



# Child Protection Policy

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## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT**

MusicFirst NI (MFNI) is fully committed to ensuring the care, welfare and safety of the young people receiving care within MFNI. MFNI will seek to carry out this responsibility in a caring, supportive and safe environment. MFNI values Children as individuals, with unique gifts and talents, and we aim to foster the personal, social and musical development of each child in our care. MFNI is therefore dedicated to taking all necessary and reasonable measures to protect children in MFNI's care from all kinds of harm.

MFNI will endeavour to safeguard young people in our care by:

1. Having an effective recruitment and selection procedure including referral to the Access NI procedure
2. Establishing child protection guidelines through a Code of Behaviour (see Item 2) for all staff
3. Developing effective procedures to deal with concerns, disclosures of abuse or allegations
4. Sharing relevant information about child protection and good practice with children, parents and staff, keeping them informed of what we do and what they can expect from MFNI. This may also mean sharing information about concerns with agencies that need to know and involving parents and children appropriately

In light of the restrictions resulting from the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020, and the subsequent move to online teaching, children and their parents/carers, will be made aware that any safeguarding concerns that arise during online lessons, will be acted on according to MFNI's current child protection policy. If a tutor has any concerns in relation to a child's home environment or relationships, which have come to light during online teaching, these should be discussed with CPO/DCPO and appropriate safeguarding actions agreed.

5. Providing effective support for staff through training and guidance provided by Belfast's HSC's Keeping Safe Project.

6. Reviewing this policy and procedures every 3 years.

The principles of the Children (NI) Order (2010) apply to this policy.

### **1. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

The Designated Child Protection Officer (CPO) and Deputy CPO will ensure that the following procedures for recruitment and selection of staff are fully implemented:

All applicants must supply information regarding personal details, past and current teaching/volunteer experience and any skill/qualification relevant to the post as well as at least 1 personal references

A declaration of any, or no, criminal record

All applicants will be expected to give permission for an [Enhanced Disclosure \(with access to Child Barred List\)](#) to be done through the Access NI Service. Any position involving access to children will require use of the Access NI system and a person will not be engaged until clearance has been received.

All staff will be expected to give permission for renewed Enhanced Disclosures every 2-3 years as long as they continue in potential Regulated Activity within MFNI.

[REGULATED ACTIVITY](#), as defined by “*Regulated Activity in relation to children –Factual note by HM Government*” and adopted by Department of Health NI, is:

*“Teaching, training or instruction of children, carried out by the same person frequently (once a week or more often), or on 4 or more days in a 30-day period, or overnight.*

*Note; the day-to-day line manager/supervisor of an individual in regulated activity is also in regulated activity.*

*Persons who are providing this teaching, training or instruction are deemed to be in a Regulated Position.”*

1. It is an offence for an organization to permit anyone on a barred list to work in Regulated Activity. However, a criminal record does not necessarily debar an applicant from working with MFNI. See Appendix 5
2. For MFNI policy re: Handling of DBS certificate information, see Appendix 4

The Designated CPO will ensure that on-going training is provided for and taken up by all those in positions of trust with children

Once accepted, all staff will undertake training so that they are less likely to become involved in actions that can lead to harm or be misunderstood. This training will include:

1. Induction – to familiarise workers with:
  - a. MFNI’s Child Protection Policy
  - b. Code of Behaviour (See Item 2)
  - c. Other relevant policies
2. Child Protection Training – awareness raising and best practice.

## **2. CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**

As the majority of the music teaching in MFNI is conducted on a one to one basis, tutors must take all reasonable care to ensure their pupils’ safety and their own. They should conduct their teaching as openly as possible so that misunderstandings cannot occur. Parents should be made welcome to remain in the lesson especially when the child is young or is new to the tutor. Communication between tutor, child and parent/care is important to the musical development of the child and should be seen as a partnership.

