

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

1. Purpose

Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts Trust (NMPAT) is committed to the highest standards in promoting the welfare of children and adults, always protecting them from harm. NMPAT believes that everyone, regardless of age, special needs or disability, racial/cultural heritage, religious belief, or sexual orientation, has the right to be protected from all types of harm and abuse.

NMPAT are committed to the guidance contained in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2025 and the principles of safer recruitment (detailed in part 3 of KCSiE):

- Protecting children and vulnerable adults who receive our services
- Ensuring that all members of staff are properly trained and supported in safeguarding and child protection
- All staff and associates have enhanced DBS clearance and necessary barred list checks appropriate to their role

In this policy the term 'staff' is used to include all those directly employed by NMPAT, associates contracted to undertake duties on behalf of NMPAT, volunteers and trustees.

2. Legal Framework

NMPAT has legal duties set out in statutes, regulations, and guidance, to protect its students and staff from harm, and to co-operate with other agencies in carrying out those duties and responding to safeguarding concerns.

This Policy is used in accordance with locally agreed inter-agency procedures, and specifically in accordance with Northamptonshire's Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) guidance.

This policy complies with legislation, policy and guidance in England with reference to:

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)
- [Charity Commission's Safeguarding guidance Nov. 2021](#)

NMPAT is also mindful of:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#)

3. Safeguarding Children

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families, or has access to information on children and their families, has a role to play in safeguarding. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all

staff should make sure that their approach is child-centred and that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interest of the child.

The policy is consistent with relevant legislation and the statutory guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

A child is anyone under the age of 18.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of the children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether in or outside the home or online
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and is an activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online. (Working Together, 2023)

4. The role of NMPAT Staff

All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn and must follow this policy, which is in line with Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures. Following correct procedures is a statutory guidance requirement, and failure to do so will be treated as gross misconduct.

All schools and settings are obliged to inform visiting NMPAT staff with the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in their school or setting. NMPAT staff must seek notification from the school's administration or office team if they are unaware of the DSL in any of the schools or settings they visit.

If a member of NMPAT staff has any concerns about a child's welfare, safety or wellbeing, receives a direct or indirect disclosure from a child or young person, or has concerns about practice witnessed in the school, they must notify the school's DSL immediately and also make contact with NMPAT's Core Safeguarding Team.

The [NMPAT Safeguarding concern form](#) must be used to make a written record of a concern and/or disclosure.

All NMPAT staff will have access to appropriate training and briefings on a regular basis (see **15. Staff training**). Staff will be trained on signs and indicators that all may not be well with a child, and of specific risks and vulnerabilities some children may face. This training aims to create a robust ethos at NMPAT, ensuring that safeguarding is at the heart of our work, empowering all colleagues to take appropriate action when required.

All new members of staff will receive a copy of this policy and the accompanying guidelines.

This policy and its associated procedures will also be included in new staff induction. Associates and volunteers acting on behalf of NMPAT will be provided with a copy of this policy prior to any working with children and young people in any setting.

Associates engaging in direct pupil working are required to undertake the standard NMPAT safeguarding training.

All associates and volunteers must provide evidence of a current enhanced DBS check as a condition of the contract of work. Where required, NMPAT will facilitate the issuing of new Enhanced DBS checks, in line with statutory obligations and best practice.

5. Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

The Board of Trustees should ensure that only appropriately trained and suitably senior members of staff are appointed to the role of DSL, to whom confidential enquiries about safeguarding may be made.

The DSLs must undergo training that provides them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. The training must be updated at least every two years. DSLs will have access to securely stored records of safeguarding and child protection incidents reported by NMPAT staff.

In addition to the formal training, DSLs knowledge and skills should be updated (for example via ebulletins, meeting other DSLs, reading safeguarding developments) at least annually, to keep up to date with any developments relevant to their role.

See **Appendix A: Key contacts and resources** for information about the Core Safeguarding Team including named DSL and Deputy DSLs.

