

Safeguarding Students and Children Policy

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POINT BLANK

MUSIC SCHOOL

Safeguarding Students and Children

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1 INTRODUCTION

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989). For the purpose of this policy document:

- The term 'child' will be used to describe all children and young people under the age of 18 years old participating in Point Blank led activities.
- The term 'student' will be used to describe a person over 18 years of age taking part in Point Blank led activities.
- The term 'staff' will be used to describe those employed on a contract of employment at Point Blank including those on working on a voluntary/unpaid basis.

2 PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

This policy is intended for all employees of Point Blank Limited and anyone else who is affected by its work activities. The aim of this Policy is to promote good practice to:

- Provide children and students with appropriate safety and protection whilst visiting/in the care of Point Blank;
- Allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific safeguarding issues.

Point Blank is determined to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to protect from harm those children and students who participate in its provision.

This policy establishes Point Blank's position, role and responsibilities and clarifies what is expected from everybody involved within the company.

Everyone who participates in Point Blank activities should be able to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from abuse. This is the responsibility of every member of staff involved in this organisation.

Point Blank recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and students by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

3 POLICY STATEMENT

Point Blank staff have a professional duty to take reasonable steps to see that the children and students are safe from harm while involved in Point Blank activities. All children and students have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled students and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.

Point Blank will ensure the safety and protection of all children and students involved in its activities through adherence to the Safeguarding Students guidelines it has adopted.

4 EMPLOYER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

In our provision for children Point Blank will ensure that:

- The welfare of the child and student is paramount

- All children and students, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity 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 have a responsibility to report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Point Blank's DSL is David McHugh, Head of Music School and Facilities.

5 EMPLOYEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

Point Blank's Safeguarding Children and Students Policy will be implemented by adhering to the policy guidelines contained within this document. All staff who work with children and students must comply with this Policy failing which disciplinary action may be taken under the Point Blank Disciplinary Procedure. Adherence of staff to this Policy will be monitored by line managers and ultimately by the person named above as being responsible for this policy.

The guidelines cover three main areas:

- Staff recruitment, support and training
- Staff conduct
- Safeguarding procedures

6 CHILDREN'S AND STUDENTS' RIGHTS

All children and students have needs and rights:

- The need for physical care and attention
- The need for intellectual stimulation
- The need for emotional love and security
- The need for social contact and relationships
- The right to have their needs met and safeguarded
- The right to be protected from neglect, abuse and exploitation
- The right to be protected from discrimination
- The right to be treated as an individual

All these rights will be made transparent before any learning is under taken.

7 ROLES

For all activities and events involving children and students at Point Blank, at least one member of staff should lead on child and student protection, raising awareness of this policy and its guidelines among other staff and where appropriate the children, students, accompanying school/care staff and parents.

Where staff are likely to engage with a child or a student on a one-to-one basis, it is imperative that he/she is appropriately trained. The "Lead member of staff" referred to in this Policy is the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or, in his/her absence, the relevant Manager.

8 STAFF RECRUITMENT, SUPPORT AND TRAINING

Point Blank recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children and students in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and students.

Pre-selection checks must include the following:

- All volunteers/staff should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.

Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children (if applicable). These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity should be provided (e.g., passport or driving licence with photo).

9 INTERVIEW AND INDUCTION

All employees (and volunteers) will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction, during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).
- Their qualifications should be substantiated.
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- Child and student protection procedures are explained, and training needs are identified.

10 TRAINING

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or student.
- Work safely and effectively with children and students.

11 STAFF CONDUCT

All staff should demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from allegations of misconduct. Staff should maintain their standards of behaviour therefore acting as a role model.