## RATIOS

When teaching in a group setting, Tutors must ensure that the ratio of children to staff is maintained as follows:

	Adult	Child
<b>3-12 years</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>: 8</b>
<b>Over 12</b>	<b>see below</b>	

Appropriate ratio for children over 12 years will be a minimum of 2 adults (preferably one of each gender) for up to 20 children with an additional leader for every 10 children. If an activity is deemed as presenting a greater risk, the presence of more adults may be necessary. If in doubt, seek advice from the CPO or Deputy CPO.

Staff are advised not to initiate unwarranted physical contact with children and young people. However on occasions when physical contact is necessary, such as providing comfort and reassurance, such contact should only take place with the consent of the child and be governed by the age and developmental stage of the child. Resistance from the child should be respected.

It is not good practice and not normally permissible to take children alone in a car or minibus on journeys however short. Should this be absolutely unavoidable, written permission must be obtained from the child's parent and the Designated CPO or Deputy CPO. See Appendix 3

Workers should not meet with children outside of organized MFNI events unless it is with the knowledge and consent of the parents and MFNI's Designated CPO or Deputy CPO.

It is not good practice for staff to retain the personal contact details (email address, mobile phone number, social media contact, etc.) of a child or young person (under the age of 18 years), and may be only be done so at the parents written request.

It is not good practice for staff to correspond with a child or young person (under the age of 18 years) through social media websites (facebook, twitter, myspace, etc.). Workers are advised to maintain a professional / appropriate distance and not 'link' with MFNI children / young people in this way.

Staff should never-

- a. Send / receive private calls or texts while supervising children
- b. Strike, or physically discipline a child
- c. Put a child down, call them names, raise their voice to a child
  1. Issues of discipline should be handled in a positive and loving way
- d. Engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games, including horseplay
- e. Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- f. Make sexually suggestive comments about, or to, a child, even in fun
- g. Let allegations a child makes go without being addressed and recorded
- h. Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves

## 3. REPORTING PROCEDURES

Concerns about a child/young person can arise through a variety of ways e.g.

a child may disclose information to a tutor

a tutor may observe a mark or injury on a child

a tutor may observe something concerning about the child's home environment or relationships

a parent may be concerned about the behaviour of a child or a tutor

a member of the public can raise a concern.

The MFNI Board will appoint a Designated CPO as well as Deputy CPO to:

a. co-ordinate action within MFNI

b. advise any worker who seeks their advice

c. liaise with Health and Social Care Trusts (primarily Belfast HSC Trust) and other Agencies about suspected cases of child abuse

d. ensure that procedures are followed

e. ensure training is provided in child protection issues to all workers and that this training is reviewed on a regular basis

Current Designated Persons:

Child Protection Officer (CPO)- Ms. Becca Hopkins

Deputy Child Protection Officer (Deputy CPO) – Ms. Denise Quinn

The procedures are outlined in Appendix 2. The report may be verbal but should be followed up with completion of the incident form. No individual should deal with any issue alone but in consultation with the Designated CPO or Deputy CPO. Strict confidentiality should be adhered to and information shared on a need to know basis.

#### **4. SHARING INFORMATION**

Sharing relevant information about child protection and good practice with children, parents and staff

The names of the designated persons within MNFI responsible for dealing with issues relating to child protection, accidents and complaints, will be prominently displayed and made known to all individuals associated with MFNI.

Information will be available to, and exchanged between those involved in reporting procedures. However, confidential information will only be shared on a need to know basis.

##### Parents

Parents can obtain a copy of MFNI's Child Protection Policy from MFNI's website, by verbal or written request, or from MFNI's Child Protection Notice Board.

##### Staff / Tutors

MFNI's policy is to brief workers on child protection issues and to ensure that they respond

appropriately to any concern that a child may have and pass on their concerns to the Designated CPO within MFNI.

#### Children and Young People

Children who take part in MFNI activities should be made aware that any concern they have will be dealt with following the standard procedures and that workers are required to pass on information of a concerning nature to the Designated CPO or Deputy CPO.

