

POLICY AND GUIDELINES
for those working with
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
for the RSCM

November 2010

RS  M

POLICY

for working with children and young people

In drawing up and revising this document, advice has been taken from the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service, denominational bodies and a number of professional advisers in the field of safeguarding and child protection.

In line with legislation in relation to children, this policy and the guidelines that follow assume that for most purposes a child is a person under 18.

A. Definitions

For convenience, the following abbreviations and definitions are used throughout:

Child	Child or young person under the age of 18
RSCM	The Royal School of Church Music
Course	Any course or event (residential or non-residential, local or national)
Course director	The person in overall charge of the course (paid or voluntary)
Staff	Any person appointed by the RSCM to work on courses with children (paid or voluntary) in a teaching or helping capacity

B. Objectives

1. To protect *children* on RSCM courses from any kind of abuse.
2. To protect *course directors and staff* from false allegations.
3. To protect the *RSCM's* reputation and standing in the community.

C. Policy

1. The RSCM aims to foster relationships of the utmost integrity, truthfulness and trustworthiness. Musicians and administrative staff who work for or on behalf of the RSCM in a paid or voluntary capacity must exercise the greatest care when working with those for whom they have been given responsibility.
2. The highest standards should be maintained therefore in all pastoral, counselling, educational, worship and recreational circumstances. The exploitation of any of these circumstances for any purpose contrary to the spirit of paragraph 1 above will not be tolerated.
3. The RSCM accepts the principles of The United Nation's *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, the UK Government's *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* initiative, and of the House of Bishops' *Child Protection Policy*, all of which promote the safety, health, well-being and value of every child.

4. The RSCM adheres to the requirements of UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children (e.g. the Children Act, 1989 and 2004, the Protection of Children Act 1999 and Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006) and aims to work in accordance with the guidance and recommendations published to support this legislation.
5. The RSCM undertakes to operate in accordance with all anti-discrimination legislation and has an Equal Opportunities policy in support of this.
6. The RSCM follows the Home Office advice in the document *Abuse of Trust*: it is unacceptable for those in a position of trust on RSCM courses to engage in any behaviour which might allow an inappropriate relationship to develop with a child or young person.
7. If allegations of abuse are made then the RSCM will cooperate fully with the statutory agencies concerned with investigating such allegations. It will not conduct investigations on its own account.
8. It is standard practice in the RSCM to require the following categories of people to undergo a vetting procedure prior to selection or appointment:
 - Employees of the RSCM who are likely to have opportunities for contact with children and young people.
 - All staff appointed by the RSCM to work on courses with children.
 - Examiners for singing awards
 - Officers and designated roles within Area Committees (e.g. Young Persons' Officers, Education, Training Officers and Awards Administrators).
 - Volunteers who support the work of the RSCM on a regular basis and who supervise or come into regular contact with children and young people.

These people will be required to complete a self-declaration form and submit names of referees, which are checked before appointment is confirmed. Some roles are regarded as sensitive or as 'regulated activities' and therefore CRB enhanced disclosure will also be required.
9. All course directors are required to discuss this policy with the RSCM Child Protection Officer in order to formulate a policy relevant to each course, and to brief course staff before each course begins.
10. All course staff will be supervised by and accountable to the course director. Staff are expected to have read this document and to have accepted the responsibilities it lays on them.
11. Where individuals are found to have infringed the guidelines set out in this document, or in the guidance for volunteers published in the Area Handbook, the RSCM reserves the right to exclude them from further participation in RSCM courses. When such decisions are taken, the individuals concerned will be notified and reasons will be given, with a right to reply.
12. The RSCM acknowledges its obligation to report child protection concerns to the statutory authorities (Social Services, the Police, or the ISA).

GUIDELINES

on working with children and young people

These guidelines conform with RSCM policy in relation to the Children Act(s)1989 and 2004, the Protection of Children Act 1999 and Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other guidance published by the Government, church bodies and safeguarding agencies.

These guidelines apply to all RSCM courses, local and national, and are to be implemented by all those who come in contact with young people on behalf of the RSCM.

Course organisers are responsible for checking that all events are registered with the RSCM and that all requirements related to the supervision of children and the vetting of individuals have been carried out.

Further instructions and guidance specifically for volunteers and members of Area Committees is published in the Area Handbook.