The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

11.1 Good practice means:

- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets). Never allow yourself to be left alone with a participant. There may be rare occasions when a confidential interview or a one-to-one meeting is necessary, and in such circumstances, the interview should be conducted in a room with an open door or visual access. Where this is not possible, the member of staff should ensure that there is another adult nearby. Never make gratuitous physical contact with a participant. [There may be occasions where a distressed participant needs comfort which may include physical comforting and staff should use their discretion to ensure that it is appropriate and not unnecessary or unjustified contact.] Be cautious about physical contact in practical exercises. Where physical contact is inescapable (e.g. to demonstrate equipment or a particular exercise/move) staff should be aware of the limits within which such contact should take place and of the possibility for misinterpretation of such contact.
- Treat all children and students equally, and with respect and dignity. Point Blank will take positive action to eliminate discrimination against any person or group of people.
- Staff should ensure that children and students are protected from discrimination on any grounds, including ability and challenge discriminating comments and behaviour. Activities should be designed to include everyone and to promote positive attitudes towards differences.
- Be clear about what the objectives of the activity are before it begins and always put the welfare of each child and student first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Never contradict an instruction given by a lecturer/project manager or other member of staff.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children and students (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or student).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children and students to share in the decision-making process.
- Ensuring that at residential events, adults should not enter children's or students' rooms (unless it is essential because someone is ill and in these circumstances, adopt the procedures set out above in relation to private interviews). Staff should never invite children or students into their rooms.
- Conducting yourself in a manner that sets a good example to the participants. Be an excellent role model.
- Always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Never use physical force against a participant, unless it constitutes reasonable restraint to protect him/her or another person or to protect property. If it is necessary to restrain a participant because they are an immediate danger to themselves or others or to property then the minimum amount of force should be used for the shortest amount of time. Remain calm and get the attention and support of other staff. The incident should be recorded in writing, with a witness statement (where possible), immediately afterwards.
- Never using physical punishment.
- Securing parental consent in writing if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment where the participant is under 18. First aid given should be recorded in writing and reported to the lead member of staff who will inform the parent or carer.
- Always keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given (refer to Health & Safety policy).
- Request written parental consent if staff are required to transport children in their cars.
- Always refer any problems to the lead member of staff.

- Question any unknown adult who enters Point Blank's premises and/or who attempt to engage with the children or students.

11.2 Practices never to be sanctioned:

- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Sharing a room with a child or student.
- Engaging in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Inappropriate use of language and/or behaviour. This should always be challenged.¹
- Sexually suggestive comments to a child or student, even in fun.
- Reducing a child or student to tears as a form of control.
- Allegations made by a child or student to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or students that they can do for themselves (e.g. apply sunscreen).²
- Inviting or allowing children or students to stay with you at your home.
- Arranging meetings with a child outside of Point Blank.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur, you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. If this relates to a child, you should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- if you accidentally hurt a learner
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner
- if a learner appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- if a learner misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

11.3 Whistleblowing Policy

Purpose and scope:

- All organisations face the risk of things going wrong or of unknowingly harbouring malpractice. The Company believes it has a duty to identify such situations and take the appropriate measures to remedy the situation. By encouraging a culture of openness within our organisation the Company believes it can help prevent malpractice—prevention is better than cure. That is the aim of this policy.

¹ Challenging Behaviour: 'Bad' behaviour is often a response to a situation, or a way to seek attention. If children and students are occupied there will be less of a need to seek attention and less of a chance for boredom to set in.

The following guidelines can be used to deal with challenging behaviour constructively:

- • Be aware of what unacceptable behaviour is. Ask your lead member of staff if you are unsure. Children and students attending certain activities will have been issued with a code of conduct.
- • Explain to children and students why certain behaviour is unacceptable. This makes them feel responsible for their behaviour and they are less likely to repeat it.
- • Make sure it is the behaviour which is punished and not the person. Always avoid labelling someone as 'bad'.
- • If appropriate ignore the bad behaviour for a while – a child or student may only be attention seeking.

² It may sometimes be necessary for staff to do things of a personal nature for children or students, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents, if this relates to a child. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child or student to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

- By encouraging a culture of openness, the Company wants to encourage you to raise issues which concern you at work. You may be worried that by reporting such issues you will be opening yourself up to victimisation or detriment, or risking your job security; that is quite understandable. However, all staff now enjoy statutory protection if they raise concerns in the right way. This policy is designed to give you that opportunity and protection. Provided you are acting in good faith, it does not matter if you are mistaken. There is no question of you having to prove anything.
- If there is anything which you think the Company should know about please use the procedure outlined in this policy. By knowing about malpractice at an early stage the Company stands a good chance of taking the necessary steps to safeguard the interests of all staff and protect the organisation. In short, please, do not hesitate to “blow the whistle” on malpractice.

Note: This policy is not the normal Grievance Procedure. If you have a complaint about your own personal circumstances, then you should use the normal Grievance Procedure. If you have concerns about malpractice within the organisation, then you should use the procedure outlined in this policy.

