last date of review: 11/08/2026

Policy Owners:

Alison Mears (Director of GYA & Safeguarding) alison.mears@gsmd.ac.uk and
Hetsie van Rooyen (Head of Safeguarding) Hetsie.vanrooyen@gsmd.ac.uk

Next Review: 11/08/2027