6. Working with children

If you observe possible signs of abuse, or a child makes a disclosure to you, **you are required by your role** to follow the correct procedures and:

1. If you are working in a school setting, involve the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the school immediately. If working elsewhere (e.g. individual lessons/ensembles/centres) go straight an NMPAT DSL
2. Inform both **in writing and verbally** an NMPAT DSL whenever you have been involved in reporting a disclosure within a school. This must be done as soon as possible and certainly **before the end of that working day**
3. If the disclosure or signs of abuse are noticed outside of school hours, during residential courses or ensemble trips, the DSL and CEO need to be notified **both verbally and in writing** as soon as possible and the DSL in the relevant school informed the next working day

Sensitive information must be treated with confidentiality, but children cannot be guaranteed absolute confidentiality because teachers have a duty of care to report any matter which may involve harm to a child.

The [NMPAT Safeguarding concern form](#) must be used to make a written record of a concern and/or disclosure.

7. Role of staff working with children

Staff working closely with children are well placed to notice signs of abuse, changes in behaviour, or delays in development. The general role of staff is to **listen** to children and to record, carefully, any observations that may indicate a safeguarding concern.

We aim to support children as soon as difficulties emerge through an Early Help response. This means we do not wait until a child is at risk of significant harm, when Child Protection procedures would need to be invoked.

Staff must report any situation of concern—whether it arises from observed behaviour, something a child has said, or simply a strong instinct that something is not right in a child's life (at home, in school, or elsewhere).

While it may be necessary to gather some initial information from the child, staff should never attempt to investigate. Instead, staff may use Professional Curiosity by asking a small number of open-ended questions (e.g. *who was there? when did it happen? where did it happen? how did it happen? what exactly happened?*). This is only to clarify that there is a concern—after which the matter must be passed on to a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

It is essential that the DSL at the school/setting is informed **immediately**. The DSL will then decide whether the matter should be referred to Children's Services, using their professional judgement and in line with the LSCP Threshold Document. An NMPAT DSL must also be notified.

The DSL should provide you with an overview of the outcome of your concern (for example, that the school spoke with parents, or that Children's Social Care were contacted).

If new concerns arise in the following days or weeks, it remains your duty to continue reporting each new incident.

8. A bruise or a mark or a change of behaviour is noted

It is appropriate to ask a child about a concern in a simple, open-ended way, taking care not to suggest a cause. The child's response should be noted carefully and recorded accurately. Their demeanour and explanation may also raise concern, particularly if their behaviour is unusual or if there are inconsistencies in what they say. These observations should be recorded factually, capturing what is seen and heard.

Once a concern is identified, the school DSL must be contacted immediately, and no further enquiries should be made by staff.

Children may sometimes display visible marks, without the need for personal examination. Any visible marks should be recorded, including their position, shape, size, and colour. Recording what is seen is essential, but non-medical staff must not make medical judgements about the significance of injuries.

Staff must **not**:

- Take photographs of marks or bruises
- Ask a child to remove clothing for examination

All records must be accurate and detailed, and the school/NMPAT DSL should be informed straight away if there is concern.

If the child offers what appears to be a satisfactory explanation, this should still be recorded. The DSL will decide whether a referral is required if there is concern about significant harm.

The [NMPAT Safeguarding concern form](#) must be used to make a written record of a concern and/or disclosure.

9. Children begin to disclose information about abuse

The main role of adults, when a child begins to disclose, is to listen reassuringly and to be supportive to the child in expressing what he or she is trying to say without leading the child. Children and young people may try a number of times to speak to adults about matters which are very personal, so a supportive, patient, listening attitude is required.

When listening to children, it is important to avoid asking any leading questions. Some questions may be useful for clarification, particularly if they are open-ended (for example “tell me more”, “can you explain that for me” or “could you describe that”).

Strict confidentiality and sensitivity are essential, but children cannot be guaranteed absolute confidentiality. They must be assured, however, that only those who need to know will be informed. This means you may only discuss the detail with a school DSL and an NMPAT DSL.

NMPAT staff have a duty to report any matter which may involve harm to a child, even when the child is concerned about this. Children should be given assurances that the information will be handled very carefully and, where older children are concerned, they may be involved in discussions about their lives. Any anxieties of a child should be carefully noted, and this information should be passed on as part of the referral.

The [NMPAT Safeguarding concern form](#) must be used to make a written record of a concern and/or disclosure.

10. Obtaining information from children

The role of NMPAT staff, in the event of a disclosure, is to establish the basic information to pass on to a DSL and not to investigate the concern.