D. Three basic principles

1. Safety in numbers
2. Care in the recruitment of people who are to be involved with children
3. Constant watchfulness

E. Safeguards

1. Good discipline should always be maintained. Where a Code of Conduct or a Participant's Agreement exists for specific courses these should be used to provide guidance as to acceptable standards of behaviour.
2. All forms of physical discipline or corporal punishment are unacceptable.
3. Any form of bullying or harassment, verbal or racial abuse is unacceptable.
4. Physical contact is to be avoided other than when critical for the immediate wellbeing of a child.
5. Children must not be permitted to run around with the risk of harm or injury.
6. All relevant health and safety regulations should be observed.
7. Where courses organized by an RSCM area committee are held regularly (i.e. 3 to 4 times per year) in the same venue, then the committee should prepare and display a list of contact information which includes the telephone numbers of, for example, local help-lines, social services, police.
8. Meetings on a one-to-one basis should be avoided. If only one child turns up to a meeting when more were expected, the meeting should be cancelled.

9. Where one-to-one meetings are absolutely necessary, they should, wherever possible, be held in communal rooms, and with another adult present. One-to-one meetings should never take place in a staff member's room unless no other room is available; the child should be accompanied by another adult.
10. It is advisable that both male and female supervisors/pastoral assistants, who have been vetted by the RSCM, are present at events and courses involving children, i.e. there is always a female available to assist girls, and a male available to assist boys.
11. During individual instrumental or singing lessons, the door into the room should be left open unless a third party is present in the room. This requirement may not apply to examination situations, provided that the examiner(s) have been through the required Child Protection checks, and that written parental consent to the exam has been obtained.
12. External doors should not be left open unattended with the potential of admitting unauthorised individuals.

F. Response

1. Any member of staff at an RSCM course who is concerned about child protection issues should speak, in the first instance, to the course director. If he/she is not then satisfied that appropriate action has been taken, or if further advice is needed, contact should be made with the RSCM Child Protection Officer.
2. Any member of staff who is concerned about issues relating to the course director's approach or behaviour should speak directly to the RSCM Child Protection Officer.
3. Any member of staff who is spoken to by a child concerning child protection issues should, in the first instance, listen carefully to what the child has to say, and if possible make a note of the conversation. Absolute confidentiality should not be promised.
4. Any allegation, accusation or suspicion of abuse should be reported immediately to the course director, who will contact the RSCM Child Protection Officer. Concerns should be logged (dates, times of incidents and names of those concerned or witnesses) and held securely by the course director. No investigation must be undertaken by members of staff themselves, beyond finding out enough information to pass to appropriate authorities.
5. Serious cases should be reported to the local police (ask for the Child Protection team), or the social services (ask for the Emergency Duty Team), who will advise on what action to take.
6. When a child has been harmed, or a disclosure of abuse has been made, the matron or pastoral assistant on duty at the course should take care of the child in an appropriate manner.

They must make sure that the child is returned to the care of a responsible adult, parent or carer at the end of the course, or sooner if necessary. If there is a concern that the adult is not appropriate, or that the child should not be returned to their parent or carer, then advice should be sought from the police or social services (see para. 4).

G. Appendix: definitions of child abuse

The following definitions are based on the UK Government's statutory guidance on how organizations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2010, DCSF Publications).

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

Physical abuse

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, serious bullying or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger or failure to ensure adequate supervision or access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

Additional definitions of abuse and harm are included in the CCPAS *Safe and Secure* manual (2009), including:

Spiritual abuse

Linked with emotional abuse, spiritual abuse could be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting an individual's right to choose for themselves.

Organised abuse

Abuse involving one or more abuser and a number of related or non-related children and young people. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse.

H. Procedure for secure storage, handling, use, retention and disposal of disclosures, and disclosure of information

1. *General Principles*

As an organization using the Criminal Records Bureau disclosure service to help assess the suitability of applicants for a position of trust, RSCM complies fully with the relevant codes of practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of disclosures and disclosure information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of disclosures and disclosure information. There is a written policy on these matters which is available to all those who wish to see it.

2. *Storage and access*

Disclosure information is never kept on an applicant's personal file and is always kept separately and securely in a locked cabinet, with access strictly controlled and limited to those who require it in order to carry out their duties.

3. *Handling*

In accordance with S124 of the Police Act 1997, disclosure information is only passed to those who are required to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of those to whom such information has been revealed, and we recognize that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

4. *Usage*

Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the subject's full consent has been given.

