

Keeping Yourself and Others Safe. Reviewed October 2024

As a visiting freelance instrumental tutor, it is your personal responsibility to understand and adhere to safeguarding requirements in all your interactions with students you teach, or meet in the location setting (usually a school). This is essential to ensuring you keep yourself and others safe. In addition to the overall safeguarding requirements, there are some particular areas of potential vulnerabilities you will face due to the manner in the way you work. These include but are not exclusive to: the nature of your authority, your relationship with your students (potentially less formal than that of a class teacher), one-to-one contact with students, the potentially perceived glamorous role as a musician, and the locations where lessons often take place. Music for Life has a duty to ensure high standards of personal and professional behaviour. This document has been compiled to provide you with vital guidance and support.

Please take time to read through this guidance.

Use of phone/tablet/laptop

- Check out the policy for individual schools - some **do not** allow devices to be switched on at all while in school. If you wish to use your device to help teaching - for example, using the metronome - it is a good idea to explain this to someone at school and get a clear agreement before you use it in a lesson.
- Be careful if you are using the device as a metronome or tuner on the stand. Smartphones and tablets invariably get notifications from text, social media updates, or emails for example. Having these pop up while a student is looking at your phone could mean that updates and texts meant for you could be seen by the student. Perhaps switch on **flight mode** in case you get an update through that you wouldn't want popping up on the screen for a student to see.
- Like the previous point, using your device to show students something whether relevant to the lesson or not, could mean that they see something unintended, whether it be a picture, message notification or app.
- Using your device to take photos or video (to record then play back some example of technique, for example) should **never** be done. Students could feel very uncomfortable and verbal consent from the student given at the time is not acceptable and could easily be forgotten in the event of any challenge from parents. *This being said, the newer performance exams require a recording to be submitted. Where recordings are made by the tutor, written permission **must** first be obtained from both school and parents as necessary. All recordings **must** be deleted by the tutor as soon as practical and at the latest, once exam results have been received.*
- If not being used, keep devices out of sight. Students may think that you are texting, recording or using your device in a way that you are not. For example, you could simply be updating your register, but if a student does not know this they may think you are doing something else.
- Make sure you never leave your device where another pupil could pick it up or access it, and make sure it is password protected.
- Don't accept or create phone calls or texts during a lesson.
- Don't show personal photos such as family/pet pictures to students. This can be uncomfortable for students and create atmospheres not conducive to a learning environment.
- **Do not contact students directly in anyway outside of your teaching.** *Do not, for example, ever text students directly to inform them of updated or changed lesson times.* If you need to do that, let us know as we can send parents an email or call them for you. Texts or emails going directly to students can be misconstrued and an open line of communication directly to a student is highly inappropriate.
- Above all, be extremely careful with your device whilst in school. Students (particularly in primary school and don't own one yet) can be extremely engaged in technology and interested in the latest phone that you may have.
- Some tutors have a dedicated device for teaching with various functions disabled, such as the camera 'app' deleted. Wherever possible, this is a great idea as it keeps teaching apps separate, removes any risk of messages coming through and schools can be shown the device used for teaching has basic functionality, only pertinent to tuition.

Social Media

- Consider having social media pages set to “private” so only friends can see them. The temptation for students to try and find tutors on Facebook is high, but consider whether there may be content or language posted by you or others that could cause any problems.
- Don’t access social media platforms whilst at school or show students anything to do with your online presence, either alluding to your social media profile(s), or showing a particular post.
- Remember, once a post is made online, it is no longer within the private sphere or in the control of the original poster.
- Don’t discuss any personal information about any students on social media.
- If you are concerned by ‘friend requests’ from students you teach or from the school(s) you teach in, please report this either to the DSL in the respective school and/or the DSL at Music for Life.
- Be careful with any profile pictures or cover photos used for social media platforms as these can be seen as an extension of you and your beliefs if seen by pupils, parents or schools. Furthermore, to protect your own privacy further, keep passwords confidential and be careful what to post on your page; for example, it is not safe to reveal home addresses, telephone numbers and other personal information.
- Many music tutors are not full time teachers but are active, professional musicians too and use social media to promote their work as a musician. However, you need to consider whether a student could “find” you on social media and if so whether you would feel any content may be inappropriate.
- Having any type of band or musician social media account to which you belong to gives students the opportunity to intentionally or accidentally connect with you or your band without your knowledge.
- Consider the risks associated with the use of the internet and social media and ensure you feel completely safe with your profile. Random checks by Music for Life may occur throughout the year and guidance would be offered if we feel you are exposing yourself to harm. Social media checks are undertaken for any new self-employed tutor that works with Music for Life.
- Music for Life has an active social media presence on Facebook - @MusicforLife1234, X - @MusicforLifeSCH and Instagram - @musicforlifesch.

