

ISM Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, Code of Practice and Procedures

The Independent Society of Musicians ('the ISM') is a not-for-profit professional association promoting the art of music and serving the interests of its members and the music profession. This policy and guidance is specifically focused on children. For the purposes of this policy and guidance a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Members requiring further advice in relation to vulnerable adults are advised to contact ISM staff.

This policy and guidance should be observed by all ISM members, ISM staff, ISM Council Members and ISM volunteers.

Many ISM members will have frequent contact with children in the course of their professional activities. The ISM acknowledges that it has a responsibility to promote best practice and the highest standards of conduct among its members and staff in relation to the safety of children. It also recognises that good safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are also of benefit to ISM members, as they can help protect them from misunderstandings or erroneous allegations.

The ISM is committed to practices which protect children from harm.

Background

All ISM members and staff who have access to or contact with children must:

- recognise and accept they have a responsibility to protect any children within their sphere of work and care;
- develop awareness of the issues which can cause children harm and have knowledge of and be able to recognise signs of the four most common types of abuse (emotional, physical, sexual, neglect);
- be aware of 'grooming' behaviour (the befriending of children as a precursor to abuse); and
- immediately report any concerns using the ISM's procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns.

The ISM in turn will endeavour to safeguard children by:

- adopting a Safeguarding Code of Practice for all ISM members;
- adopting a procedure for reporting safeguarding concerns; and
- reporting concerns to the relevant authorities.

N.B. The ISM Council is committed to keeping the ISM Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Code of Practice under constant review.

The Policy

It is the ISM's policy that:

All ISM Members, ISM Staff, ISM Council and any volunteers working with the ISM understand and accept responsibility for the welfare of children with whom they come into contact in the course of their work, and that they will report any concerns about a child or somebody else's behaviour, using the procedures laid down in this document.

There is a Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) within the ISM who will take action following any expression of concern and the lines of responsibility in respect of child protection are clear.

The Chief Executive and, in his/her absence, the DSP know how to make appropriate referrals to statutory child protection agencies.

All ISM members who come into contact with children in the course of their professional activities must adhere to the ISM Safeguarding Code of Practice (in this document), the procedure for reporting safeguarding concerns in this document and have regard to any other relevant guidance issued by the ISM. Failure to comply with these obligations may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the ISM's Disciplinary Procedure.

Information relating to any allegation or disclosure must be clearly recorded as soon as possible, and there is a procedure setting out who should record information and the time-scales for passing it on.

The Children Act 1989 states that the "welfare of the child is paramount". This means that considerations of confidentiality which might apply to other situations should not be allowed to over-ride the right of children to be protected from harm. However, every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned when an allegation has been made and is being investigated.

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be referred to or included in recruitment, training and policy materials, where appropriate, and this policy will be openly and widely made available to members and staff and actively promoted within the organisation.

A culture of mutual respect between children and ISM members will be encouraged, with adults modelling good practice in this context.

It is part of the ISM's acceptance of its responsibility of duty of care towards children that ISM members and staff who encounter child protection concerns in the context of their work will be supported when they report their concerns in good faith.

Our Code of Practice

ISM members should obtain a DBS/PVG/AccessNI disclosure prior to working with children and consider joining the relevant update service.

Read the guidance provided by UK governments to ensure the safeguarding of children. For example: Keeping Children Safe in Education in England, Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A Guide for Schools in Northern Ireland, National guidance for child protection in Scotland and Keeping learners safe: the role of local authorities, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools under the Education Act 2002 in Wales.

Inappropriate physical contact with children must be avoided. Physical contact is only appropriate in very limited circumstances. For more detailed advice please see the Guidance for Private Music Teachers set out in Annexe 2 to the ISM Code of Conduct.

It is not good practice to take children alone in a car on journeys, however short, unless with the prior consent of the child's parent or guardian, and then only in exceptional circumstances.

Do not make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child, even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted. Inappropriate remarks include innuendo, swearing, and discussing their or your own intimate relationships.

Other than in exceptional circumstances, do not communicate directly with children by email or text messages and only then with the prior consent of the child's parent or guardian. If electronic communication is necessary best practice would be to communicate directly with parents or guardians.

Never communicate with children via Twitter, Facebook or other social media.

