



...teaching music, changing lives!

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Child Protection Policy

Berkshire Maestros fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection. Our policy applies to all staff and volunteers working within the organisation and is in line with the policy of each Unitary Authority in Berkshire.

Berkshire Maestros will:

- Ensure we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children. *(Berkshire Maestros complies with the Criminal Records Bureau; our staff are required to undergo an enhanced CRB check prior to employment. Previous employer references are also taken up as part of the recruitment procedure.)*
- Raise awareness of child protection issues amongst staff & volunteers. *(Guidelines and advice form part of the Staff Code of Practice. Child protection issues will be discussed as part of the induction programme for new staff. Child Protection issues will be discussed with volunteers.)*
- Ensure a safe environment in which children can learn and develop musically. *(Guidelines are given to staff and volunteers regarding retaining a professional 'distance', common situations including working in a 1:1 situation and advice on physical contact. See Appendix 1)*
- Develop and implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse. *(Advice is given in guidance to staff & volunteers. See Appendix 1)*

We recognise that because of the day-to-day contact with children, Berkshire Maestros teaching staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. Maestros will therefore:

- Seek to establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in their School and in Berkshire Maestros whom they can approach if they are worried.

We will follow the advice of each Unitary Authority and take account of guidance issued by the DCSF to:

- Ensure we have a designated member of staff to be responsible for child protection matters. *(The Chief Executive of Berkshire Maestros will carry ultimate responsibility for child protection matters).*
- Ensure we have a nominated member of the senior management team to oversee child protection matters.
- Ensure every member of staff, volunteer and trustee knows the name of the designated person responsible for child protection and their role. *(A copy of the Child Protection Policy is available to all staff on our website in addition to a printed version along with practical guidelines).*

- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated person responsible for child protection in Schools or Berkshire Maestros.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on Berkshire Maestros and its staff for child protection. *(A paragraph setting out Berkshire Maestros obligations relating to Child Protection will be included in documentation for parents).*
- Co-operate as required with relevant agencies regarding child protection matters.
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations.
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer. *(In the event of an allegation against a member of staff, the Chief Executive of Berkshire Maestros may suspend that member of staff pending an initial investigation. Where the allegation is of a serious nature, then the matter will be reported to the appropriate authorities and Berkshire Maestros will co-operate fully in any investigation. Where a school has received a complaint, the investigation will be carried out jointly with the school and both parties will attend investigatory meetings. In the event of an allegation against a volunteer, the volunteer's services will be suspended pending an initial investigation by the Company Secretary of Berkshire Maestros who may then refer the matter to the appropriate authorities.)*

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The tuition / activities provided by Berkshire Maestros may be an important stabilising element in the lives of children at risk as it provides a regular secure and predictable experience. It is accepted that children suffering from abuse may have challenging behaviour or be defiant or they may be withdrawn. Berkshire Maestros will endeavour to support the child through:

- The content of the music curriculum.
- The ethos of the lesson / session that should promote a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- Ensuring that pupils know when behaviour is unacceptable but making the pupil aware that they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaising where appropriate with other agencies that support the pupil such as Schools, Social Care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, education welfare, educational psychology and other professionals available in the Children's Service locality teams.

In order to make the policy relevant and ongoing we undertake to periodically review it in the light of good practice and new legislation.

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Appendix 1: Guidelines for Staff & Volunteers

Berkshire Maestros fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection. Our policy applies to all staff and volunteers working within the organisation and is intended to support the policy of each Unitary Authority in Berkshire.

Below are practical guidelines and procedures which staff and volunteers should adopt in relation to Child Protection.

FAMILIARITY

- Staff should maintain a professional 'distance' from children
- Avoid 'special' relationships
- Never initiate social contact with children outside of the teaching situation
- Avoid any actions which may be interpreted as 'over familiar'

PHYSICAL CONTACT

- Physical contact should be avoided in the normal course of teaching. It is accepted however that occasional and limited physical contact may be necessary in order to guide the pupil in essential elements of technique. e.g. positioning the hand or correcting the posture of a student.
- In occasional circumstances, where it is necessary for physical contact, then verbal permission must first be sought from the pupil before invading any personal space.
- The teacher should be aware of proximity from the pupil and keep a suitable distance. i.e. one where the pupil does not feel that their personal space is being invaded.
- Teachers are advised to avoid standing behind or leaning over students.
- Physical restraint must not be used except in exceptional circumstances where reasonable restraint may be used to avoid personal injury.

ACCOMMODATION

- Where tutors are required to teach in a 1:1 situation, then the teaching room should be viewable from the outside. Where this is not the case then the teacher should bring this issue to the attention of a senior member of Maestros staff and a responsible person in the School / Centre concerned.

TRANSPORTING CLIENTS

- Lifts should not be given to pupils in staff cars except in exceptional circumstances with parental (or Chief Executive of Berkshire Maestros) permission. (Insurance cover must be appropriate for business use).

CONTACTING CLIENTS BY TELEPHONE / EMAIL

- Calls to parents are acceptable on an occasional basis providing there is good reason, however staff should always ask to speak to the parent / guardian and never the child.
- Calls to children should be avoided in all cases except in the case of a justifiable emergency situation.
- Permission must always be obtained from parents to communicate via email, text etc.

WHAT TO DO IF ABUSE IS SUSPECTED

- You have a legal duty to report any suspicion of abuse. In the first instance you should inform the Child Protection Liaison Officer of the school (If the teaching is during the school day) You must then report that there has been a child protection issue to the Chief Executive of Berkshire Maestros who is responsible for Child Protection matters. If the suspicion of abuse is raised in an 'out of school' or 'after school' situation you must inform the Chief Executive of Berkshire Maestros who will take the necessary action.
- **Tel: 0118 901 2360 Email: philipitchfield@berkshiremaestros.org.uk**

WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD OR VULNERABLE ADULT SPEAKS TO YOU ABOUT ABUSE

- Reassure the child that you will take what is said seriously.
- Keep Calm.
- Listen. Do not prejudice anything by making judgements.
- Tell the child that you will need to talk to someone else – do not promise confidentiality
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened, intimidated or made to promise secrecy
- Never push for more information than has been freely given or ask leading questions.
- Hear the allegations clearly.
- Refer the case to the correct person immediately. (See above)
- Do not discuss the case with anyone else apart from the school's Child Protection Liaison Officer and / or Chief Executive of Berkshire Maestros.

(Vs.11.09.2008)