Teaching

- Make sure to wear your Music for Life ID photo lanyard at all times in school, along with any additional visitor lanyard a school may provide.
- Best practice suggests that practice rooms or teaching spaces should have a window in the door. If this is not possible and there is no other way for passing school staff to see into the space you are teaching in, it is recommended best practice to prop the door open, so that you are not teaching in an enclosed space. If you feel that the space isn’t workable, we would suggest firstly to flag it with the school to see if an alternative is available during your teaching time.
- Be mindful of the teaching environment. Try to clear a space in the room to ensure there is enough room for you to teach in, possibly removing excess chairs in the room, allowing sufficient space between you and the student.
- Avoid physical contact. In the vast majority of cases, demonstrating on your own instrument or using verbal instructions is all that is required but if you feel you need to touch a child’s hand, for example, don’t do so without explicitly asking their consent first.
- Be careful about the language used and be careful when mentioning personal experience. Some experiences are not age appropriate and should never be referred to or discussed. These include but are not limited to: drinking alcohol, smoking, drug use etc. Some children could think you are making this appear cool when they are not of age.
- Different people have different ideas as what is regarded as bad language. Although there will usually be agreement about what is completely inappropriate, the danger tends to be words where there are slightly greyer areas, so be really careful what you say - children are impressionable and will repeat.
- Occasionally, the bad language/inappropriate content issue can arise if you are teaching a song, the parent or student looks it up online and considers the subject matter or language to be inappropriate. Worth a thought beforehand.

- Bringing tools in for instrument repair. Some tutors may bring items into school such as small screwdrivers. Just be aware that this could lead to potential problems. If you misplace tools, forget to pick them up from a room after teaching, or they are taken by a student, it can lead to potentially extremely serious consequences.
- Please follow school policies and procedures, particularly in reference to the supervision of children - in the vast majority of cases children should not be left unsupervised. Familiarise yourself with both Music for Life and individual school policies at the start of each academic year, or if you are made aware of a change to a policy.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead - The DSL for Music for Life is Debbie Grierson and any issue in school should be reported to her. Please also check and know who the DSL is in each of the schools you visit too so you can report any issue to the correct person. If in doubt, please check or report anything to the school receptionist or head of music/music lead within school.
- When undertaking Music for Life activities, avoid wherever possible wearing anything with a slogan on. Smart Casual attire is usually the generally accepted standard when visiting a school.
- Treat others with respect and provide an example you wish others to follow, or you wish to be treated yourself.
- No matter how well intentioned, remember that others may misinterpret your actions, for example, what someone considers as 'banter', others would consider as bullying. Don't engage in any inappropriate physical or verbal contact.
- Don't allow yourself to be drawn into arguments, controversial discussions such as political views, tantrums, crushes, favouritism to any individual, or telling inappropriate jokes and discouraging others wherever possible. Furthermore, don't engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay. Unless you find yourself in a situation where safety is an issue, never allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.

Above all, remember that things can escalate extremely quickly and safeguarding issues can occur to anyone at any time. With these above thoughts and topics in mind, it is hoped you can mitigate any potential issue before it arises in school by thinking about how to avoid any problem that may occur. When it comes to safeguarding, it truly can happen to anyone, and unfortunately no one can rely on their good name as this may not be enough to protect you.

Safeguarding - Music for Life DSL is Debbie Grierson (07484 060801)

If in doubt at any point, contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead of the school and at Music for Life, Debbie Grierson, so it can be reported in the right way. If someone does disclose anything to you:

- Try to **stay calm** and **reassure** them that you are taking them seriously.
- **Listen carefully**, keeping questions or interruptions to a minimum. Any questions asked by you should be open, don't ask leading questions. *Remember TED: Tell me about that; can you Explain?; can you Describe?*
- Make it clear that **you cannot promise confidentiality**. It is important they understand that you need to share information to keep them safe.
- **Don't try to interpret**, speculate, make assumptions, or jump to conclusions from what has been said. Also, don't make any comments of judgements.
- As soon as possible, **make a clear and accurate record** of what has been said, heard and seem. **Report** this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the school you are in, and also the DSL at Music for Life via the link - <https://forms.office.com/e/JUB9jnrh2u>
- Don't discuss the allegations with anyone outside of the Designated Safeguarding Leads.
- If there is an immediate danger to safety, dial 999 immediately and ask for the police.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Gooch-Peters". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'D'.

Dan Gooch-Peters
Managing Director - Music for Life