Children and young people should also be made aware that this applies to online lessons too, and should a tutor observe or overhear anything concerning in relation to the child's home life, the normal safeguarding procedures will be followed.

### **5. SUPPORT AND TRAINING OF STAFF**

Staff need to be aware of their responsibility to the children in terms of ensuring they are protected from harm when in MFNI. Staff will be supported through an Induction Session with the Designated CPO and through child protection training, which will be provided every 2 years. This is a requirement of their contract agreement. Existing staff will be required to up-date their child protection training every 2-3 years and maintain evidence of such. MFNI will facilitate up-date training.

### **6. REVIEW**

The Designated CPO, Deputy CPO & MFNI Board will review this document every 3 years.

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Child abuse occurs when the behaviour of someone in a position of greater power causes harm to a child. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or a failure to act or to provide proper care (or both) on the part of the carer; e.g. a person who has actual custody of a child (such as a parent or foster parent), a worker within the MFNI setting, or an acquaintance or stranger who may be an adult or a young person.

“An abused child is a boy or girl under the age of 18 who has suffered or may suffer significant harm”.

Categories for concern are defined in the Children (NI) Order 1995 & 2016:

### NEGLECT

The actual or likely persistent or significant neglect of a child, or failure to protect a child from exposure to any danger, including cold and starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

### PHYSICAL

Actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child, or wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child.

### SEXUAL ABUSE

Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child. The involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violates the social taboos of family roles. The child may be dependent and/or developmentally immature.

### EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Actual or likely persistent or significant emotional ill treatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment. This category arises where it is the main or only form of abuse.

### EXPLOITATION

The intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child for personal gain. It includes child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud, or child trafficking.

Signs of abuse might be physical or observed more in behaviour and are explored in a training sessions.

Recognising that children have rights as individuals and to being treated with dignity and respect, both the workers and children within MFNI must be aware of the rights of children. In case of adults, this will enable them to make more informed decisions regarding their own behaviour and the

monitoring of the behaviour of others. In the case of children, awareness of their rights gives them the ability to develop an understanding of what is acceptable and how to protect themselves.

What rights do children have?

The minimum standard rights of children (anyone under 18 years of age) have been established through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is a binding international treaty that the UK government signed at the United Nations, committing itself to give children the rights and protections written in the convention.

There are many rights written into the convention, including rights relating to:

Children having access to information, especially any information that would make life better and safer for them

Children may have a say in their education

Protection from violence, abuse and exploitation

MFNI staff should consider how their role with children should encompass the recognition of these rights in terms of a child's personal, social, emotional and musical development.

**APPENDIX 2: INCIDENT FORM (Concern/Disclosure/Allegation)**

In any case where an allegation is made or concerns are present a record must be taken using this form. This will only be kept by the Designated and Deputy CPOs. Copies will not be kept by any other staff or board member. Please record legibly recording only facts. Not opinions.

<b>Name of Child:</b>	
<b>Age and Date of Birth:</b>	
<b>Parents name/person with responsibility:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Telephone No / Email:</b>	
<b>Type of Incident (Concern/Disclosure/Allegation) &amp; Date:</b>	
<b>Reporting Person:</b>	
<b>Reporting Person's Contact Details:</b>	
<b>Nature of Concern:</b> <i>(What has prompted these concerns? Include dates and times of specific incidents if possible, other persons present etc.)</i>	
<b>Gateway Team:</b> -Name of Contact -Phone Number -Date & Time of Contact -Advice Given	
<b>Initial Action taken and when:</b>	
<b>Proposed Further Action:</b>	

## GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE IN LISTENING TO CHILDREN DISCLOSING ABUSE

Listen to the child, rather than questioning them directly. Offer them reassurance without making promises and take what the child says seriously.

Children may be frightened by the threat of violence to themselves or other members of their family, or of being taken away from or breaking up their family.