5. *Retention*

Once a relevant decision has been made, disclosure information is not kept longer than is necessary to allow for the resolution of any disputes or complaints, generally six months. After this period, only the following information will be recorded:

- the name of the subject
- that a CRB check has been carried out
- the date and type of disclosure
- the unique reference number of the disclosure
- the recruitment decision taken

This information is kept in a secure database. If in exceptional circumstances it appears necessary to keep disclosure information for more than six months, advice will be sought from the CCPAS Disclosure Unit before a final decision is made to do this.

6. *Disposal*

Once the retention period has elapsed, disclosure information is destroyed promptly in a secure manner and is not kept insecurely while awaiting destruction. No photocopy or electronic image is to be retained of disclosure information. (To ensure this, disclosure information must not be scanned or communicated by e-mail or post. In exceptional circumstances, fax may be used.)

7. *RSCM's relationship with CCPAS*
RSCM uses Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) as an umbrella organization enabling it to obtain disclosures from the CRB. RSCM recognises that CCPAS therefore has a responsibility to ensure as far as reasonably practicable that RSCM complies with all the requirements of the CRB Code of Practice in relevant policy statements and procedures. RSCM undertakes to inform CCPAS of any changes in its organization, personnel or practices which could materially affect its ability to work within these expectations.

I. Recruitment procedures for posts requiring CRB disclosure

1. *General*
These procedures apply to all posts, whether employed, freelance, sessional or voluntary. The guiding principle is that a criminal record is not necessarily a bar to working for RSCM. All recruitment decisions concerning a candidate with a criminal record will take into account the nature of the post and the nature, circumstances and background of the offence(s) committed. In difficult cases, authorised officers may take advice from the CCPAS helpline (which is staffed separately from the administration of disclosures). If this is necessary, RSCM will preserve the anonymity of the individual concerned in all its dealings with CCPAS.
2. *Identifying posts requiring vetting*
CRB disclosures will only be required for posts which are designated as involving 'regulated activity' or where a thorough risk assessment indicates that it is relevant and proportionate. The risk assessment should also cover whether the post requires all convictions to be considered, or only those which are unspent as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. All forms, advertisements, job descriptions and person specifications concerning such posts will state clearly that ISA registration or a disclosure will be requested before the offer of the post is confirmed.
3. *Beginning the vetting process*
Applicants will be invited to provide details of any criminal record only when called for interview, and will be instructed to send the information under separate confidential cover to the Recruiter. Such information will be seen only by those needing to see it as part of the recruitment process.
4. *Use of disclosure information*
RSCM will disregard convictions which are not relevant to the post under consideration, and will not question candidates about these. RSCM ensures that those making decisions about these matters receive appropriate guidance and training in doing so.

5. *Discussing disclosure information with candidates*
RSCM will ensure that an open and measured discussion of any convictions relevant to the post takes place either at interview or separately. A conditional offer of a post will not be withdrawn following receipt of disclosure information without discussing the matter with the candidate first. Candidates will be made aware that failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the post may lead to an offer being withdrawn.
6. *CRB Code of Practice*
RSCM will make every subject of a CRB Disclosure aware of the existence of the CRB Code of Practice, and make a copy available on request.

J. Complaints procedure

If a parent or guardian wishes to complain about the way an incident affecting their child has been dealt with by staff or volunteers at an RSCM event, they should put this complaint in writing to the RSCM Child Protection Officer in the first instance. If the subsequent response is regarded as unsatisfactory they can then refer it to the RSCM Director to be investigated further. The matter will be dealt with promptly and in confidence; all correspondence will be held securely.

K. Authorised Personnel

RSCM Child Protection Officer

The Child Protection Officer is authorised to respond to any information regarding the safety and wellbeing of children engaged in RSCM activities; and to answer any concerns related to the vetting of staff and volunteers.

RSCM Child Protection Administrator

The Child Protection Administrator is the first point of contact for any queries about child protection policy and about procedural issues regarding the vetting of staff and volunteers.

Recruiters

Specific staff are authorised to see and check evidence of identity of candidates, and to liaise with CCPAS during the checking process. Within RSCM, they act as first contact for disclosure matters, and have access to the secure database of disclosure records and the secure storage of disclosure information still being retained.

Authorised Officers

The Director, the Bursar, and the Head of Education are authorised, either in consultation with one or all of the others, or in consultation with the CCPAS helpline:

- to decide the level of vetting (if any) required for a particular post
- to see disclosure information if necessary
- to make a decision concerning the recruitment of a candidate

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