

Dungarvan Brass Band & Dungarvan Youth Band Child Protection Guidelines.

Introduction

To provide young people with the best possible experience and opportunities in brass banding everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework and demonstrate exemplary behaviour. We in Dungarvan Brass Band, which includes Dungarvan Youth Band, (hereafter called “the Band”), want to make sure that children are protected and kept safe from harm while they are with staff and volunteers in this organisation. **It is our policy to safeguard the welfare of all children by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.**

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse, whether intentional or accidental. It is **not** therefore the responsibility of participants in the bands to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is, however, their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and to act if they have concerns about the welfare of a child.

Good Practice

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and actions:

- The welfare of children must always come first regardless of other considerations
- Children have the right to be protected, treated with respect, listened to and have their own views taken into consideration.
- Make the experience of brass playing fun and enjoyable for all, promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying and do not condone rule violations or the use of prohibited or illegal substances.
- Insist on adherence to Child Protection procedures.
- Respect the developmental stage of each young person and do not risk sacrificing their welfare in a desire for personal achievements. This means ensuring that the practice intensity is appropriate to the physical, social and emotional stage of the development of the student.
- Build relationships based on mutual trust and respect, in which young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their own development and decision-making, where appropriate.
- Avoid situations where the teacher, conductor or any other member of the band uses their position and power to decide what the student should or should not do without consideration of the young person’s needs and capabilities.
- Always be publicly open when working with children. Avoid if possible teaching sessions or meetings where a teacher and an individual student are completely unobserved. In 1:1 lessons, encourage parents to sit in.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of physical guidance is required in teaching technique, this should be provided openly and with the consent of the student.
- Try to have another adult present if you know in advance physical guidance will be required.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate relationship with students. Maintain a “professional distance”. Don’t be overly familiar.
- Maintain appropriate standards of behaviour at social events that young people attend.
- Communicate regularly with parents. This may be directly or via the appropriate officer as the situation demands.

- Gain written parental consent when appropriate.

Poor Practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel.

- Taking children alone in a car on journeys
- Situations where a child will be alone with you completely unobserved
- Sharing a room in a hotel etc with a child that is not your own
- Allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching of any form
- Allowing children to use inappropriate language or behaviour unchallenged
- Letting allegations a child makes go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon
- Doing things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves

We recognise that cases arise where it is impractical to avoid some of the situations mentioned in this section. For example, if you are left alone with a child because the parent failed to pick them up. Deviations from the guidelines should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of band officers and the children's parents, and should be noted. If during your care of a child you accidentally hurt them, the child seems distressed in any manner, or misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to a welfare or other band officer and make a brief written note of it. Also report and note any inappropriate behaviour of the child towards other children or the teacher. Parents should also be informed of the incident.

Abuse

Abuse against a child is never acceptable. Child abuse is complicated and can take different forms, but usually consists of one or more of the following:

- **Neglect:** Where a child's needs for food, warmth, shelter, nurturance and safety are not provided, to the extent that the child suffers significant harm.
- **Emotional abuse:** Where a child's needs for affection, approval and security are not being met and have not been met for some time by their parent or carer.
- **Physical abuse:** where a child is assaulted or injured in some way that is deliberate.
- **Sexual abuse:** Where a child is used for the sexual gratification of an adult.

The Band acknowledges abuse is not always easy to recognise, nor are the people in the band likely to be experts in recognition. It is **not** the responsibility of those in the band to decide if child abuse has taken place, but it is their responsibility to voice concerns.

Indicators of Abuse

Indications that a young person may be abused include the following:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- The young person describing what appears to be an abusive act involving him/ her.
- Someone else (a young person or adult) expressing concern about the welfare of another young person.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet or withdrawn, or displaying sudden outbursts of temper).
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour.
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.

- Having difficulty in making friends.
- Being prevented from socialising with other young people.
- Displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite.
- Losing weight for no apparent reason.
- Becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt.

It should be recognised that the above list this is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place.

