



Safeguarding Policy

Gloucestershire Academy of Music

Updated October 2025

Designated Safeguarding Officers:

Glyn Oxley 07913 036372

Sue Bain 01452 668592

In preparing our policy, we have referred to
Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025

All GAM staff and associates are required to read each update of this policy and to confirm that they have read and understood the policy by emailing info@glosacadmusic.org

1 Child Protection Policy

1.1 Introduction

Everyone who participates in Gloucestershire Academy of Music (GAM) is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. GAM has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, tutors and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

The GAM is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone attending the Academy accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of Gloucestershire Academy of Music and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children's Act 1989)

1.2 Policy statement

Gloucestershire Academy of Music is committed to the following statements:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, race, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in music in a fun and safe environment
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- all staff recruitment will follow 'safer recruitment' guidelines, ensuring that employees who work with children will be suitable for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and child protection procedures
- working in partnership with parents and children is essential for the protection of children

- safeguarding is everyone's business and that there is an expectation that staff will pass on to the appropriate manager and local authority any welfare concerns that may arise in the course of their duties

1.3 Monitor and review the policy and procedures

The implementation of procedures should be regularly monitored and reviewed. The child protection officers should regularly report progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements gaps and areas where changes are required to the management committee.

The policy should be reviewed every year or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation.

2 Promoting Good Practice

2.1 Introduction

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities in music education everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of employees or participants at Gloucestershire Academy of Music to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child, as explained in section 4.

This section will help you identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.

2.2 Good Practice

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and action:

- always work in an open environment where possible (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- make the experience of music education fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity
- always put the welfare of the young person first

- maintain a safe and appropriate distance from students (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child)
- refrain from contacting students directly by phone, message or email UNLESS express written permission has been granted by parents. Direct contact, **with parental permission**, is permissible with students in KS5 and above to make arrangements for rehearsals or lessons.
- avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given
- involve parents/carers wherever possible
- gain written parental consent for any travel arrangements
- be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people
- always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- recognising the developmental needs and capacity of the young person and do not risk sacrificing welfare in a desire for Gloucestershire Academy of Music or personal achievements. This means avoiding excessive practising or competition and not pushing students against their will
- secure written parental consent for Gloucestershire Academy of Music to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given
- carry out a risk assessment for every off-site event and location
- keep accurate attendance registers for all GAM activities
- adult learners attending courses or ensembles alongside children **will be supervised by the music leader at all times** and will be briefed on our safeguarding practice
- any adult learner who is involved in coaching and supporting children in an unsupervised capacity is required to undergo our safer recruitment and DBS checks (see below)

- ensure that during residential holiday courses there are always male and female members of staff available. Staff should never enter changing, sleeping or bathroom areas of the opposite sex

2.3 Poor Practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel:

- unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others
- taking young people alone in a car on journeys, however short
- taking young people to your home where they will be alone with you
- sharing a room with a young person
- engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- organising activities for children on GAM courses which involve physical risk without a) full prior permission of the parents and b) having carried out a site visit and prepared a risk assessment
- allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching of any form
- allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun
- using terms of endearment to a young person
- reducing a young person to tears as a form of control
- allowing allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- doing things of a personal nature that the young person can do for themselves

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situation e.g. transporting a young person in your car, this should only be carried out with the **full understanding and consent of the parent/carer** and the young person involved.

If during your care you accidentally hurt a young person, the young person seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to another

colleague and make a written note of it. Parents should also be informed of the incident.

3 Defining Child Abuse

3.1 Introduction

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

The main types of abuse are: **physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, online abuse, child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation (FGM), bullying and cyberbullying, forced marriage, child trafficking, radicalisation and grooming, peer to peer abuse and upskirting.**

The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person.

Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood

Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

3.2 Types of Abuse

- **Physical Abuse:** where adults physically hurt or injure a young person e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute child abuse.

This category of abuse can also include when a parent/carer reports non-existent symptoms or illness deliberately causes ill health in a young person they are looking after. This is known as fabricated or induced illness (FI).

- **Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of young people

that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn.

Ill treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse in music education may occur when the young person is constantly criticised, given negative feedback, expected to perform at levels that are above their capability. Other forms of emotional abuse could take the form of name calling and bullying.

- **Bullying** may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are three main types of bullying.

It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

Bullying also happens online, using social networks, games and mobile phones. This is called **cyberbullying**. A child can feel like there's no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night.

In music education bullying may arise when a parent or tutor pushes the young person too hard to succeed.

- **Neglect** occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.

Neglect in music education could occur when a teacher does not keep the young person safe, or exposing them to unnecessary risk of injury.

