



## **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

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## **1. Introduction and Overview**

Musicalous Language Services is an English language school for international (i.e. non UK) students wishing to improve their English language skills. We take students from the age of 12 and there is no maximum upper age limit. We run courses for closed groups (i.e no mixing of adult and students under 18). Lessons are located in hired premises with consideration given to the needs of each course. Accommodation is in host families.

**The Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) for Musicalous Language Services is Sarah Schwetje-Peters, the Principal and Director of Studies:**

**Phone: 07833587678**

**E-Mail: [sara@musicalous.com](mailto:sara@musicalous.com)**

### Who is covered by this policy?

All adults who have any contact, in any form, with young persons aged under 18 are covered by this policy. This includes all employees (including those on work experience) of Musicalous Language Services, Homestay Hosts, Group Leaders and all students regardless of age.

### Terminology

Safeguarding – Generally ‘looking after’ the welfare of young people in our care

Child Protection – Protecting children from direct and/or harmful behaviour

Child – Anyone under the age of 18

Young learners – Students under the age of 18

This policy is subject to annual review.

A full copy of this policy is available to view on our website. An abridged copy is available for Host Families.

This policy is in line with statutory guidance for schools and colleges; Keeping Children Safe in Education (2014), Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)

Updated and Reviewed by:  
Position:  
Date:

Sarah Schwetje-Peters  
Principle and Director of Studies  
April 2023

Signed:



## 2. **Policy Statement**

Musicalous Language Services is committed to providing a secure and friendly environment where all members of the community, whatever their background or character, are protected from harm and respected by others.

All staff and any other adults involved with Musicalous Language Services accept and recognise their responsibilities:

- to safeguard the welfare of children who join the school and any of its programmes;
- to continually develop awareness of any issues which might harm these children;
- to not make staff or any other adults involved with the School unnecessarily vulnerable to suspicion of any form of abuse

### 2.1 Policy Aim

The aim of the Musicalous Language Services Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is to promote good practice by providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Musicalous Language Services and to allow all staff to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues. This policy applies to both real world and online environments.

### 2.2 A Child's Rights

Anyone under the age of 18 is legally considered to be a child in the UK (according to The Children Act 1989).

1. All children have rights. No-one can take away a child's right to be safe.
2. All children have the right to say 'No' if any person tries to do something to them which they feel is wrong.
3. All children have the right to get help against bullies by enlisting the support of friends or by telling an adult.
4. All children must feel they can tell an adult of any incident that frightens or confuses them or makes them unhappy.
5. All children must know that if they go to an adult for help, they will be believed and supported.
6. All children have the right to be treated with respect and to be safeguarded from harm. We recognise that:
  - Some children may be especially vulnerable to abuse
  - Children who are abused or neglected may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. Whilst at school, their behaviour may be challenging
  - Children can be victims and perpetrators of abuse
  - Children who harm others may have been abused themselves
  - Allegations can be made against staff, however careful and safe our recruitment practices

### **2.3 An Adult's Responsibilities**

All adults at Musicalous Language Services, whether staff, group leaders or visitors, have a responsibility to:

- Follow company procedures and policies at all times
- Act as a positive role model for all Young Learners with whom they have contact
- Report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Person, or outside agencies as appropriate

### **3. Safe Practice**

Safe working practice ensures that students are safe and that all staff:

- Are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions;
- Work in an open and transparent way;
- Ensure they teach in an environment which is in full view of others where possible to avoid situations that could be open to question;
- Discuss and/or take advice from school management over any incident which may give rise for concern;
- Record any incidents or decisions made;
- Apply the same professional standards regardless of diversity issues;
- Are aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

One-to-one contact with students:

- When hosting or teaching a student, care should be taken to maintain best Safeguarding practice:
- Avoid sitting or standing in close proximity to the student. Always leave exit routes clear for a student to leave the room if they wish.
- Avoid all unnecessary physical contact; apologise immediately if accidental physical contact occurs. Touching may be appropriate when a student is in distress and needs comforting: use your professional judgement when you feel a student needs this kind of support.
- Avoid any conduct that could be seen as a sexual advance.
- Avoid displays of affection.
- Report any incident that causes you concern to the DSP, maintaining your own separate written record.

All staff are expected to follow our Code of Conduct for Employees and maintain personal boundaries as laid out below:

- Personal relationships between a member of staff (paid or unpaid) and a student is prohibited. This includes relationships through social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter.
- Use of abusive language is prohibited.

