

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Maldon Youth Orchestra

Updated January 2025

Introduction

Maldon Youth Orchestra (MYO) believes that children have the right to be completely secure from both the fear and reality of abuse, and we are committed to protecting all children from harm. This policy outlines MYO's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, in compliance with current United Kingdom legislation and best practices.

We all have a duty to:

- Protect children and young people from maltreatment.
- Prevent impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensure that children and young people grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care.
- Enable children to have the best possible life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

Legal framework

This policy is based on the following key legislation and statutory guidance:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2023)
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

Definition of a child

This policy applies to all individuals under the age of 18, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, or religion.

Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

MYO has appointed a **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** who is responsible for all child protection and safeguarding matters. The DSL is trained to Level 3 safeguarding standards and ensures that all MYO personnel follow safeguarding procedures correctly.

DSL Contact Details:

Gemma Burton

If the DSL is unavailable, the following deputies should be contacted:

Julia Chilver, Joanna Reyes, Julie Lee-Ranson

Reporting concerns

All staff, volunteers, parents, and children should report concerns regarding child welfare to the DSL without delay. Concerns may include:

- Significant changes in a child's behaviour.
- Deterioration in general well-being.
- Unexplained injuries, bruises, or marks.
- Comments from the child that indicate abuse or neglect.
- Any inappropriate behaviour by adults towards children.

Reporting process:

1. **Immediate action:** Any concerns must be reported to the DSL or deputy DSL immediately.
2. **Referral to external agencies:** If concerns meet the threshold for intervention, the DSL will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or Children's Services.
3. **Confidentiality:** All concerns and reports will be handled confidentially and only shared on a need-to-know basis.
4. **Escalation:** If concerns are not adequately addressed, staff must escalate the matter using MYO's escalation process.

Whistleblowing policy

MYO encourages and protects those who report safeguarding concerns in good faith. If an individual feels unable to report internally, they can contact:

- **NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline:** 0800 028 0285
- **Ofsted Whistleblowing:** whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

Online and digital safeguarding

MYO recognises the risks associated with digital platforms and online communication. To safeguard children in online spaces:

- All staff and volunteers must follow best practice.
- MYO will ensure that children are educated on safe online behaviour.

- No private communication between MYO personnel and children via personal social media accounts is allowed.
- Any online activity must comply with MYO's safeguarding policy.

Safer recruitment and DBS checks

MYO ensures that all adults in contact with children are safely recruited. Our procedures include:

- **Appropriate DBS checks** for all volunteers and staff before they are allowed to work unsupervised with children.
- Identity verification.
- Mandatory safeguarding training before starting work. Noting in accordance with MYO AGM 2020 all MYO volunteers who were trained in safeguarding and are required to continue training at a higher level than required for MYO because of their roles as teaching staff in their permanent employment shall be exempt upon confirmation such training has occurred.
- Annual DBS update checks where applicable.
- Reporting concerns arising from DBS checks to the DSL and appropriate authorities.

Allegations against adults

If an allegation is made against an MYO member, the following steps will be taken:

1. The adult concerned will be suspended from activities while investigations are conducted.
2. The DSL will contact the LADO and relevant agencies immediately.
3. Investigations will be conducted according to statutory guidance and involve external safeguarding bodies as necessary.

If the allegation is against the DSL, it must be reported to the MYO Chair or another senior figure.

Training and policy awareness

- All MYO staff and volunteers must complete **safeguarding training** before starting their roles.
- The DSL must be trained to **Level 3 safeguarding training** and update their knowledge annually.

Mental health and wellbeing

MYO recognises that safeguarding includes mental health concerns. Staff and volunteers should:

- Be trained to identify signs of poor mental health in children.
- Provide a safe and supportive environment where children feel comfortable discussing their wellbeing.
- Signpost children to appropriate mental health support services.

Inclusion and diversity

MYO is committed to safeguarding **all children**, with particular attention to:

- Risks faced by **LGBTQ+ young people**.

- Additional safeguards for children with **disabilities and special educational needs**.
- **Cultural sensitivity** when responding to safeguarding concerns.

Policy review and accountability

- This policy will be **reviewed annually** or sooner if there are legislative changes.
- The MYO committee is responsible for ensuring compliance and implementation of this policy.
- All staff and volunteers must acknowledge receipt and understanding of this policy annually.

Emergency contacts

Here are the emergency contact details for safeguarding concerns in Essex:

- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):**
 - **Phone:** 3330 139 797 - **Email:** ado@essex.gov.uk - or referrals, a written form is required. You can access the referral form via the Essex Safeguarding Children Board website.
- **Children's Services:**
 - **Phone:** 345 603 7627 - **Out-of-Hours Emergency Duty Team:** 345 606 1212 - or immediate concerns outside of office hours, contact the Emergency Duty Team.
- **Police:**
 - **Emergency:** 99 - **Non-Emergency:** 01 - **Alternative Non-Emergency Number:** 1245 491491 - or non-emergency incidents, you can also use the live chat service available 24/7 on the Essex Police website.
- **NSPCC Helpline:** 808 800 5000
- **Childline:** 800 1111 please ensure these contact details are included in your safeguarding policy and shared with all relevant parties within your organisation.