

nyos

# Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

The National Youth Orchestras of Scotland nurtures the skills and future prospects of young people in Scotland through high quality music projects. Each year these range from introductory grassroots level initiatives, to flagship orchestras which provide a platform for Scotland's very best young musicians. In order to achieve this, NYOS employs a core staff team along with highly skilled tutors, conductors and soloists and a team of pastoral care staff. All staff provide their services on a paid, professional basis.

All activities are directed towards children and young people aged 8 to 25 years of age, therefore, this policy also covers vulnerable adults who are identified to the Course Managers or Chief Executive prior to their arrival at any activity.

Everyone who participates in the activities of NYOS, regardless of age, mental or physical needs, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, is entitled to do so in a safe environment. NYOS recognises its responsibility to provide all children, vulnerable adults and staff with the highest possible standard of care and to protect them at all times from all types of harm and abuse. NYOS also recognises that working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and their teachers and tutors is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

## Key Principles of Working with Children

At the heart of good practice in protecting children lies an understanding of their rights. There are four key principles derived from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which has been ratified by Scotland.

These four key principles, as follows, underpin the work of NYOS with children and young people:

- The best interests of the child must always be a primary consideration.
- All children and young people should be treated fairly and with dignity and respect.
- All children and young people have the right to protection from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- All children and young people have the right to express their views on matters that affect them.

## Code of Practice

NYOS is committed to ensuring that:

- Care is taken to ensure adequate supervision of young people at all times.
- All young people, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief, and sexual identity are able to participate in NYOS activities in a safe and enjoyable environment.
- All reasonable steps are taken to protect young people from harm, discrimination, and abuse of any kind and to respect their rights, privacy, wishes and feelings.
- Appropriate risk assessments are undertaken, and subsequent health and safety measures are maintained
- Behaviour that is appropriate to the age of the young people involved is encouraged in staff and young people alike at all times.
- Staff and parents/carers are aware of the Policy Statement.
- The Policy is reviewed regularly.
- All NYOS employees who work with young people are recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility. In order to achieve this NYOS will ensure that staff are carefully selected, interviewed, instructed and supervised.

- The charity registration with the Central Registration Body in Scotland (CRBS) is kept up to date and an Enhanced Disclosure under the PVG Scheme (2011) is required for all staff undertaking regulated work with children and/or vulnerable adults.
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## Prior to Residential Courses

- Course Instructions and Guidelines are issued prior to courses.
- All students are requested to complete a Medical Information Form.
- Written parental consent is requested for NYOS to act in 'loco parentis', for students under the age of 18, and for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises.
- Written parental consent is secured for students (under 18) to attend NYOS Courses.

## During Residential Courses

- All young people are encouraged to adhere to guidelines and rules stated within the Course Instructions and Guidelines and reiterated by staff.
- All young people know that there are adults in attendance whom they can approach if they are concerned and know who these adults are.
- All concerns brought to the attention of NYOS staff will be dealt with and monitored appropriately, as indicated below in the Complaints Procedure.
- At least one member of the pastoral care staff employed by NYOS has appropriate medical training and responsibility.
- A written record is made of any injury/ailment that occurs during NYOS attendance, along with details of treatment/support given.
- Adequate staff-student ratios are maintained.

# Good Practice Guidance

## Direct Contact

- Maintain a safe, professional, and appropriate relationship with students.
- Physical contact can be applied appropriately to instruct professionally, treat/prevent an injury, encourage, protect, and comfort.
- Give enthusiastic, constructive, and positive praise and advice as required.

## Supervision

- During courses, young people will always be under appropriate supervision by NYOS pastoral staff or tutors.
- Appropriate adult : young person ratios will be maintained at all times.

## Discipline

- If a young person is behaving in a disruptive manner, they will be removed from the situation by the Course Manager or Head of Pastoral Staff and given a verbal warning if necessary.
- Any further disruptive behaviour will be reported to the Chief Executive who may ask a student to leave a course if deemed necessary for their own welfare or that of other students.
- Where appropriate during a residential course, the student's parents may be contacted to discuss the matter.

## Assessing Risks

- Risk assessments are carried out before each course, project, and concert.
- During residential courses, a medically trained member of pastoral staff is always in attendance. They act as a first point of contact for First Aid and any other medical needs.
- Any incidents, illnesses etc and necessary actions are documented.
- It is the responsibility of the students to ensure that any electrical equipment (e.g. amps, keyboards etc) they bring are safe.
- NYOS carries out regular PAT testing on all its own electrical equipment.
- NYOS encourages all students to familiarise themselves with fire procedures at any residential, rehearsal or performance venue.

- Students are also made aware of any potential risks and encouraged to adhere to any related instructions for the safety of themselves and those around.

## Protecting Children from Exploitation

NYOS recognises its role in preparing the students who attend courses for a professional career in music and all that this entails in terms of rehearsal and performance schedules. We place high importance on self-discipline and working towards a common goal. However, we also recognise that in some cases, especially NYOS Development and NYOS Academy, the young people involved may be as young as 8, and that we have a responsibility to make sure that rehearsal schedules are made with this in mind. We ensure adequate opportunities for rest and free time as well as strict curfew times at night. The pastoral staff are alert to any signs of fatigue amongst students. Furthermore, we always ensure that no activities are planned that may be damaging to students' health or well-being in any way.

## Confidentiality

All information regarding a child and his/her family will be kept confidential by NYOS and should only be disclosed to the Head of Pastoral Staff in order to assess any action to be taken as a result of the concern.