If a disclosure takes place during teaching in a school setting, in addition to verbally reporting to the school DSL the member of staff should:

- Complete the school’s report form during their visit, or immediately after before leaving
- Complete an NMPAT disclosure form and inform an NMPAT DSL that a disclosure has been reported, giving the name of the school, date and report number. This must be done as soon as possible and before the end of the working day

If a disclosure takes place at the Kettering Road Music and Arts Centre, or at a music centre or other off site setting, in addition to verbally reporting to an NMPAT DSL the member of staff should:

- Complete the [NMPAT Safeguarding concern form](#)

Very accurate recording is essential:

- This should be verbatim where possible, using the **actual words of the child** and noting any questions raised with the child
- The written account should avoid interpretations or judgments
- Record the dates, times, who was present, position in the room, and anything factual about the child’s appearance
- All records taken at the time of the disclosure should be kept secure as they may be required as evidence
- It is advised that children are not spoken to in groups and should be seen separately whilst information is being obtained

11. Safer working practice for all staff

Whilst working with children, NMPAT staff are in a position of trust and, therefore, need to take all possible measures to protect themselves and to safeguard children.

This includes:

- Always wearing your NMPAT identity badge
- Registering time of arrival/departure with the school office

- Notify NMPAT of ANY changes to your weekly timetable
- Make sure it is known by the school which room you are teaching in
- If possible, make sure that people can observe what is going on in the lesson, from outside the room (for example working in a room with glass panels in the doors). If this is not possible, make sure someone in the school knows where you are and which students are due to be with you at which time. If this is a regular occurrence, please speak with a DSL so this can be rectified

12. Concerns and allegations about staff

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 defines two levels of allegation/concern:

- a. Allegations that may meet the harm threshold
- b. Allegations/concerns that do not meet the harm threshold – referred to as ‘low level concerns’

Staff must, always, and in all work-related settings and contexts, adhere to the [NMPAT Code of Conduct](#) as well as their conditions of service and the detail set out in the NMPAT Staff Handbook.

The term ‘low-level’ concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the harm threshold. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff Code of Conduct including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door with no clear visibility by others, or without prior knowledge or agreement
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating, or offensive language

Any low-level concern made against any member of school or setting staff must be passed without delay and in confidence, to the member of staff named in the individual school policy (usually but not necessarily the headteacher).

Any concerns relating to requests made of an NMPAT employee, by a school or setting, should be reported to the line manager (i.e. requests to work in an inappropriate environment, or to work in a way which compromises their ability to safeguard themselves or a child).

Any allegation made against any member of staff in a school or external setting, or concern relating to an incident, observation or disclosure that may meet the threshold of harm must be passed without delay and in confidence, to the Headteacher or Principal of that school or external setting.

The Chef Executive must also be informed, who will liaise with the Headteacher or Principal in the school or setting as appropriate.

13. Management of Safeguarding

All charities have a responsibility to ensure they don't cause harm to anyone who has contact with them. Charities working with children or adults at risk, have extra responsibilities. NMPAT Trustees must ensure that:

- It has an annually updated safeguarding/child protection policy
- Timely and effective annual training is given to staff
- This policy is publicly available
- It operates safer recruitment procedures with trained staff
- There are clear procedures for dealing with accusations against staff and volunteers
- There is a DSL and deputies, who undertake training every two years
- The Code of Conduct is kept up to date
- There is a designated Trustee to champion safeguarding

The Trustees are ultimately responsible for ensuring the child protection policy is in place. Where a member of staff has a child protection concern about the NMPAT Chief Executive, this should be referred to the Chair of the Trustees immediately.

The Board of Trustees will receive, annually, a report on developments in safeguarding policy or procedures, training undertaken by NMPAT staff and the number of incidents/cases (without details or names).

14. Information sharing

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect. All information shared will have due regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 in the UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). GDPR does not prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children or vulnerable adults safe.

15. Staff training

The Board of Trustees, through responsibility delegated to the Trust's senior leadership team, should ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training as part of their induction process. This training needs to be successfully completed before working directly with children and vulnerable adults.