- Passing on personal contact details where unnecessary to students is prohibited.
- Taking students to a member of staff's home is prohibited unless authorised by the Dedicated Safeguarding Person.
- Selling to or buying items from a student is prohibited.
- Accepting responsibility for any valuables on behalf of a student is prohibited.
- Accepting money as a gift/ borrowing money from or lending money to a student is prohibited.

#### **4. Child Protection Policy**

##### **Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information:**

If you have concerns regarding the potential abuse of a child, it is not permitted by law to keep these concerns to yourself. Therefore, confidentiality may be breached if withholding information may damage the wellbeing of a child.

All information collected on any child will be kept secure and access limited to the appropriate individuals and agencies.

##### **4.1 Identifying child abuse**

**Child Abuse** is most often used to describe ways in which children are harmed – usually by adults – with damage to their physical or mental health. There are four broad categories of abuse as follows:

Physical: through hitting, shaking, squeezing etc.;

Sexual: through inappropriate touching or contact with a child;

Emotional: through persistent lack of attention, unrealistic adult demands;

Neglect: failing to provide basic needs of food, proper clothing, safe supervision

It can be difficult to identify child abuse as it has various forms. Below are some typical indicators to watch for:

- Unexplained injuries;
- A child describing an abusive act that has happened to them;
- Another child telling you of their concern about a friend / fellow student;
- A child becoming increasingly withdrawn;
- Sexually explicit behaviour in games / activities;
- Serious distrust of adults;
- Difficulty in making friends / socialising with other children.

The last two might appear naturally as the school and its programmes are new and strange environments for visiting children who typically only stay for under 2 weeks. However, in extreme forms, these might be indicators of a deeper problem.

**4.2 Child sexual exploitation (CSE)** is a form of sexual abuse where children are exploited for money, power or status. Consent for sexual activity cannot be given under such a context, even where a child believes that they have provided consent.

CSE can take place online and may not involve physical contact. Potential indicators of CSE may include:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Children who associate with other your people involved in exploitation
- Children with older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Children who become pregnant, or who suffer from STIs
- Children who misuse alcohol and drugs
- Children who go missing for long periods of time or regularly come home late
- Children who miss classes or drop out of school

**4.3 Female genital mutilation (FGM)** is a crime in the UK; there is a legal duty to report it if you know it has happened to anybody under 18.

**4.4 Bullying**, defined as wilful and repeated behaviour which has the purpose of making another person unhappy, is not tolerated in any form at our school.

### **Identifying bullying**

Bullying can take many different forms. It may be physical, emotional, name-calling, showing a lack of respect for another's property, excluding somebody from a social group; there are many possibilities. One person 'having a joke' is another person suffering bullying. Sometimes it is obvious, sometimes it is done subtly and in such a way that children will be worried about telling staff what is happening. For this reason it is vital that staff are vigilant in noticing changes in behaviour of children, particularly if they become withdrawn.

### **4.5 Photography and Images**

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place.

To protect students:

- Seek their consent for photographs to be taken or published (on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- Seek parental consent (this is indicated on the Parental Consent Form)
- Use only the student's first name with an image
- Ensure students are appropriately dressed
- Encourage students to say if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them

No photos of any child under 18 should be posted on any personal social media sites. Musicalous Language Services will only post photos on the School's website and/or social media with the consent of the parents.

### **4.6 E-Safety**

Host Families have a responsibility to the children in their care to know what they are doing during their stay with them. This includes all online activities.

Teachers allowing access to internet usage during lessons should also be aware and monitor sites visited.

Staff accompanying excursions and activities should be aware of any internet usage during trips.

Risks to children who use the internet include:

- Exposure to inappropriate materials, for example pornographic pictures and videos
- Physical danger and sexual abuse
- Cyberbullying
- Addiction and obsessive use
- Losing control over sensitive pictures and other media
- Damage to online reputation
- Illegal or inappropriate behaviour, for example, exposure to hate mail or offensive images
- Viruses
- Copyright infringement

Bearing in mind the above, host families should install parental control software on their internet access points.

Good practice for the use of internet during Young Learner placements includes:

- Guiding children as to what internet use is acceptable and what is not.
- Providing clear objectives when the internet is used during lessons.
- Planning internet use to enrich and extend learning activities
- Encouraging children to report any materials that make them feel uncomfortable to their teacher or group leader
- Maintaining adult supervision of internet access at all times

All adults should maintain professional boundaries when engaging with children online, especially on social media. Connecting or 'friending' students aged under 18 on social media is not considered appropriate.

