

Child Performance Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

Andover Light Orchestra has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for children all staff, chaperones, parents/legal guardians and volunteers accept their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse.

This means to ensure that everyone follows procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

There are three elements to our policy:-

- **Prevention through awareness of each individual child's needs.**
- **Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect**
- **Procedures for identifying and reporting cases or suspected cases, of abuse.**

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of (Name of company/organisation) and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Prevention

We recognise that the "entertainment industry" can be a very "adult" environment and we expect that all orchestra members, parents/legal guardians, volunteers and anyone else who comes into contact with children behave in an appropriate manner at all times and remember that "The Welfare of the Child is Paramount".

Andover Light Orchestra Safeguarding Officer, Chairpersons and Committee will therefore:-

- Act within the Children's Act 1989 & 2004
- Act within The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Ensure they familiarise themselves with the requirements for safeguarding as defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel welcome and familiar with their environment and are informed of personal (toilets, dressing rooms etc.) and emergency arrangements (fire exits, meeting points etc.) and any Health and Safety Procedures (Dangerous equipment, First aid etc.)
- Inform each child whom the appropriate person or people are to speak to if they have any questions, problems, or concerns.
- Ensure that all children are treated with respect and dignity and are treated as individuals and offered equality of opportunities.
- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and unnecessary physical contact with children) and involve/allow parents/appropriate adults wherever possible, to take responsibility for the child/children they are responsible for (parents/appropriate adult must only have responsibility for their own child)

- Recognise the individual needs of the child e.g. recognising when a child may be tired and may need a break.
- Ensure that children are supervised appropriately.
- Ensure that all members of the orchestra who don't necessarily have close contact with children but who are assisting in rehearsals and concerts are aware of their conduct around children.

Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect

A child is abused or neglected when somebody inflicts harm, or fails to act to prevent harm. A child or young person up to the age of 18 years can suffer abuse or neglect and require protection.

The overarching definition of abuse:

- **Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

The main categories of abuse:

- **Physical Abuse** - a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- **Sexual Abuse** - involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
- **Neglect** - the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or

unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

- **Emotional Abuse** - the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Andover Light Orchestra will adhere to the relevant legislation when working with children and young people under the age of 18 years as outlined in the following:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014

Suspicion of Abuse

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child, immediately make this known to the designated individual/manager responsible for child protection.
- If a child discloses to you about abuse outside of the performance environment, such as at home, or historic abuse, you **must** still report this to the designated individual/manager responsible for child protection.

Disclosure of Abuse

If a child tells you that, they or another child or young person is being, or has previously been abused:-

- Always stop and listen straight away, show that you take their allegations seriously.
- Encourage the child to talk, but do not ask leading questions, interrupt or ask the child to repeat itself.
- Never promise that you will keep what is said confidential or secret – explain that if you are told something of concern that you will need to let someone know but that you will only tell the people who need to know and can help.
- Do not force the child to continue their disclosure if they decide not to once they know the information must be shared further.
- Do not use language such as 'I have to share this because it is my job', but ensure the child is aware that you must share this information to help them.

- Record what you have been told accurately and as soon as possible. Use the child's own words. Make a note of the time, location, whether anyone else present and of the Child's demeanour.
- Ensure that your concerns are reported immediately to the designated safeguarding officer
- Do not confront the alleged abuser.
- Do not share the information with anyone else other than the designated safeguarding officer.

Handling Allegations

- If a child makes an allegation against a member of the orchestra it must be reported as a matter of urgency to the designated officer for child protection who will refer on to Hampshire Children's Services. If the allegation is against the designated safeguarding officer then the information should be reported to another member of the Orchestra Committee or directly to Hampshire Children's Services
- The alleged perpetrator should not be made aware of the allegation at this point.

Recording

- In all situations, the details of allegation or reported incident must be recorded. Make accurate notes of time, dates, incident or disclosure, people involved, what was said and done and by whom, action taken to investigate, further action taken e.g. suspension of individual and if relevant: reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, name of person reporting and to whom it was reported.
- The record must be stored securely by the designated safeguarding officer and shared only with those who need to know.
- **DO NOT worry that you might be mistaken**; you have a responsibility to pass on your concerns following a disclosure. Never think abuse is impossible, or that an accusation about a person you know well and trust is bound to be wrong.
- Historic disclosures must be treated with the same severity as any current disclosures.

IT IS YOUR DUTY TO REFER CONCERNS ON, NOT TO INVESTIGATE

Good Practice

- It is good practice to ensure that risk assessments incorporate advice around appropriate behaviour with children, collection and drop off procedures, and personal device use.
- Adults must not use inappropriate language in front of children or behave inappropriately or favourably towards any particular child.

- If any behaviour displayed may be misconstrued, either from adult to child or child to adult, this must be reported and recorded to the Designated Safeguarding Officer in case of any allegation.
- Any use of photography must be with the agreement of the child's parent/appropriate adult
- No child should ever be alone with an adult other than their parent/appropriate adult, however should this be necessary, the adult must let someone else know when and why they are with a child alone.

The Designated Individuals/Managers for child protection and safeguarding

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Position in Company	Joint Chairperson
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Policy Implementation Date	20/02/2025
Policy Review Date	February 2026
Policy Approved By	Andover Light Orchestra Committee by email during February 2025
Signature	Kate Hughes and Katy Warren (Co-Chairs)