

The Oldham Council Music Service

Parent Guidance – Keeping Your Child Safe

Oldham Music Service holds the safety and wellbeing of the children it works with as its highest priority. The service is constantly reviewing its safeguarding policies and processes. Ensuring that children are safe when attending our sessions is a joint responsibility between parents and the service and we respectfully ask that parents / carers observe the guidance in this document. Should parents / carers have any concerns about any aspect of the points made in this document they should contact the Designated Safeguarding Leads for the Music Service, these are:

Dennis Hadfield, dennis.hadfield@oldham.gov.uk
Jonathan Leedale, jonathan.leetdale@oldham.gov.uk

Oldham Music Service has a Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy which is available to view on their website: Oldham Music Service

Parental Responsibility at Music Centre activities

Music Service staff will take full responsibility for your child (loco parentis) between the start and finish times of the activity the child is attending. Whilst no member of our staff would ever leave a child unattended and vulnerable, it should be carefully noted that it is our policy that at the official end time of a session, it is the responsibility of parents to promptly collect their child from the rehearsal room and resume full responsibility.

In the case of all primary school age children it is a requirement that parents collect their children directly from the rehearsal room. It is not acceptable for primary age children to walk outside of buildings onto car parks without parental supervision or to walk home / take unaccompanied public transport unless parents have notified the Music Service in writing that this is their wish.

If a primary age child is participating in more than one activity during an evening session, it is the responsibility of parents/carers to resume responsibility between the activities and chaperone children between rooms. It is not acceptable for primary age children to move around the building unaccompanied.

In the case of secondary age children (who often travel to school on their own), it is appropriate for more independence to be assumed and music service staff will not question a child leaving the venue unaccompanied at the end of a session, to proceed to car parks, public transport or to walk home. It is for parents to satisfy themselves that they are happy with the transport arrangements in place for their child

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based on their knowledge of that child's maturity and experience. Again, we reiterate that our staff responsibility exists only between the published start and finish times of the activity.

It is for parents to notify their group leader if they have specific requests with regards to child collection arrangements, particularly secondary age pupils who will otherwise be free to leave the venue as described above.

Break times

If ensemble leaders choose to have a break mid-way through a rehearsal, specific details will be provided on areas to which pupils are allowed to roam. Often this will be limited to the rehearsal room and the nearest toilet facilities but may also include refreshment facilities (a member of staff will steward this area if this is to be allowed). Students must thoroughly obey these instructions.

Pupils will not be allowed to leave the music centre to get food or drink so please make sure that they have snacks and drinks if they need them. There is also a vending machine in the foyer that pupils can use.

'Stranger – Danger' risks

We know that parents have to make varied arrangements for delivery and collection of children to/from our activities. Our staff will quickly develop knowledge of the adults who undertake responsibility for individual children and will always be vigilant in observing any less familiar people making collections.

It must however be considered that there is a risk of strangers presenting themselves to collect a child from an activity. If staff suspect or become aware of an unexpected person making collection they will contact the parent / carer on our records before allowing the child to leave. Parents should also ensure that they have spoken with their child regarding 'stranger danger' issues and that the child is clear and happy about the person who is collecting them from a session. Again to reiterate, Music Service responsibility for the safeguarding of a child begins and ends according to the published session times. It is for parents to ensure that collection arrangements are satisfactory and safe.

Notifying the Music Service of potential risks

If a parent/carer is aware of a potential risk concerning an unauthorised person presenting themselves to collect a child at any of our sessions / events (e.g. an estranged parent / partner) this should be made known to the session leader and a member of the Music Service management team in order that special vigilance may be given to the child concerned.

Fire Safety

In the event that the fire alarm is raised, ensemble leaders will lead groups to designated muster points outside the building and carry out a roll-call with their attendance registers. Parents should allow staff to maintain responsibility for children and not attempt to take their children away independently. Parents /

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carers are responsible for making their own way out of the building to safety. Parents should follow children to muster point areas as directed by staff but not interfere with the registering of children. Staff, parents of students should remain at the muster point until permission is given to return to the building.

Noticing a suspicious person on site

If a parent / carer notices any suspicious persons on site (either inside or outside the building), they should immediately raise their concern with a music service manager or one of our teaching team.

Parents / carers in the Music Centre

Adults (staff and parents/carers) should not use designated pupil toilets in our music centre venues. Adults must use specifically designated adult / staff toilets.

Students should under no circumstances use the designated adult / staff toilets.

Parents needing to accompany younger children to the toilets should similarly use the adult toilet facilities. It is inappropriate for adults to be present in the same facilities as unsupervised children (i.e. to use the student toilets).

The available toilet facilities at concert venues may not allow for adult / child separation as is available in a school venue. If parents have concerns about safeguarding arrangements with regards to toilets at such venues, these should be made known to service managers.

