

## **Protecting Children: Seeking Advice and Reporting**

Advice is available at any time; please do not hesitate to ask a school or Music Hub DSL/D if you are unsure of the appropriate course of action. **Remember this is about prevention, not just reporting.**

Discuss your concerns **immediately** with the class teacher/school DSL/D and Music Hub DSL/D if:

- You think something is wrong with a child and you are not sure what to do
- You see an injury (and you do not have any other information)
- A child reveals information to you which may indicate abuse, neglect, bullying, participation in or victimisation by gang activity
- A child reveals information about contact with an adult or another child which may pose a risk such as radicalisation and/or extremist views.

It is likely you will be asked to record any of the above scenarios and subsequent actions on a school's written document AND on the Sheffield Music Hub *Cause for Concern* sheet. Any safeguarding records should be sent only through safe electronic means. Be prepared to confirm verbal and telephone referrals in writing within 24 hours of being made.

**If the situation arises during ensembles/twilight lessons (not during school hours),** seek advice directly from the Music Hub DSL/D whether that is on the night or the next day as appropriate for the need.

### **In every case:**

- really listen to the child - and allow the child time to speak. Use open questions like "Tell me..." Show you care and help them 'OPEN UP'
- seek clarification from the child if necessary but do not press for information
- stay calm and be reassuring
- reassure the child they have done the right thing by telling you, use phrases like 'you've shown such courage today'
- do not promise to keep information confidential. It is vital that the child receives appropriate support and protection
- do not say that everything will be OK now (don't promise something you cannot deliver)
- offer reassurance to a child that he/she will be kept safe and take immediate action to protect a child

You may wish to say something like *"I am going to try and help. I'm going to talk to X and they will help you through this. You did the right thing by telling me."*

Remain calm, no matter how difficult it is to listen to the child – think of how hard it must be to say it. Take your time and slow down – respect pauses and don't be tempted to interject or interrupt. Recognise and respond to *their* pace and body language. Take what you are being told seriously even if you are not sure if you believe it. Do not ask the child to write it down and do not photograph any injuries.

Some things are very difficult to talk about, you've been chosen because the child feels they can talk to you. If you show anger, disgust or disbelief then the child may stop talking for fear of upsetting you further or feel that your negative feelings are being directed towards them.

Write the report timely and accurately. Recording safeguarding concerns is vital to the effective safeguarding of children/young people. Safeguarding records are kept for many years and must be fully understood even after they have left your education setting. Carefully consider the language that you use – will the reader understand what you mean? Avoid 'stock phrases', and instead, describe what you have seen or heard, and what you think or feel about the situation.

**All records should:**

- Be factual, evidenced, concise, complete, accurate and objective
- Use plain English and fully convey your meaning
- Be securely stored

**Each record should include:**

- Full name, date of birth and year group of the child or young person
- Full name and title of post held by person writing the record
- Date and time of writing the record and when an incident and/or concern began
- Details of your concerns, what gave rise to them, and any discussions about this
- All actions you have taken
- The extent and nature of any involvement by other professionals, and their full details
- Date and authors signature at the end of the record

If you have third party information (hearsay or gossip), still record it. A professional will look into the accuracy of that information. State that you are unsure whether it is true or not.

You could be called to court to give evidence whether as a witness of a disclosure or a witness of an incident. This could be after a significant period of time.

**Further advice:**

[NSPCC Learning: let children know you're listening](#)

[Let children know you're listening: the importance of an adult's interpersonal skills in helping to improve a child's experience of disclosure \(PDF\)](#)

[Let children know you're listening poster \(PDF\)](#)

[Recognising and responding to abuse](#)