All staff will receive annual safeguarding and child protection update training as required to provide them with:

- the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children and vulnerable adults
- an understanding and awareness of current issues and changes to guidance and legislation
- an understanding of safer work practice and acceptable workplace behaviours in line with the [NMPAT Code of Conduct](#)

All staff are required to attend annual face-to-face safeguarding training. In addition, all staff are required to complete an online safeguarding course every two years, with an annual refresher course. It is a mandatory requirement for all staff to complete this training.

The above is a minimum provision for all staff. In addition, for music delivery staff, safeguarding discussions will be carried out between Heads of Departments and the music delivery teams, on a regular basis, to embed safeguarding practice and enable Heads of Department to identify any further training needs.

16. Staff Recruitment

For posts that work directly with children or vulnerable adults, or have access to information about children or vulnerable adults, NMPAT recruitment principles include:

- all job adverts state that the successful applicant will need to undergo an enhanced DBS with barred list check
- all successful applicants receive an initial offer contingent upon completion of an enhanced DBS and all other appropriate checks
- all enhanced DBS results are reviewed. If there are any queries on the information contained on the enhanced DBS, a proportionate risk assessment is completed by the Chief Executive

17. Confidentiality

Staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children and vulnerable adults with other professionals, particularly investigating agencies. If a pupil confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the child, sensitively, that he / she has a responsibility to refer for the child's own sake. Within that context, the child should be reassured that the matter will be disclosed only to the people who need to know about it. DSLs who receive information about children and families in the course of their work, should have the information only within a professional context. Child protection records should be kept securely locked. Any digital records should be stored at the highest level of security.

Information regarding pupils and their families should be regarded as confidential by those who work for the NMPAT. All staff will aim to maintain this confidentiality; all records relating to child protection incidents will be maintained by the DSL and only shared as is consistent with the protection of children.

18. Closing Statement

NMPAT has a commitment to safeguarding children and equipping them with the skills to understand their rights. It is recognised that instrumental/vocal teachers can play a crucial role in a child's development of these life skills.

This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, or to reflect updates in legislation. This Policy is next due for renewal in August 2026.

Appendix A: Key contacts and resources

Core Safeguarding Team

The Core Safeguarding Team is made up of a group of senior colleagues who all undergo detailed and comprehensive annual training.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

Iain McKnight Director of Ensembles and Partnerships imcknight@nmpat.co.uk
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Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs):

Charlotte Buxton Chief Executive cbuxton@nmpat.co.uk	Rachel Coles EDI and Performance Development Lead rcoles@nmpat.co.uk
Chris Jeffs Director of Learning Development cjeffs@nmpat.co.uk	Nicola Maddock (from 01 Jan 2026) Director of School Based Teaching nmaddock@nmpat.co.uk

The Core Safeguarding Team can be contacted, in confidence, via email (safeguarding@nmpat.co.uk) or phone (01604 816682).

Additional information and how to report a concern

Information about Safeguarding at NMPAT, including how to [report a safeguarding concern](#), can be found at nmpat.co.uk/safeguarding (publicly accessible) or on [SharePoint](#) (NMPAT staff only).

Wider Safeguarding Team

The Wider Safeguarding Team is made up of a group of leadership colleagues who all undergo annual online DSL training. They will be able to provide general support and guidance relating to safeguarding and child protection as well as supporting the colleagues they manage to access resources and record concern:

Claire Anderson Head of Keyboard	John Bickerdike Head of Brass	Margaret Boothby Lead Teacher: Rutland Music
Harriet Brown Head of YNot Arts	John Draper Head of Guitar	Samuel Ebrahim Head of Duston Centre
Beth Gifford Head of Strings	Tim Green Head of Percussion	Nikki Hannent-Corbett Head of Holloway Centre
Andy Kirkwood Head of Woodwind	Andrew Macfarlane Head of Kettering Centre	Shaun Moffat Head of Nene Valley Centre
Janine Mold Head of Brackley & Cheney Centre	Vicki Reamsbottom Head of Daventry Centre (from 01 Jan 2026)	Simone Reid Head of Wellingborough Centre
Simon Steptoe Musical Inclusion Programme and Partnership Manager	Nikki Taylor Head of Youth Theatre	Wendy Dawn Thompson Head of Vocal Studies