



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Revised – May 2024

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The University of Strathclyde is a charitable body, registered in Scotland, charity no. SC015263
WSSO Trust is a charitable body, registered in Scotland. Charity no. SC029370

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Child Protection Policy

The West of Scotland Schools Orchestra Trust is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. It recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. To these ends The Trust has adopted Creative Scotland's [Creating Safety](#) guidance on child protection for individuals and organisations involved in delivering artistic, cultural and creative projects for children and young people in Scotland and this document should be read in conjunction with these guidelines.

This policy was reviewed in May 2024.

A child in the following document is a young person under the age of eighteen. (Children Act 1989)

The Trust will: -

1. Plan all activities with the best interests of the children and young people as a primary consideration
2. Undertake Health and Safety checks in advance of activities
3. Develop best practice in relation to the recruitment of staff by ensuring that all staff employed are PVG disclosed and establish recruitment and supervision policies for all staff and volunteers
4. Ensure that all staff members understand their legal and moral obligations to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation. A copy of this document and Creative Scotland's Creating Safety guidelines will be issued to all staff employed by the Trust
5. Instigate a sensible Code of Practice which sets out the standards of behaviour expected from all adults involved in the Trust's activities based on four key principles (**Appendix 1**)
6. Appoint a designated child protection worker who has responsibility for dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse and ensure that all staff members understand their obligation to report care or protection concerns about a child. Staff should be made aware of the Child Protection Worker and how to contact him/her
7. Issue guidance on how to deal initially with disclosure, discovery or recognition of abuse (**Appendix 2**)
8. Take further action by following the guidelines from Creative Scotland's booklet "Creating Safety" (p25)
9. Endeavour to keep up-to-date with national developments and legislation relating to the care and protection of children and young people
10. Observe protocol when communication online (**Appendix 3 – Online Safety**)
11. Follow Scottish Government guidelines in relation to supporting transgender pupils who attend WSSO trust activities (**Appendix 4 – Supporting Transgender Pupils**)

Appendix 1 - Code of Practice for WSSO Staff Members

At the heart of good practice in protecting children lies an understanding of their rights.

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

Each of these key principles is derived from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which has been ratified by Scotland. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 imposes new duties on Scottish Ministers and certain public bodies to promote the UNCRC and to publish reports on what they are doing to further children's rights.

You should:

- Treat all children and young people with respect
- Plan activities which involve more than one person being present, or ensure that other adults are within sight or hearing wherever possible
- Be available to listen to the concerns of young participants, and to refer them to other sources of help where appropriate
- Try to ensure that your actions cannot be misunderstood or cause offence
- Encourage young participants to feel comfortable enough to point out attitudes and behaviour they do not like
- Show understanding when dealing with sensitive issues and recognise that caution is required when discussing such issues
- In general, avoid physical contact

You should not:

- Permit abusive behaviour e.g. bullying, taunting, racist behaviour
- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour
- Show favouritism to an individual
- Exaggerate or trivialise any child abuse issues
- Make suggestive remarks or actions, even in jest
- Place yourself or others in potentially compromising situations
- Believe it could never happen to me or rely on your good name to protect you

Ask yourself:

1. Is what I plan to do in the best interests of the children I am working with?
2. How will the children benefit from the activity and how can I maximise those benefits?
3. Is my behaviour appropriate for the children I am working with just now?
4. Do any of the children I am working with have specific needs which I need to take into account?

Appendix 2 - How to deal with disclosure, discovery or recognition of abuse

When a child wants to talk about abuse

- It is important to reassure the child or adult that it is right to talk about it and that you will take everything they say seriously
- It is wrong to promise confidentiality

General Points

- Reassure the child that you are taking what is said seriously
- Keep calm
- Be neutral and non-judgmental - don't prejudge anything
- Tell the child you will need to talk to someone else – don't promise confidentiality
- Whatever a child may have done, he/she is not to blame for the abuse
- Be aware the child may have been threatened, intimidated or made to promise secrecy
- Never push for more information than has been immediately given
- Hear the allegations clearly, make a written note using the pro forma below and refer the case immediately to the designated child protection worker (Course Director)

Responding to concerns about a child when they have not disclosed anything

If you are concerned about a child because of something you notice (examples on page 18) discuss your observations with the designated child protection worker (Course Director). Trust your intuition and don't keep things to yourself.

