



Online Learning Policy

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Online Learning Policy

This policy should be read alongside the current West Sussex Music's policies and procedures on child protection and safeguarding:

- [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy - Sept 2024](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education - Sept 2024, Part 1](#)
- [Acceptable Use of IT Policy 2024](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)

1. Definitions

In this document:

- “we,” “our,” “us,” or “WSM” refer to West Sussex Music Trust*, trading as West Sussex Music.
- “staff” refers to West Sussex Music managers; teachers; associate tutors; administrators; volunteers and delivery partners
- “parents” refers to parents; guardians; and carers

*West Sussex Music Trust is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales. Company number: 8524556 Charity number: 1152703. Our registered office is at Herbert Shiner School, South Grove, Petworth, West Sussex GU28 0EE.

2. Introduction

This policy outlines our commitment to providing a safe and secure online learning environment for all participants in our online lessons and courses. We prioritise the well-being of our students and aim to ensure that parents and guardians feel confident in our safeguarding measures. This document provides clear processes and guidance for both parents and staff.

Online lessons and courses will utilise video conferencing software and links, and this policy outlines how we use Teams and Zoom platforms to ensure a safe, engaging, and educational experience for children. Teams and Zoom are cloud based; are accessible for all; and there is no additional software required for students. Further details about online video links and courses will always be provided when students are invited to join an online lesson or course.

3. The purpose of this policy

West Sussex Music works with children and families online as part of its activities. This is Online Learning.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- create a safe and supportive online learning environment, by ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people when learning online
- provide staff with the overarching principles that guide our approach to online safety
- ensure that, as an organisation, we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use online devices

- to provide clear guidelines for staff regarding online safeguarding practices
- to ensure parents/carers are informed about our online safeguarding policies and procedures.

This policy applies to all staff, children and young people and anyone involved in West Sussex Music online activities.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Staff:

- have undergone thorough background checks and are trained in child protection and safeguarding policies.
- are responsible for monitoring all student interactions and reporting any concerns regarding safety or well-being.
 - This will include reviewing shared comments in the chat function in Teams or Zoom.
 - All comments are visible only to the teacher and other students within the supervised class environment.
- are expected to create a positive and respectful online classroom atmosphere.
- will remind students to adhere to the Code of Conduct and reinforce the code wherever necessary.
- will review projects to ensure appropriate use of Teams and Zoom by all students.

Parents/Carers:

- are encouraged to engage with their child about their online learning experience. This is particularly important with learners under the age of 13.
- with students under the age of 13, we expect parents / carers to:
 - Support when logging on to Teams or Zoom.
 - Be present and available during the online lessons and courses.
- should report any concerns regarding their child's safety or well-being to West Sussex Music immediately by emailing music@westsussexmusic.co.uk

5. Online learning environment

Platform security

Lessons and courses will be conducted and delivered on Teams or Zoom. Access will be restricted to enrolled students and authorised staff only. The following safeguards are in place:

- Each student will have a unique login to Teams or Zoom, ensuring a safe and controlled environment.
- Personal information is protected in accordance with our privacy notice. No personal data will be shared without parental consent.
- Students will receive guidance on online safety, including how to protect their personal information and how to report any inappropriate behaviour.

Supervised courses:

All online courses are supervised by WSM staff to ensure a positive and productive learning environment.

Monitoring interactions:

All online interactions, including chat functions in the video courses, will be monitored by WSM staff to ensure a safe environment.

Code of conduct:

Students will be required to adhere to our Code of Conduct that promotes respectful communication and behaviour. Any violations will be addressed promptly.

Equipment requirements:

Students will need to have access to:

- a computer with webcam – laptop or tower (tablets and phones are often not suitable for lessons and courses due to reduced functionality)
- computer speakers or headphone / ear buds
- a reliable broadband connection

Student setting for online courses:

- **Blurred backgrounds:**
Staff will expect the use of blurred backgrounds to protect the privacy of students' homes and family members. This aligns with the UK GDPR and the Children's Code (Age-Appropriate Design Code), which emphasise the importance of protecting children's privacy online. For further guidance, see the ICO's resources on the Children's Code [here](#).
- **Virtual backgrounds:**
Virtual backgrounds are permitted, provided they are appropriate, non-distracting, and do not compromise the professionalism of the session. Staff will offer guidance on setting up these backgrounds where needed.
- **Consistent environment:**
Students are encouraged to attend courses from a consistent, quiet location free from interruptions, in line with best practices outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (2024). You can find further details in the KCSIE guidance [here](#).
- **Dress code:**
Students must dress appropriately for an educational setting during online courses, ensuring a professional and respectful atmosphere.
- **Parental support:**
Parents/carers are encouraged to help students set up a safe and appropriate learning environment and should remain within earshot during courses where possible. This supports recommendations from the NSPCC on remote learning, which you can explore [here](#).
- **Staff responsibilities:**
Staff will periodically remind students of these expectations and may ask for a parent/carer to assist if there are concerns.

6. We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind.
- children and young people should be able to use the internet for education and personal development, but safeguards need to be in place to ensure they are always kept safe.

7. We recognise that:

- the online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however, it can also present risks and challenges.
- we have a duty to ensure that all children, young people, and adults involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online.
- we have a responsibility to help keep children and young people safe online.
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers, and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare and in helping young people to be responsible in their approach to online safety.
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

8. We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- having clear and robust safeguarding procedures in place for responding to abuse including online abuse.
- providing clear and specific directions to staff on how to behave online.
- supporting and encouraging the young people using our service to use the internet, in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others.
- supporting and encouraging parents/carers to do what they can to keep their child safe online.
- providing a Code of Conduct for use with children and young people and their parents/carers.
- providing clear and robust procedures to enable us to respond appropriately to any incidents of inappropriate online behaviour.
- reviewing and regularly updating the security of our information systems.
- ensuring that usernames, logins, email accounts and passwords are used effectively.
- ensuring personal information about the adults and children who are involved in our organisation is held securely and shared only when appropriate.
- ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their written permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given.
- providing supervision, support, and training for staff about online safety.
- examining and risk assessing any recent technologies before they are used within the organisation.

If online abuse occurs, staff will respond by:

- interrupting the online session: Staff will immediately pause or end the online session to stop the abuse from continuing.
- removing the abuser from the session to prevent further harm.
- documenting the incident.
- reporting the incident: Staff will report the incident to the designated safeguarding lead.
- contacting the parent/carer: Notify the parent/carer of the student involved, providing them with details of the incident and the steps being taken.
- arranging follow-up courses to check on the well-being of the students involved.
- conducting a policy review: Review the current online safety policies and procedures to identify any gaps or areas for improvement.

9. Parent/Carer engagement

Regular updates:

Parents and carers will receive regular updates about the lessons and courses, including information on safeguarding practices and any changes to policies.

Open communication:

We encourage parents and carers to maintain open lines of communication with teachers, and lesson and course administrators regarding their child's progress and any concerns.

10. Review and evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Feedback from parents, students, and staff will be considered in the review process.

11. Conclusion

We are committed to providing a safe and enriching online learning experience for all students in our online lessons and courses. By adhering to this policy, we aim to foster a supportive environment that promotes creativity and learning while ensuring the safety and well-being of every participant.

For any questions or concerns regarding this policy, please contact our designated safeguarding lead at 01403 286330.

This policy aims to provide clarity and reassurance to both parents/carers and staff, ensuring a safe and productive online learning environment.

12. Contact details

Designated Safeguarding Lead

James Underwood 01403 286330 / 07469 351444 james.underwood@westsussexmusic.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

Paul Smyth: 01403 286330 / 07467 373867

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