



Safeguarding Policy

The RSCM has a duty of care:

- 1) To protect *children* on RSCM events and 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.

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.

Definitions

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

Child	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 engaged by the RSCM to work on courses with children (paid or voluntary) in a teaching or helping capacity
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service

Policy

- Tutors, administrative and pastoral 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.
- The highest standards of conduct must be maintained in all pastoral, counselling, educational, worship and recreational circumstances.
- The RSCM complies with current UK legislation in relation to Safeguarding.

Guidelines for working with under 18s

- 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, or might expose them to unsuitable influences.
- 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.

RSCM require the following categories of people to undergo relevant clearance procedures prior to selection or appointment:

- employees of the RSCM who have contact with children and young people
- all staff appointed by the RSCM to work on courses with children
- examiners for singing awards
- those holding one of the nine main committee roles

- other volunteers helping at events where under 18s will be in attendance.
- national RSCM Choir staff and adult choir members

These people will be required to complete the RSCM Self-Declaration process before appointment is confirmed. Any individual working in Regulated Activity for the RSCM is obliged to obtain an Enhanced DBS including a barred lists check.

Some roles involving regular supervision may not count as Regulated Activity but still be eligible for an Enhanced DBS without the barred lists check. Most of our volunteer roles (including examiners) do not meet these criteria due to the infrequency of contact with under 18s. RSCM Office will determine the relevant type of check for the work being undertaken, and will inform the person.

- All centrally-run course directors are required to discuss this policy with the RSCM Safeguarding Officer in order to formulate a policy relevant to each course, and to brief course staff before each course begins.
- All centrally-run course staff will be supervised by and be accountable to the course director. Staff are required to read this document and to accept the responsibilities it lays on them.
- 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 RSCM involvement. When such decisions are taken, the individuals concerned will be notified and reasons will be given, with a right to reply.

Employers have a duty to refer to the DBS any individuals for whom they are responsible and believe pose a risk to children or vulnerable adults.

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

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

Further guidance specifically for Area Committees [is available here](#).

Three basic principles

- 1) safety in numbers
- 2) caution in the recruitment of people who are to be involved with children
- 3) constant watchfulness

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) Meetings on a one-to-one basis should be avoided. If only one child turns up to a meeting when more were expected, the parent or guardian should be invited to remain, and if they cannot do so, then the meeting should be cancelled.
- 8) 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; the child should be accompanied by another adult. RSCM examinations and auditions are **not** to be conducted in a private house. If the exam venue is suddenly unavailable, a church or other public space should be sought first; as a last resort, the exams should be postponed.
- 9) It is advisable that both male and female supervisors/pastoral assistants who have RSCM clearance are present at events and courses involving children.
- 10) During individual instrumental or singing lessons, the door into the room should be left open unless a third party is present in the room. With regards to RSCM Exams, the Awards Administrators must refer to the current [Notes for Awards Administrators](#) for guidance.
- 11) External doors should not be left open unattended with the potential of admitting unauthorized individuals.

Response

- 1) Any member of staff at an RSCM centrally run course who is concerned about Safeguarding 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 Safeguarding 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 Safeguarding Officer.
- 3) Any member of staff who is spoken to by a child concerning Safeguarding 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 Safeguarding 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 the appropriate authorities.
- 5) Where abuse is alleged/suspected, the case should be reported to the local police (ask for the Child Safeguarding team) or the social services (ask for the Emergency Duty Team) who will advise on what action to take.

If 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 and ensure they are 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. 5).

Definitions of child abuse

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.

- 1) Physical abuse
Where children's bodies are hurt or injured.
- 2) Emotional abuse
Where children don't receive love and affection, may be frightened by threats or taunts, or given responsibilities beyond their years.
- 3) Sexual abuse
Where adults (and sometimes other children) engage in any form of sexual activity, including conversation and sexually explicit images, with children.
- 4) Neglect
Where adults fail to care for children and protect them from danger, seriously impairing health and development.

If Abuse is disclosed or discovered:

- Do not delay.
- Do not act alone.
- Do not start to investigate.
- Consult with the RSCM Safeguarding Officer at the earliest opportunity.

Responding to a Child:

- Listen and keep listening.
- Don't question and don't pass judgment.
- Never promise confidentiality.
- Explain what you intend to do and don't delay in taking action.
- Write down the content of your conversation as soon as possible, sign, date and keep confidentially.
- Contact the RSCM Safeguarding team as soon as possible.

If you suspect an adult or someone passes on information regarding an RSCM volunteer or employee, please contact the Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible. Do not attempt to investigate the information yourself or pass on the information to others.

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

1) General Principles

As an organization using the Disclosure and Barring Service to help assess the suitability of applicants for a position of trust, the 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. The DBS Code of Practice which can be viewed at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/agencies-public-bodies/dbs/dbs-checking-service-guidance/cop>. A hard copy can be made available on request.

2) 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. Sensitive information is always kept securely.

Recruitment procedures for posts requiring DBS disclosure

1) General

These procedures apply to all posts whether employed, freelance, sessional or voluntary. 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, authorized officers may take advice from the Registered Body. If this is necessary, the RSCM will try to preserve the anonymity of the individual concerned.

2) Identifying appointments requiring a DBS disclosure

DBS disclosures with a check on the barring lists 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, then an Enhanced Disclosure with a barred lists check may be considered. 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 a disclosure will be requested before the offer of the post is confirmed.

3) Beginning the clearance process

Successful applicants for any position which involves supervisions, regular contact or regulated activity with children will be required to complete the RSCM's Self-Declaration process; any relevant information should be sent under separate confidential cover. Such information will be seen only by those needing to see it as part of the recruitment process. A DBS disclosure will be sought if the work meets current eligibility criteria for one.

4) Use of disclosure information

The RSCM will disregard convictions which are not relevant to the post under consideration.

5) Discussing disclosure information with candidates

The 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.

Vulnerable Adults

The RSCM is committed to the support, nurture, protection and safeguarding of all. We recognise that there are many different levels of vulnerability and that all adults should be offered respect, and we

will try our best to ensure opportunities for all within the RSCM. Staff and committee members are not eligible for DBS checks for Vulnerable Adults through the RSCM and therefore we ask those who need support to be accompanied by their own carer at RSCM events or courses. If specific advice is required in relation to safeguarding vulnerable adults, please contact the Safeguarding Officer or email safeguarding@rscm.com.

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 Safeguarding 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.

Authorised Personnel

1) RSCM Safeguarding Officer

The Safeguarding Officer is the first point of contact for any queries about safeguarding policy and about procedural issues regarding the clearance of staff and volunteers and is authorized to respond to any information regarding the safety and wellbeing of children engaged in RSCM activities, and to answer any concerns related to the clearance of staff and volunteers.

2) The Deputy Director (Education, Voluntary Networks & Safeguarding)

Overall responsibility for safeguarding lies with the Deputy Director (Education, Voluntary Networks & Safeguarding), who is also authorized to respond to any information regarding the safety and wellbeing of children engaged in RSCM activities, and to answer any concerns related to the clearance of staff and volunteers.

3) Recruiters

Specific staff are authorized to see and check evidence of identity of candidates and to liaise with the Registered Body during the checking process. Within the 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.

4) Authorized Officers

The Director, the Deputy Director (Education, Voluntary Networks & Safeguarding) and the Deputy Director (Operations & Finance) are authorized, either in consultation with one or all of the others, or in consultation with our Registered Body:

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

CONTACT DETAILS:

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