Remember, it is not your role to determine whether or not abuse or neglect has taken place. Your role is to report the disclosure the way it happened with delay or prejudice and for the Child Protection Officer to decide what to do next.

Appendix 3 – Safety Online

Guidance for Pupils

- Be prepared ahead of the session with instrument, music & equipment required
- Be aware of your surroundings and your background
- If using video, check your lighting and the quality of sound from your microphone
- Be aware of and limit any noise in your environment – e.g. pets, domestic appliances etc
- If you have one, use a headset rather than the microphone built-in to your device
- Check what is visible on screen and 'blur' your background
- If using a laptop, consider raising it so that you are looking directly into the screen
- Dress appropriately at all times
- Consider who else might be able to hear what you are saying and see you on screen
- Do not record or take photographs during the live lesson
- Maintain standards of behaviour

Guidance for Staff

Zoom is the preferred platform for hosting calls and online delivery. Staff should refer to the University Staff Zoom User Guide links below and familiarise themselves with application features to deliver online sessions efficiently, safely and securely.

- https://www.strath.ac.uk/media/ps/its/zoomvcstephen/Zoom_Guide_for_Staff__S_Cweb.pdf

You Should

- Stay professional during the call
- Establish a serious and professional manner when teaching online
- Emphasise that video calling apps are for learning sessions only and not for other contact such as sharing photos or general messaging
- Dress as you would when teaching face to face
- Consider the background that your students will see, and carry out a video check from your camera to see what is visible. A neutral background is best – minimise mess and don't put anything too personal on display
- It may be necessary to widen the frame depending on your instrument, so take care that the frame is well chosen and appropriate. You may wish to use your chosen app's blurred background setting.
- Do not allow students to wear excessively informal attire or present against a messy background.
- The same applies if a student behaves inappropriately,
- Terminate the call and communicate the reason afterwards if you have any concerns

Appendix 4 – Supporting Transgender Pupils

This policy has been adopted in line with the Scottish Government's *Supporting Transgender Pupils in Schools: Guidance for Scottish Schools* (Published Aug 2021)

Our Aims

Our aim is to achieve excellence and equity for all young people who attend WSSO Trust activities. To achieve this, we must ensure every child and young person is happy, safe, respected and included in their learning environment. By doing so, we are creating the right environment for everyone to participate fully and achieve their potential.

It is usual for there to be significant engagement with young people and their families as part of preparing for a residential trip. This can include the allocation of rooms and sharing arrangements. As part of these discussions, appropriate account should be taken of the wishes, rights and needs of all young people, including those who are transgender, in line with many other considerations in preparation for a residential course.

Residential Courses – Guidance for Staff

- If a transgender young person wants to share a room with other young people who share their gender identity, they should be able to do so, as long as the rights of all those involved are considered and respected.
- If any young person, including a transgender young person, is concerned about sharing a room with others, we will consider making alternative arrangements, including giving them their own room where appropriate.
- If any young person voices a concern, this should be considered - responses should be reasonable and proportionate, taking into account the rights of all young people.
- WSSO Trust will provide single-cubicle or private washing facilities for any young person, including a transgender young person, who would like greater privacy.
- When considering sharing information, as part of planning, WSSO Trust will seek the young person's permission before sharing information with others.

(NB WSSO Trust has investigated the ethos and practice of our residential course venues and have no concerns – May 2024)

The WSSO Trust Promise to Members

All of us at WSSO Trust promise to make sure that you have the best time possible while you are taking part in our activities.

We all believe that you have a right to feel safe and comfortable while you are with us. We will do our very best to live up to the promises that we make to you.

We promise to;

- *Make you feel welcome*
- *Always think about your needs as the main consideration*
- *Treat all young people fairly*
- *Make sure that all our staff and volunteers know what they are supposed to be doing*
- *Make our activities as safe as possible*
- *Listen to what you want to tell us*
- *Do our best to make sure you have an enjoyable & valuable learning experience*
- *Do what we say we will do*