11.4 Our Guarantee

- The Company is committed to this policy. If you use this policy to raise a concern the Company gives you its assurance that you will not suffer any form of retribution, victimisation or detriment. The Company will treat your concern seriously and act according to this policy. You will not be asked to prove anything. If you ask for a matter to be treated in confidence the Company will respect your request and only make disclosures with your consent. You will be given feedback on any investigation and the Company will be sensitive to any concerns you may have as a result of any steps taken under this procedure.

11.5 How to raise your concern internally

- Tell your immediate superior line manager

If you are concerned about any form of malpractice you should normally first raise the issue with your immediate superior line manager. There is no special procedure for doing this—you can tell that person about the problem or put it in writing if you prefer.

- If you feel unable to tell your immediate superior line manager

If you feel you cannot tell your immediate superior line manager, for whatever reason, please raise the issue with another manager.

- If you still have concerns

If you have raised your concerns and you are still concerned, or the matter is so serious that you feel you cannot discuss it with either of the two persons named above, you should raise the matter with a Director.

11.6 How the Company will respond

- After you have raised your concern the Company will decide how to respond in a responsible and appropriate manner under this policy. Usually this will involve making internal enquiries

first, but it may be necessary to carry out an investigation at a later stage which may be formal or informal depending on the nature of the concern raised.

- As far as possible, the Company will keep you informed of the decisions taken and the outcome of any enquiries and investigations carried out. However, the Company will not be able to inform you of any matters which would infringe the duty of confidentiality owed to others.

11.7 Raising your concern externally (exceptional cases)

The main purpose of this policy is to give you the opportunity and protection you need to raise your concerns internally. The Company would expect that in almost all cases raising concerns internally would be the most appropriate action for you to take. However, if for whatever reason, you feel you cannot raise your concerns internally and you honestly and reasonably believe the information and any allegations are true, you should consider raising the matter with the appropriate regulator.

Caution: If you have good reasons for not using the internal or regulatory disclosure procedures described above, you may consider making wider disclosure by reporting the matter to the police or to the media, for example. However, whistleblowers who make wider disclosures of this type will only be protected (from victimisation and suffering detriment) in certain circumstances. The Company recommends that you take legal advice before following this course of action since we believe it will be in your own interests to do so.

11.8 Use of photographic/filming equipment

Written consent to take and use images of children or students should be obtained prior to the taking of photographs and/or video footage. Parents of children should be made aware of when, where and how the images may be used in order to give their informed consent. This includes comprehensive information regarding use of images e.g. in print, multi-media, broadcast; for what purpose e.g. promotion, publicity, evaluation, audit, review; and where possible an indication of who the audience will be e.g. the general public, the participating children and their families, other organisations and institutes.

12 CHILD AND STUDENT PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Point Blank will follow the procedures to:

- Ensure we have a lead member of staff for child and student protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
- Ensure every member of staff knows the name of the lead staff member responsible for child and student protection and their role.
- Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the lead staff member. However, staff should remember that they are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred.
- Ensure that parents of children have an understanding of the responsibility placed on Point Blank and staff for child protection by supporting documentation available from Point Blank.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child and student protection matters including attendance at case conferences.

- Keep written records of concerns about children and students, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately. Ensure all records are kept securely in locked locations.
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Adopt a procedure for dealing with concerns about possible abuse.

13 ABUSE

13.1 Definition of Child Abuse

A term to describe a range of ways in which people, usually adults, harm children. Often the adult is a person who is known and trusted by the child.

Child abuse is neglect, physical injury, sexual abuse or emotional abuse inflicted or knowingly not prevented, which causes significant harm or death.

NSPCC (1999)

Abuse and adults

Organisations and individuals should not be limited in their view of what constitutes abuse or neglect, and should always consider the circumstances of the individual case. Types of abuse include – physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, modern slavery, financial abuse, neglect, self-neglect, domestic violence, discriminatory abuse, and organisational abuse.

13.2 Awareness of actual or likely occurrence of abuse

There are a number of ways in which abuse becomes apparent:

- A child or student discloses abuse.
- Someone else discloses that a child or student has told him/her or that he/she strongly believes a child or student has been or is being abused.
- A child or student may show signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation.
- A child's or student's behaviour may indicate that it is likely that he/she is being abused.
- A member of staff's behaviour or in the way in which he/she relates to a child or student causes concern.

13.3 Issues of Disclosure

Becoming aware of abuse can cause a multitude of emotional reactions, which are personal to each individual. Whatever the reaction and however the abuse has become apparent, actual or suspected, it must be responded to in the correct manner according to the procedure outlined here. Even if the truth of the disclosure is uncertain – an appropriate response has to be made. A response in accordance with the procedure outlined here will be supported by the lead member of staff and ultimately Point Blank.