Staffing Levels and Suitability

All of our staff members are fully checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service. Oldham Music Service staff also sign a declaration of suitability to work with children document and there is a compulsory acceptance of the service safeguarding policy.

Staffing levels in our ensembles are very high with at least one leader and one supporting member of staff attached to each ensemble. There is a very high staff presence at our evening sessions. At our music centre we also have a receptionist stationed at the main entrance.

First Aid

All music centre teachers have received basic first aid training. Service managers have been more substantially trained and are 'qualified first aiders'. Numerous first aid kits are available at the music centre and are held by duty managers.

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Wider child protection and safeguarding issues

The Music Service operates according to its own bespoke Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct which have been produced in line with the requirements of the DfE, Oldham Council and other national organisations for music education. This document is available to view upon request.

Under this policy and guidance any allegations of abuse will be taken very seriously and a strict procedure will be followed for the investigation of such allegations in accordance with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) processes and the Oldham Child Safeguarding Board. Such matters should be raised with Dennis Hadfield or Jonathan Leesdale, Deputy Head of Music Service who are the Designated Safeguarding Leads for the Music Service.

The LADO provides management and oversight of individual cases of allegations of abuse made against those who work with children. If you have any concerns about the staff working at Oldham Music Service, Oldham LADO can be contacted:

Colette Morris:

Office: 0161 770 8870

Mobile: 07583 101 863

Email: colette.morris@oldham.gov.uk

Wendy Nicholls:

Office: 0161 770 0008

Mobile: 07974 619094

Email: wendy.nicholls@oldham.gov.uk

Data Protection

Oldham Music Service takes Data Protection very seriously indeed. For this reason, our staff registers contain minimal information which is not identifiable so that there will be no breach of data protection should a register get lost and fall into the wrong hands.

In the event of an emergency, all contact details and medical details shared by parents with the service are held on-site by the duty service manager who can quickly access the necessary information.

Concerts and Performances

The venues we use for our performances range from world class concert halls through to local community spaces and churches. It is impossible to form policy which would be able to be applied to such varied circumstances.

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When ensembles perform at major events, very specific instructions and procedures will be in place for close and remote supervision at the event. Parents will be made aware of these in the correspondence issued about the event.

For local, end of term or community / church events throughout the year, parents should take note of the following important points:

- The main entrance and exit doors will be staffed throughout all performance events in order to monitor people entering and leaving the building. Unaccompanied primary school age children will not be allowed off the premises.
- Children will be allowed freedom of movement between 'holding areas/dressing rooms', toilets and auditorium at the discretion of group leaders. It is not always possible to allow pupils into the auditorium to watch other performances due to fire capacity restrictions.
- Many of our local venues offer only limited toilet facilities which do not allow for segregation between pupils, staff and parents. Parents must be aware that staff will allow pupils to use the public toilet facilities which will be shared with staff and audience members.

If any parent / carer is unhappy about these arrangements or have concerns about the safety of their children at our events, you should make your feelings known to the Designated Safeguarding Leads for the Music Service.

Day course events

Music Service staff will take full responsibility for students between the published arrival and finish times for a day course event. Separate parental consent will be sought for such events. Only those children for whom we have received parental consent will be allowed to participate in the activity and will fall under our responsibility.

Parents are responsible for the dropping of and collection of children at the published times and for ensuring that transport arrangements are in place to their satisfaction.

We reiterate the 'stranger danger' / 'unauthorised person' guidance given earlier in this document.

The service has specific arrangements in place for the safe keeping of personal data. Emergency contact / medical information will be available to group leaders as required in the event of an emergency.

Social Media

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Oldham Music Service is unable to control interaction between pupils/students using social media or text messaging and cannot be responsible for the behaviour of members outside of ensemble activities. Whilst interaction with social media sites is a normal part of a young person's life, it should be done with responsibility and respect.

- Parents and children should not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Oldham Council Music Service into disrepute.
- Parents should monitor usage and take all steps to ensure that social media is not used to attack, insult, abuse or defame other music centre members, their family members, individual teachers or Oldham Music Service.
- Pupils should not have contact through any personal social medium with any member of Oldham Music Service.
- Any breach of this policy that leads to a breach of confidentiality, defamation or damage to the reputation of Oldham Music Service may result in legal action.
- Any breach of this policy which amounts to proven 'cyber bullying' will result in the immediate discontinuation of music centre membership for the pupil responsible.

Parents who may be worried about inappropriate social media interaction between music centre members should discuss the matter with the Designated Safeguarding Leads for the Music Service.

Thank you for taking the time to familiarise yourself with this document. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Oldham Music Service 0161 770 5660

(Reviewed April 2025)

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