Child Liaison Officers

The band will appoint one or more officers to deal with concerns about child protection. The current Liaison Officer(s) are:

- The Liason Officer(s) will act as a liaison with outside agencies and a resource person to any staff member or volunteer who has child protection concerns.
- The Liason Officer(s) is responsible for ensuring that the standard TUSLA reporting procedure is followed, so that suspected cases of child neglect or abuse are referred promptly to the designated person in the TUSLA Children and Family Services or in the event of an emergency and the unavailability of the TUSLA, to An Garda Síochána.
- The Liason Officer(s) should ensure that they are knowledgeable about child protection and keep themselves updated on new developments.
- Advise the Committee to ensure all procedures and guidelines are derived from and consistent with the current Children First: National Guidance and local guidelines are in not variance with the national guidance.
- Ensure Garda vetting is sought for appropriate individuals.
- See also Appendix 2

Reference

“Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children”
(2011) Department of Health and Children

“Our Duty to Care: the principles of good practice for the protection of children and young people” (2002) Department of Health and Children

“CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES: Recommended good practice in brass banding” British Federation of Brass Bands.

Other Contacts:

TUSLA (Child & Family Agency)
Area Child Manager
Waterford Community Services
Cork Road
Waterford
051 – 842800
www.TUSLA.ie

Appendix 1: Guidelines for Staff & Volunteers

Our policy applies to all staff and volunteers working within the Band. Below are practical guidelines and procedures which staff and volunteers should adopt in relation to Child Protection.

FAMILIARITY

- Staff should maintain a “professional distance” from children.
- Avoid “special” relationships. (Avoid showing favouritism)
- Never initiate social contact with children outside of the teaching situation.
- Avoid any actions which may be interpreted as “over familiar”.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

- Physical contact should be avoided in the normal course of teaching. It is accepted however that occasional and limited physical contact may be necessary in order to guide the pupil in essential elements of technique. e.g. positioning the hand or correcting the posture of a student.
- In occasional circumstances, where it is necessary for physical contact, then verbal permission must first be sought from the pupil before invading any personal space.
- The teacher should be aware of proximity from the pupil and try to keep a suitable distance. i.e. one where the pupil does not feel that their personal space is being invaded.
- Teachers are advised to avoid standing behind or leaning over students if possible.
- Physical restraint must not be used except in exceptional circumstances where reasonable restraint may be used to avoid personal injury.

LOCATION & TRANSPORT

- Where required to teach in a 1:1 situation, then the teaching room should be viewable from the outside.
- Invite parents or another teacher or adult band member to sit in on a lesson, particularly teaching in a 1:1 situation.
- Lifts should not be given to pupils in cars.

CONTACTING BY TELEPHONE / EMAIL

- Communication with parents on band related issues should normally be made through a band officer.
- When making a call always ask to speak to the parent / guardian and never the child.
- Calls to children should be avoided in all cases except in case of emergency.
- Permission must always be obtained from parents to communicate via email, text etc.

WHAT TO DO IF ABUSE IS SUSPECTED OR OTHER INCIDENTS OCCUR

- Make note of and report any incidents, suspicions and potential issues.
- You have a duty to report any suspicion of abuse. In the first instance you should inform the Child Liason Officer, or another Band officer if unavailable.

Appendix 2: Guidance to Liason Officers

For more detailed information on protection and welfare issues, including the TUSLA standard reporting procedure form, please refer to the “Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children” (2011) issued by the Department of Health and Children. Officers are also advised they can contact the TUSLA with any questions.

Some important points from the Children First document are shown below.

- Any person reporting a child abuse or neglect concern should do so without delay to the TUSLA Children and Family Services. A report can be made in person, by telephone or in writing. The contact number is 051 – 842800 and is also available on the TUSLA website (www.TUSLA.ie)
- Before deciding whether or not to make a formal report, you may wish to discuss your concerns with a health professional or directly with the TUSLA Children and Family Services.
- Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or to risk of harm pending TUSLA intervention. In the event of an emergency where you think a child is in immediate danger and you cannot get in contact with the TUSLA, you should contact the Gardaí. This may be done through any Garda station.
- The Standard Report Form for reporting child welfare and protection concerns to the TUSLA should be used by professionals, staff and volunteers in organisations working with or in contact with children, or providing services to children when reporting child protection and welfare concerns to the TUSLA Children and Family Services. If a report is made by telephone, this form should be completed and forwarded subsequently to the TUSLA. The TUSLA will follow up on all referrals, even if the Standard Report Form has not been used.
- In those cases where an organisation decides not to report concerns to the TUSLA or An Garda Síochána, the individual employee or volunteer who raised the concern should be given a clear written statement of the reasons why the organisation is not taking such action. The employee or volunteer should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free as individuals to consult with, or report to, the TUSLA or An Garda Síochána.

See also

- “Our Duty to Care: the principles of good practice for the protection of children and young people” (2002) Department of Health and Children”