13.4 What to do upon suspicion or disclosure

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

What to do	What not to do
<p>Stay Calm</p> <p>Listen, hear and believe</p> <p>Give time to the person to say what they want</p> <p>Reassure & explain that they have done the right thing in telling.</p> <p>Explain that only professionals who need to know will be informed</p> <p>Act immediately in accordance with the procedure in this policy</p> <p>Record in writing as near as verbatim as possible what was said as soon as possible</p> <p>Report to the lead member of staff</p> <p>Record your report</p>	<p>Don't panic. Don't over-react. It is extremely unlikely that the participant is in immediate danger</p> <p>Don't probe for more information.</p> <p>Questioning the participant may affect how the participant's disclosure is received at a later date.</p> <p>Don't make assumptions, don't paraphrase and don't offer alternative explanations. Don't promise confidentiality to keep secrets or that everything will be OK (it might not)</p> <p>Don't try to deal with it yourself</p> <p>Don't make negative comments about the alleged abuser</p> <p>Don't "gossip" with colleagues about what has been said to you</p> <p>Don't make a child or student repeat a story unnecessarily</p>

It is the duty of anyone who works with children or students 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.

13.5 Responsibility

Staff made aware of suspicions, allegations or actual abuse, are responsible to take the appropriate action according to this procedure.

- The primary responsibility of the person who first suspects or who is told of abuse is to report it and to ensure that their concern is taken seriously whilst adhering to the dos and don'ts above.
- The incident should be reported immediately to the lead member of staff who is then responsible for dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse.
- Staff should never try to deal with a suspicion, allegation or actual incident of abuse by him/herself.

13.6 Reporting suspected, alleged, or actual incidents of abuse

It may sometimes be difficult to accept that something that has been disclosed in confidence by a child or student should be passed on to a colleague. But the welfare of the child or student must be paramount, and you therefore have a duty to report suspicions, allegations or actual incidents to the designated member of staff.

Information should also be reported if you yourself have concerns that a child or student may be suffering harm or at risk of abuse, even if you are unsure about your suspicions. Once this initial report has been made, the lead member of staff will consult with the relevant statutory agencies:

- The local Social Services Emergency Duty Team
- Child Protection Unit
- NSPCC Child Protection Helpline 0800 800 500

The following information may be required:

- Staff name, address, telephone number, position/role within Point Blank.
- As many details about the child or student as possible, e.g. name, date of birth, address, home telephone number, and school.
- What the reasons are for telephoning, e.g. the suspicions, allegations, what has been said, giving details of times and dates and the child's or student's emotional state, or what the child or student has said in response to the suspicions/concerns. Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- What's been done so far?
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

The relevant statutory agency will then give instructions as to what to do next and take the responsibility for further action.

13.7 Statutory Protection Procedures

What happens next is entirely up to the relevant statutory agency, usually Social Services. Enough information passed onto the agency may lead to the suspicion, allegation or actual incident, being dealt with quickly with few complications, or it may lead to thorough checks with several other organisations and possibly a child protection conference, if this relates to a child.

A child protection conference involves as many people as possible, (including the parents/carers and sometimes the child as well), who discuss the issues that have been raised in the suspicions, allegations, or actual abuse that has been reported and investigated. Decisions about what will happen next are made at the conference.

Quite often, the person who has made the initial report may not be contacted again unless further information is required. It is not usual practice for the relevant statutory agency to feedback developments. However, if you feel that not enough action has been taken, and the child is still at risk, concerns should be reported again or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline contacted for advice.

13.8 Recording suspected or actual incidents

No matter what happens to a suspicion, allegation or actual incident of abuse, (that is whether or not it is processed through a statutory agency or not), all details must be recorded.

Important information to record includes:

- The date and time of disclosure, suspicion, allegation or actual abuse incident.
- Details given to you about the above, e.g. date & time of when things occurred.
- An indication of the parties involved.
- Details of what action you and the School has taken.
- Details of reporting on, e.g. who to (statutory agency) and when.

If for any reason it is decided not to consult with a relevant statutory agency, a full explanation of why must be documented. Recording should be factual, that is, no reference made to your own subjective opinions. Records should be kept completely confidential and secure (always locked away) and only shared with those who need to know about the suspicion, allegation or actual incident of abuse.