

Mid-Sussex Youth Band



Child Protection Policy



Introduction

Child abuse of all kinds - physical, sexual and emotional - has been increasingly detected and brought to the attention of the general public in recent years.

While many child abusers are known to the victim either as relatives or friends of the family, some meet children in other contexts and a small minority of abusers may gain access to children in schools or other teaching environments.

Although abuse of children by 'staff' is rare, Band members need to be vigilant about the conduct of themselves and others, so that their relationships are seen to remain entirely proper.

Band instructors and other adults working with the Youth Band are vulnerable to both the possible consequences of their close professional relationships with their pupils and to malicious or misplaced allegations made by Youth Band members deliberately or innocently, arising from a normal and proper association during Band events.

This document is intended to assist all Band members in dealing with the complex problem of child abuse by:

1. Identifying the areas of risk for adult Band members
2. Setting out what Band members should do if they suspect that a child is being abused by someone

Code of Conduct

Relationships and Attitudes

Band members should ensure that their relationships with Youth Band members are appropriate to the age and gender of the pupils. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

Physical Contact with Youth Band Members

As a general principle, Band Instructors are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with Youth Band members. Physical contact, which may be misconstrued by the child, parent or other observer should be avoided. Such contact can include well-intentioned informal gestures, for example putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, which, whilst acceptable in appropriate circumstances should not be repeated with an individual child. More obvious and more intimate contact should never occur.

There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance, which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. In such situations the child's permission should normally be sought before physical contact is made.

Teaching

Private Meetings and One to One Instruction

Band Instructors should be aware of the dangers that may arise in a one to one situation. Instructors are advised to ensure that another adult is present at all times. If another adult Band member is not available, a parent should be asked to sit in. Where the child is under the age of eight years, the child's own parent or guardian should be present.

Small Group Instruction

As all small group instruction takes place away from the main teaching area, Instructors are advised to follow the same guidelines as for one to one instruction.

Transporting

Band Instructors should be aware of the dangers of transporting children in their cars. Another adult should be present in the car, but sitting in the front seat. Youth Band members should sit in the rear seats unless full. The Instructor should check that all Youth Band members have correctly used their seatbelts before moving off.

A single Youth Band member should not be transported unless in a case of emergency. If possible the parents or guardians of the child should be contacted first. A single Youth Band member should always sit in the rear seat and the adult should check that the seatbelt is used correctly.



At Concerts and Other Performances

In changing rooms two adults should always be present if supervision is required. A single adult should not be in a changing room with a single Youth Band member.

There should always be responsible adults supervising Youth Band members when the Youth Band is either waiting to perform, or after their performance. Responsible adults can include the child's parent or guardian.

A list of contact names and telephone numbers for Youth Band members should be taken to every performance in case of accident or illness.

Recruitment

Whilst running the recruitment stall, all adults should take general notice of the guidelines on physical contact with children.

Following an Incident

If a Band Instructor feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Chairman.

Where Abuse is Suspected or Alleged

In an emergency, or if there are serious concerns the Duty Officer at the local Social Services Department should be contacted.

If a Youth Band member wishes to talk, listen but do not ask questions. Reassure the child that the allegations will be taken seriously and that the Social Services will have to be contacted. The adult to whom the disclosure was made should stay with the child until a decision is made, in consultation with the Social Services Duty Officer.

A written record of the information given and the action taken should be made as soon as possible and a signed and dated copy given to the Chairman.

Under no circumstances should a Band member try to investigate. Never promise to keep any information secret. All information is strictly confidential and should not be discussed with anyone other than the appropriate authorities.