#### **4.7 PREVENT**

Musicalous Language Services has certain obligations under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to help counter radicalisation among students of all ages. The PREVENT strategy is the cornerstone of the UK government's counter-radicalisation programme. It is important that all staff members and hosts are aware of the need to implement PEVENT, and appropriately trained in its application.

The risk of radicalization will be managed by:

- Promoting a safe and tolerant environment via the clear outlining of behaviour expectations
- Challenging radical views where they are espoused; the Prevent lead should be involved in this process where possible
- Preparedness to react to upset caused by local or international news events (e.g. terrorist attacks)



- Recognising signs of vulnerability to influence by extremist views

## 5. Child Protection Procedures

### What to do if a child discloses sensitive information to you

#### Receive

- Stay calm and listen to what the child is saying to you.
- Accepting what is being said without judgement
- Take it seriously.

#### Reassure

- Let the child know that they have done the right thing by sharing the information with you. Thank them for telling you.
- Explain that you must inform other people about the information disclosed: do not promise to keep anything secret.
- Explain that the people you share the information with have the job to protect and help children.

#### React

- Do not push for more information.
- Do not make assumptions or interpretations of what you are told.
- Don't ask leading questions. Let the child explain in their own words and own time what has occurred.
- Do not ask the child to repeat what they have told you to another person.
- Discuss your concerns at the earliest possibility with the DSP

#### Record

- Make a note, as detailed as possible, of any conversations with the child. Use the actual words used by the child. If necessary draw a picture or diagram to show bruises or other marks which the child shows to you.
- Record statements and observable things, not your assumptions or interpretations.
- Do not destroy any notes made.
- If you are not happy with our management of the disclosure, you may report your concerns directly to the appropriate agencies.

### What to do if abuse is suspected

- Continue to monitor the child's behaviour, making a note of particular concerns.
- Discuss concerns with the DSP
- If you are still concerned about the child's welfare, information must be passed to the relevant agency. Reporting suspected abuse is to protect the child – you are not 'reporting' the child's parents.
- If you or the DSP has contacted your local Social Services, they should inform you that they are responding to what you have told them. It is not likely that you will be told what action they are taking.

### **What you should do if you suspect a child is abusing another child**

- Ensure immediately that the student has no further contact with the student suspected of abusing him or her.
- Immediately report your suspicions to the DSP.
- If a child opens up to you before you have a chance to escalate your concerns, you should follow the guidelines above.

### **How to react if you suspect bullying**

- Investigate all reports, however seemingly trivial.
- Ensure that all reports of suspected bullying are logged and that the follow-up is also logged.
- Once it has been established that bullying has taken/ is taking place, explain to the person acting unkindly that their actions have been precisely that and tell them the effect it has had on another / others.
- Ask them to consider an appropriate way of putting things right and, if necessary, support them in making an apology.
- Ensure that any apology / reconciliation is done with staff present so that it can be accurately record.
- Should the incident be more serious, conduct no-blame meetings with both parties (bully and bullied). The aim is to clarify the situation through discussion and allow both sides to work out a solution that is satisfactory to them both. This will be recorded by the supervising teacher. (Under-18s should not be asked to sign any documents). Send details to the DSP, who will inform parents (and host family if deemed appropriate) of both parties what has happened and how it has been resolved.
- If, after this meeting, the bullying continues, then it must be seen as deliberate and require a more serious response. The DSP will take immediate action to protect the bullied person and begin procedures to restrict the activities of the bully. Decisions will be made which could involve the bully being removed from the course. The DSP will keep parents of both parties and staff fully informed.
- Any further incidents of bullying by the same person would result in them having to leave the school and/or programme and return home as quickly as possible.

## **6. Safer Recruitment**

Musicalous Language Services recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children at Musicalous Language Services.