Do not engage in behaviour which could be construed as 'grooming' a child (for example giving a child money, presents or favours or talking or behaving in an inappropriate or unprofessional manner towards children).

Do take a disclosure of abuse from a child seriously. It is important not to deter children from making a 'disclosure' of abuse through fear of not being believed, and to listen to what they have to say. Guidance on responding to an allegation of abuse is set out in this document. If the allegation gives rise to a child protection concern it is important to follow the ISM's procedure for reporting such concerns, and not to attempt to investigate the concern yourself.

Always report any concerns immediately to the ISM's Designated Safeguarding Person regarding the conduct of another ISM member in relation to children or vulnerable adults.

Make notes of any incidents which occur and ensure that a record is kept which can be passed on or referred to in the future.

Remember that those who abuse children can be of any age (even other children), gender, ethnic background or class, and it is important not to allow personal preconceptions about people to prevent appropriate action taking place.

Good practice includes valuing and respecting children as individuals, and the adult modelling of appropriate conduct – which will always exclude bullying, shouting, racism, sectarianism or sexism.

Further advice and guidance on child protection and safeguarding issues is available via the relevant advice pages on the ISM website and in Annexe 2 to the ISM Members' Code of Conduct (guidance for Private teachers).

Guidance on responding to a child making an allegation of abuse

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully to what is said and show that you are taking it seriously.
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets.
- Tell the child that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it.
- Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace.
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you, that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

- Tell them what you will do next, and with whom the information will be shared (if this is in a school it will need to be the nominated child protection lead within that school).
- Make no judgment about what you have heard.
- Record in writing what was said, using the child's own words as soon as possible – note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.
- Report the matter immediately to the relevant person within an organisation, to the ISM, the relevant local authority officer or the NSPCC and without delay.
- Remember that whilst you may have been the first person encountering an allegation of abuse it is not your responsibility to decide whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies, following a referral from the Designated Safeguarding Person in the organisation.

How to report your concerns – reporting procedures for ISM members

ISM members could have their suspicion or concern raised in a number of ways, the most likely of which are:

- the conduct of another music professional or adult;
- a child “disclosing” abuse;
- bruising or evidence of physical hurt;
- unusual behaviour by a child.

If an ISM member has such concerns they should report them immediately to the appropriate person in the organisation within which the concern has arisen (for example a school, orchestra or music service). This principle applies regardless of whether the ISM member is working in an employed or self-employed capacity.

Where a concern arises independently of any organisation (for example where an ISM member has concerns about the welfare or safety of a child who they teach privately) the ISM member should immediately contact the ISM's Designated Safeguarding Person by telephone (020 7313 9315) or email (cp@ism.org) in the first instance. The DSP will assist with making a referral to the relevant local authority child protection officer. If a child in your care has suffered a serious injury as a result of abuse, seek medical attention immediately and then inform your Local Authority Children's Social Care Department. If you have a concern out of ISM office hours you can seek advice from the NSPCC free 24-hour Child Protection Helpline (0808 800 5000).

ISM members are always able to contact the ISM's Designated Safeguarding Person if they wish to discuss any safeguarding concerns, however they arise. ISM members must report to the ISM's Designated Safeguarding Person immediately any concerns they may have about the conduct of another ISM member in relation to children.

The most common examples of the types of concerns that must be reported immediately are:

- someone has behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- someone has possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;

- someone has behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- someone has behaved towards a child in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

The DSP will consider the concerns raised and refer them immediately to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will consider the matter and then, if appropriate, refer it to the Child Protection Committee for their immediate attention. If the Chief Executive is not available the DSP will undertake the role of referring the matter to the Child Protection Committee. The Committee will then decide whether to report the matter to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or, after taking appropriate advice (which may include discussing the circumstances on a confidential basis with professional advisers), decide either to deal with the matter internally or not to take any further action. If further information comes to light at a later stage which warrants a referral to the LADO, the Child Protection Committee will make this referral.

Reporting Procedure for ISM staff

ISM staff members do not, in the normal course of their duties, have direct contact with children. However, there may be circumstances in which concerns about the safety of a child or about the conduct of an ISM member in relation to children are brought to the attention of an ISM staff member. Any such concerns must be reported immediately to the ISM's DSP or to the Chief Executive. The DSP and/or the Chief Executive will then follow the procedure for considering child protection concerns set out in this document.

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