- **Sexual Abuse** occurs when adults (male and female) use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing young

people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.

In music education, activities which might involve physical contact with young people could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Also the power of the music teacher over young students, if misused, may lead to abusive situations developing.

- Child sexual exploitation is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status.
- Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons.
- Child trafficking is a type of abuse where children are recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold.
- Radicalisation is when someone starts to believe or support extreme views. They could be pressured to do illegal things by someone else or be persuaded to change their behaviour or beliefs.
- Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world by a stranger or by someone they know.
- Children can be abused by another young person (peer to peer abuse)
- Upskirting is the practice of making unauthorised photographs under a woman's skirt or man's kilt, capturing an image of the crotch area or underwear.
- **Child-on-Child Abuse and Sexual Harassment** (*Added October 2025*)
GAM recognises that children can abuse other children and is committed to preventing and responding to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including:
 - Bullying (including cyberbullying)
 - Physical abuse
 - Sexual violence and harassment
 - Upskirting
 - Initiation/hazing-type violence and rituals

Staff must report any concerns immediately to a DSO. Victims will be supported sensitively, and alleged perpetrators will be managed in line with safeguarding and disciplinary procedures. GAM will ensure that all students understand acceptable behaviour and how to report concerns.

3.3 Indicators of Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- the young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a young person
- unexplained changes in a young person's behaviour e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- inappropriate sexual awareness
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- distrust of adult's, particularly those whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- difficulty in making friends
- being prevented from socialising with others
- displaying variations in eating patterns including over eating or loss of appetite
- losing weight for no apparent reason
- becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt

Signs of bullying include:

- behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go training or competitions
- an unexplained drop off in performance
- physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. on food, alcohol or cigarettes
- a shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking

place. It is **NOT** the responsibility of those working in Gloucestershire Academy of Music to decide that child abuse is occurring. It **IS** their responsibility to act on any concerns.

3.4 Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment

Some people use music events with young people as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people. All teachers must be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to Gloucestershire Academy of Music's Designated Safeguarding Officer.

All parents and students should be made aware when teachers use video equipment as a coaching aid.

3.5 Online Safety and Use of Technology *(Added October 2025)*

GAM is committed to safeguarding children in both physical and digital environments. This includes:

- Ensuring appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place for internet access
- Supervising students during online lessons or digital activities
- Prohibiting unsupervised use of personal devices during GAM activities
- Educating students about online risks including grooming, cyberbullying, and exposure to harmful content

Staff must report any online safety concerns to a DSO. GAM will review its digital safeguarding practices annually and ensure staff are trained in online safety protocols.

3.6 Ethical Use of AI and Emerging Technologies *(Added October 2025)*

As part of its commitment to safeguarding, GAM will monitor the use of generative AI and other emerging technologies in music education. This includes:

- Ensuring AI tools are used ethically and do not expose children to inappropriate content
- Supervising any AI-assisted learning or composition activities
- Reviewing AI platforms for data protection and safeguarding compliance

Staff must not use AI tools to communicate directly with students or generate personalised content without oversight. Any concerns about misuse of technology should be reported to a DSO.

4 Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

4.1 Introduction

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Gloucestershire Academy of Music in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person. This applies **EITHER** to allegations/suspicions of abuse occurring within Gloucestershire Academy of Music **OR** to allegations/suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

This section explains how to respond to allegations/suspicions.

4.2 Responding to Low-Level Concerns *(Added Oct 2024)*

GAM recognises that not all safeguarding concerns meet the threshold for harm. Low-level concerns are behaviours by staff or volunteers that may be inconsistent with the organisation's expectations but do not indicate abuse. Examples include:

- Using overly familiar language or nicknames
- Breaching professional boundaries (e.g. texting a student without parental consent)
- Failing to maintain appropriate physical distance

All low-level concerns must be reported to a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO). These concerns will be recorded and monitored to identify any patterns or escalation. GAM encourages a culture of openness and reflection to ensure early intervention and uphold professional standards.

4.3 Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed in section 3 of this document, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the young person affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- **stay calm** so as not to frighten the young person
- **reassure** the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- **listen** to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously
- **do not promise** to keep their disclosure confidential
- **inform** the child that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- **keep questions to a minimum** so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been

led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify

- **safety of the child** is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue
- Hand the notes, reporting the incident immediately to one of the GAM designated safeguarding officers:

Glyn Oxley	07913 036372
Sue Bain	01452 668592

- Do not discuss with anyone else.