A policy of safer recruitment is followed which means:

- References will include a specific enquiry as to whether there is any impediment to the employee being employed in a situation where s/he will have responsibility for the care of or substantial access to children
- A self-disclosure form about any criminal record and suitability to work with young people must be completed prior to employment

- All references will be followed up
- We will require completion of a DBS disclosure before the induction day and normally prior to employment commencing.
- Staff must provide proof of identity and abode prior to taking up employment with Musicalous Language Services
- Any gaps in CVs must be explained satisfactorily
- Furthermore, some of the questions asked in interview will be specifically designed to explore the candidate's attitude towards working with young learners.
- In the event that we have to employ someone before receiving a formal DBS disclosure, additional checks on suitability will be undertaken by way of obtaining extra references (over and above 2), both verbal and written.
- Evidence or disclosure of a criminal record will not necessarily result in a candidate not being appointed to a position. Naturally, the nature of the disclosure will be taken into account and if deemed irrelevant to dealing with young people, the candidate may well be successful if all other employment criteria are met. Such issues will of necessity be dealt with on a case by case basis

## **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) & Enhanced Disclosures**

It is Musicalous Language Services policy to DBS check all teaching, social and administrative staff prior to employment. In addition to this it is currently Musicalous Language Services policy to check the main householder in every host family. Also every other adult member in a host family will complete the Musicalous Language Services Child Declaration form.

### **7. Preventing sexually harmful behaviour between children**

- Set and respect physical boundaries.
- Encourage children to also respect themselves and others.
- Demonstrate to children that it is all right to say "no" and that they need to accept "no" from others.
- Stay aware of how children are interacting with one another.
- Talk with children, and listen to what they have to say.
- Set clear guidelines.
- Regularly remind children of other trusted adults whom they can talk to.

Children of opposite sex will not be placed in host families together. If students wish to visit students of the opposite sex at their host family, an adult will be required to be at home and students should be encouraged to remain in public areas. Any bedroom doors must remain open.

### **8. Ensuring student welfare and safeguarding practical measures**

#### **8.1 Health and Safety**

The Health and Safety of a Young Learner needs to be considered (along with specific child protection issues) to ensure effective Safeguarding and the provision of a safe, secure environment for our students. This document forms one of a suite of

8 associated policies are in the 'Policies Folder' and outlined in the Employee Handbook.

All policies are subject to annual review.

### **8.2 Risk Assessments**

Risk assessments are completed for every activity undertaken and are central to effective safeguarding of our students. The Principle ensures that the correct risk assessment is given to relevant staff leading an activity. That staff member reads the risk assessment prior to departure or prior to starting the activity and signs a master sheet, stating that they have read and understood the potential risks involved in the activity and what to do should anything happen.

### **8.3 Incident reporting**

Staff are required to record incidents and 'near misses'. Incident and accident report forms are available.

### **8.4 Staff Ratios**

Ratios Staff/adult to student ratios will be age appropriate and activity appropriate but will never be less than 1:15 for students aged 12 -17.

### **8.5 Road safety**

All students, irrespective of age, should be regularly reminded of road safety, crossing roads safely, using pedestrian crossings and so on.

### **8.6 Supervision and curfews**

Curfew times may be set by the individual schools and information about curfew times is given on each individual program to the host families. All hosts are expected to enforce these times.

As a general rule curfews are:

Students aged 12-15 are not permitted to go out in the evenings unsupervised.  
Students aged 15- 17 will have a set curfew between 9.00 and 10.00pm.

Students are not permitted to go to any parks unsupervised in the evenings.

All students are expected to go straight home to the host after school or activities in the afternoon; the host will be preparing the evening meal and will expect students home between 5.30 and 6.00pm unless the program states otherwise.

### **8.7 Medical Awareness and First Aid**

All medical conditions and medications are to be disclosed at the time of booking or prior to booking. Parents must sign that their child is medically fit to carry out all activities on the course program.

To protect the confidentiality of all students medical information will only be disclosed where relevant.

Host families are informed of any relevant medical conditions, allergies and medications that are required during the homestay.

A folder containing all relevant information is carried by a member of Musicalous Language Staff during all activities.

On tours organised by other organisations where Musicalous Language Services is contracted to provide host family and tuition only (i.e no trips are organised) relevant information is shared with host families and teachers but it is expected that the accompanying teachers will carry documentation of any medical conditions and allergies.

At Musicalous Language Services we encourage all staff to undertake first aid training. No member of staff however should give medication without first informing the Principle who will obtain written consent from the parents.

### **8.8 Disciplinary Matters**

All students are always expected to behaviour in a respectful and appropriate manner during the course. Examples of unacceptable behaviour are outlined in the terms and conditions and must be followed by all students.

If a member of staff or host family becomes aware of any breaches of student behaviour rules they should report it to the Director of Studies as soon as possible who will deal with any disciplinary measures.

Any behaviour which endangers the safety or wellbeing of another child will result in immediate exclusion from the course.