Any disclosure of confidential information can only be undertaken with the express permission of those concerned except where it is considered necessary for the protection of a child, in which case, information will be shared with the appropriate authority.

It is recognised that children and young people need to be protected from information and material that might affect their well-being.

Due consideration will always be given to the appropriateness of any material the students are involved with (whether provided by NYOS or an external partner).

## **Internet Safety**

We encourage our students to keep in touch via Facebook and Instagram. However, we recognise that this is only applicable to young people over the age of 13; for all students under this age, we would encourage a parent/carer to like us on Facebook/follow us on Instagram instead.

In accordance with Meta rules and regulations, we will not tolerate any misuse in any circumstances and will, if necessary, report any such activity to Meta and immediately remove the perpetrator from commenting on our Pages.

## **Photographs and Images of Children**

NYOS is mindful that photographs can be used as a means of identifying children when they are accompanied with personal information, for example the name of the child and the organisation/school of which they are a member. This information can make the child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to 'groom' the child for abuse.

Photo images can be used or adapted for inappropriate use.

NYOS may arrange for journalists, press photographers and, on occasions, film crews to visit during any course or performance to interview and/or film/take photographs of students. Photos and videos may be made public, for example on YouTube or Vimeo, on our own website and for funding applications and reporting. Parents/carers are made aware of this and have the

opportunity to contact the Chief Executive or Course Manager prior to a course if they are not in agreement with this arrangement.

Members of the audience are not permitted to take any form of photograph or make any type of video or audio recording in performance areas without prior permission. Appointed press photography will be permitted in designated areas by prior arrangement with the Chief Executive.

## **Understanding Abuse and Neglect**

It is the responsibility of NYOS staff to deal with and if necessary, report any suspicions or concerns about a child or a young person. Child abuse occurs when a person in a position of trust and/or authority misuses this power over a child and causes him or her emotional and/or physical harm. While young people are in our care, this person could be a member of staff or another young person.

A list of categories follows that may result in the failure of a young person to thrive can be found in Appendix 1. The list is not exhaustive or mutually exclusive. “Likely” means potential or suspected.

## **Understanding Abuse and Neglect**

Actual or likely, persistent or severe neglect of a young person, or the failure to protect a young person from exposure to any kind of danger including starvation or cold, or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the young person’s health or development, including the non-organic failure to thrive.

## **Physical abuse**

Actual or likely perpetrated physical injury to a young person, or failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a young person.

## **Sexual abuse or assault**

Actual or likely perpetrated sexual exploitation of a young person or the forcing of undesired sexual behaviour by one person upon another, whether sustained over a period of time or as an isolated incident. This may include activities that children or young people do not fully understand and cannot give their consent to; and/or they have been coerced into participating against their will. Sexual abuse can range from people indecently exposing themselves to children, asking children to touch their genitals, to sexual intercourse.

## **Emotional abuse**

Actual or likely, persistent or severe emotional ill treatment, bullying or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional and behavioural development of a young person. This may include: degrading name-calling, being intimidated by threats, complete absence of affection towards the young person or unrealistic demands for achievement being placed on them.

All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment. This category should be used when it is the main or sole form of abuse.

## **Guidelines for recognising possible abuse**

Doubtful or inconsistent explanations of fractures, cuts, scalds, burns, lacerations, swellings or small bite marks.

Bruising in areas which a young person would not normally injure in every day play or fingertip bruising e.g. centre of back, abdomen, between thighs.

Failure to thrive emotionally or physically, or loss of weight, unexplained lethargy or tiredness.

Anxious and disturbed behaviour by young people. Young people may exhibit undue fear of adults or display apprehensive or withdrawn or conversely aggressive behaviour. They may display attention-seeking behaviour or lack self-esteem. They may self-harm.

Conflicting explanations of an injury.

All of the above may be harmless in nature if it is an isolated occurrence, but if one or more occur frequently enough to raise suspicion it should be reported to the Chief Executive. In the case of an emergency, the Course Manager, Head of Pastoral Staff or Chief Executive will ensure that medical attention is received or the police alerted as appropriate. The police have the power to act immediately to protect a child.

## **Appropriate Response to Suspicions of Abuse**

Changes in young people's behaviour or appearance will be monitored and acted upon. Parents will normally be the first point of reference unless there are suspicions that the parents are implicated.

Be supportive to the child or young person. Listen with care, but do not ask any unnecessary questions. Take what the child or young person is saying seriously, and advise them you will have to pass the information on.

Immediately report the grounds of your concern to the Designated Safeguarding Officer who will take steps to pass the information on to the relevant person or organisation who will

investigate the concerns Do not delay in reporting your concerns. Where possible, advise the Designated Safeguarding Officer on the same day the concern arises.

All such suspicions will be kept confidential, shared only with those who need to know.

## **What to do in an emergency**

If you are concerned about the immediate safety of a child, for example a child at risk of immediate harm or injury, contact Police Scotland immediately. Do not delay, as this could result in serious injury to a child.

*What if it is someone within the organisation that you are concerned about?*

If you have observed an NYOS employee or freelance worker acting in a way that has caused you to be concerned, and feel the matter needs to be investigated you should contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer outlining your concerns and the basis for them. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will take your concerns seriously and decide on an appropriate course of action. This may involve the use of the organisations disciplinary procedures and / or a referral to Social Work Services / Police.

If the concerns involve the Designated Safeguarding Officer, this should be reported to the Trustee Safeguarding Officer.