**In all cases if you are not sure what to do you can gain help from the NSPCC
24 hour help line Tel No: 0808 800 5000**

4.4 Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

Information should include the following:

- the child's name, age and date of birth (if known)
- the child's home address and telephone number (if known)
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- details of witnesses to the incidents
- the child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred
- have the parents been contacted? If so what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so record details
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail
- record all information by producing handwritten notes as soon as you can.
- Date and sign the notes.
- Do not report this sensitive information via email.

4.5 Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations **MUST** be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague.

It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

Gloucestershire Academy of Music expects its members and staff to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child **immediately** with the person in charge and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

If the nominated Gloucestershire Academy of Music designated safeguarding officers are not available, you should take responsibility and seek advice from the NSPCC helpline, the duty officer at your local social services department or the police. Telephone numbers can be found at the end of this document or online.

Where there is a complaint against an employee or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation.

- **Criminal** in which case the police are immediately involved
- **Child protection** in which case the social services (and possibly) the police will be involved
- **Disciplinary or misconduct** in which case, Gloucestershire Academy of Music will be involved

As mentioned previously in this document, Gloucestershire Academy of Music is not expert in child protection and it is not our responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for child protection.

Social services have a legal responsibility under The Children Act 1989 to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the child and family (where appropriate), gathering information from other people who know the child and making inquiries jointly with the police.

NB: If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by an employee or a volunteer should be reported to the designated safeguarding officers at Gloucestershire Academy of Music. They will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- the matter will be referred to Gloucestershire County Council's children's helpdesk on 01452 426565 or to Gloucestershire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0800 5420202
- the parent/carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from MASH
- the chair person of your organisation should be notified to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings

- if a designated welfare officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the other DWO or to a GAM board member who will refer the matter to Gloucestershire MASH.

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made sometime after the event. Where such allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to social services. This is because other children receiving music education or outside it may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children.

4.6 Concerns outside the immediate environment of Gloucestershire Academy of Music (e.g. a parent or carer)

- Report your concerns to a designated safeguarding officer
- If the welfare officer is not available, the person being told or discovering the abuse should contact Gloucestershire MASH (see above) immediately
- Social Services and the DSO will decide how to inform the parents/carers
- The DSO should also report the incident to the Gloucestershire Academy of Music's Board who should ascertain whether or not the person/s involved in the incident plays a role in the organisation and act accordingly
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis

4.6 Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The designated welfare officer
- The parents of the child
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services/police
- Gloucestershire Academy of Music Chair
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

4.7 Internal Inquiries and Suspension

- Gloucestershire Academy of Music's DSO will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries

- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the Gloucestershire Academy of Music's Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases the Gloucestershire Academy of Music Disciplinary Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

5 Recruiting and Selecting Personnel with Children

5.1 Introduction

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers, both full and part time. To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children the following steps are taken when recruiting.

5.2 Controlling Access to Children

- Consent should be obtained from the applicant to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children should be obtained. These references **MUST** be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo)
- CVs/Applications are scrutinised and any gaps in employment/training explored with the prospective employee

5.3 Interview and Induction

All employees and volunteers are required to undertake an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers receive formal or informal induction during which:

- Their qualifications are substantiated
- The job requirements and responsibilities are clarified
- Child Protection Procedures are explained and training needs identified e.g. basic child protection awareness

5.4 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 what is deemed 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 and/or abuse
- respond to concerns expressed by a child
- work safely and effectively with children

Gloucestershire Academy of Music requires:

- All staff and volunteers who have access to children to undergo a DBS check
- All employees and volunteers to undertake relevant child protection training or undertake a form of home study, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of positive culture towards good practice and child protection
- All staff and volunteers to receive advisory information outlining good/bad practice and informing them what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person by reading this policy.
- All GAM staff and volunteers to confirm **in writing** they have read this policy and its subsequent updates.
- All staff and volunteers to be identified by the wearing of the official GAM lanyard

Declaration

On behalf of Gloucestershire Academy of Music we, the undersigned, will oversee the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

Signed:

Name:

Glyn Oxley

Position within Gloucestershire Academy of Music

Principal

Date:

01 October 2025

Name:

Sue Bain

Position within Gloucestershire Academy of Music

Operations Director

Date:

01 October 2025

Information for Designated Safeguarding Officers:

Gloucestershire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

01452 426565 (during office hours)

Childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk

www.gscb.org.uk

Gloucestershire County Council Social Worker advice

Child at immediate risk, phone Front Door 01452 426565 (option 1)

Practitioner Advice Line 01452 426565 (option 3)

NSPCC

Helpline 0808 800 5000

help@nspcc.org.uk

Police (out of office hours)

101