

WEST SUSSEX GUITAR CLUB

POLICY AND SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES FOR THOSE WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS (i.e. THOSE UNDER 18 YEARS OLD AGE)

**FEBRUARY 2015
Updated August 2023**

The West Sussex Guitar Club ("the Club") follows the "Working Together To Safeguard Children" guidelines of March 2013.

The Club has a Child Protection Officer who is Mr Alexander Levtov of 16 Lyon Street, Bognor Regis, West Sussex. Telephone 01243 866162.

The following recommendations provide a framework within which children should be safe from harm and adults protected from false allegations or temptation. Be prepared for your colleagues to remind you if you forget one of these guidelines, and be prepared to help a colleague by advising them in return. The more trusting and open the relationships between workers, the safer children and young people will be.

- Do treat all children and young people with the respect and dignity befitting their age.
- Do watch your speech, tone of voice and body language.
- Do learn to control and discipline children without physical punishment, even if you have the parents' explicit permission for this.
- Do make sure another adult is around if you need to help toilet or wash a child.
- Do NOT invade a child's privacy whilst washing or toileting.
- Do ask parents' permission if you need to see a child on his or her own, make sure that another adult is nearby and that the child knows this.
- Do make sure that each group includes a female helper.
- Do NOT be sexually suggestive about or to a child or young person even in fun.
- Do NOT scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child or young person.
- Do NOT show favouritism to any one child.
- Do NOT allow children to involve you in excessive attention-seeking that is overtly physical or sexual in nature.
- Do NOT give lifts to children or young people on their own. If this is unavoidable ask the child to sit in the back.

- Do NOT permit abusive peer activities e.g. ridiculing, bullying etc.
- Do NOT allow unknown adults access to children. Visitors should be accompanied by a known person.
- Do NOT touch a child's person unless reasonably necessary.

What To Do About Inappropriate Advances

Children or young people can sometimes make suggestive approaches to an adult. They may have a crush or they may act inappropriately following previous abusive experiences. Sometimes inappropriate physical contact can happen by accident.

It is vital that the worker takes the responsibility to:

- **tell the young person that their language or behaviour is unacceptable.**
- **tell a Club official about the incident, however embarrassing this is.**
- **the worker with the Club Officers should decide on what measures will be taken to help the young person and prevent a re-occurrence. This will typically include informing the young person's parents.**

Confidentiality

The highest level of confidentiality should be maintained at all times in relationships with both adults and children. You should, however, make it clear that there are certain circumstances, if a child is suffering or is likely to suffer harm, that other people will need to be told so that the child can be protected.

If an allegation has been made against someone it is very important that as few people as possible know whilst the allegation is being investigated. This protects both the accuser and accused.

Hearing a Child Abuse Disclosure

The child may think that you are able to stop the abuse without anything else happening. If a child asks to tell you something in confidence ALWAYS tell them that that will depend on the circumstances. You may have to tell someone else if they are being harmed.

If possible, try to have another adult present whilst the child speaks, but do not prevent the child from speaking if this is not a possibility.

- Maintain eye contact
- Allow the child to talk, but do not press for information
- Tell the child that they are not to blame for anything that has happened

- Reassure the child that they were right to tell
- Let the child know that you will have to tell other people so that the abuse can stop. Try to explain what will happen next in a way that the child can understand
- Reassure the child that you will support them during the difficult times to come.
- As soon as possible write down as carefully as possible what the child has said, how they said it and how they appeared emotionally. Write down what you said. • D e c i d e what to do
- Never do nothing
- Do NOT do the investigating yourself
- Do NOT delay
- Do NOT panic

Action To Be Taken

- If the child or young person needs urgent medical help call the appropriate emergency services – police or ambulance – or take the child to your nearest Accident & Emergency Department. Tell the hospital staff of your suspicion.
- If suspected abuse took place during activities organised by the Club inform the Child Protection Officer, or if not available the Club Chairman, or if not available a Trustee of the Club whose name and address is set out in the Club constitution.
- If the child is not in immediate danger or you are not sure if child abuse is involved, discuss your concerns with the Child Protection Officer or if not available the Club Chairman. If you not happy with his or her advice you have a duty as a citizen to take your concerns directly to Social Services or the Police, or the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) based at the West Sussex County Council offices in Chichester, West Sussex.
- As soon as you are sure you suspect abuse or following preliminary discussions, telephone the LSCB or the local Social Services office. Discuss your concerns with the duty Social Worker; remember it is the Social Services' responsibility to decide whether to investigate.

- Give the Social Worker as much detail as possible – descriptions, dates, times, verbatim conversation. Distinguish between fact and opinion, what you have seen and what others have told you.
- Follow up your referral by writing to the LSCB or Social Services whichever you dealt with, confirming your telephone call
- Be prepared to have further discussions with Social Services/Police investigation team.
- Continue to support the child. Remember you will need support for yourself.
- Be prepared to attend a multi-agency case conference at which the parents will be present.
- Remember: delay can prevent a conclusive investigation from being carried out.

Review of this Policy

These guidelines and this policy will be reviewed annually and updated accordingly.

Dated February 2015

Updated August 2023