Staff should reassure young people who disclose in these situations that by doing so they are protecting themselves and possible other children from further abuse.

Never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events. Do not overreact. Explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell. Do not questions or interrogate the child.

Record the discussion accurately as soon as possible after the event, even if it is information you do not understand fully or like writing down. **This is of vital importance.**

Contact the designated person(s) within MFNI. The Designated & Deputy CPOs may then discuss the concern/suspicion with Social Services and, if appropriate, make a direct contact.

Make direct contact with Social Services if the Designated and / or Deputy CPO is not available or if it is inappropriate to approach them. See Appendix 7.

Record any discussion or actions **within 24 hours.**

**APPENDIX 3: PERMISSION FORMS**

Permission Forms for all trips are composed specifically for the occasion and approved by the Designated CPO or Deputy CPO.

**Membership Registration Form**

Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_



1. Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_  
Medical Conditions / Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_  
Entrance Class / Pathway: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_  
Medical Conditions / Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_  
Entrance Class / Pathway: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_  
Medical Conditions / Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_  
Entrance Class / Pathway: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_  
Medical Conditions / Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_  
Entrance Class / Pathway: \_\_\_\_\_

**Member Signature:**

I hereby wish to register as a member of MusicFirst NI and to enrol the above named in music classes/lessons presented by MFNI. By signing this form, I acknowledge that my business contract(s) is/are personally held with the tutor through Musician's Union. Furthermore, I have read and agree to uphold all Terms & Conditions (see overleaf).

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX 4: HANDLING OF DBS CERTIFICATE INFORMATION**

### **MFNI Policy Statement**

#### General principles

1. As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, MFNI complies fully with the code of practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of certificates and certificate information.

MFNI also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of certificate information and has a written policy on these matters, which is available to those who wish to see it on request.

#### 2.2 Storage and access

Certificate information should be kept securely, in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

#### 2.3 Handling

In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997, certificate information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. MFNI maintains a record of all those to whom certificates or certificate information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

#### 2.4 Usage

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

#### 2.5 Retention

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, MFNI does not keep certificate information for any longer than is necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints.

If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep certificate information for longer than six months, MFNI will consult the DBS about this and will give full consideration to the Data Protection and Human Rights of the individual before doing so.

Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding the safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

#### 2.6 Disposal

Once the retention period has elapsed, MFNI will ensure that any DBS certificate information is immediately destroyed by secure means, for example by shredding, pulping or burning. While awaiting destruction, certificate information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack).

MFNI will not keep any photocopy or other image of the certificate or any copy or representation of the contents of a certificate. However, notwithstanding the above, MFNI may keep a record of the date of issue of a certificate, the name of the subject, the type of certificate requested, the position for which the certificate was requested, the unique reference number of the certificates and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

## **APPENDIX 5: POLICY ON RECRUITMENT INCLUDING EX-OFFENDERS**

### **MFNI Policy Statement**

1. MFNI complies fully with the Code of Practice, issued by the Department of Justice, in connection with the use of information provided to registered persons, their nominees and other recipients of information by AccessNI under Part V of the Police Act 1997, for the purposes of assessing Applicant's suitability for employment purposes, voluntary positions, licensing and other relevant purposes. MFNI undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly and not to discriminate unfairly or unlawfully against the subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.
2. This policy is made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.
3. MFNI is committed to equality of opportunity to following practices, and to providing a service, which is free from unfair and unlawful discrimination\*. MFNI ensures that no applicant or member of staff is subject to less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, marital status, race / colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, age, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, physical or mental disability, political opinion, offending background, or is disadvantaged by any condition which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance.
4. MFNI actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential, and welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. The selection of candidates for interview will be based on those who meet the required standard of skills, qualifications and experience as outlined in the essential and desirable criteria.
5. MFNI will request an AccessNI Disclosure only where this is considered proportionate and relevant to the particular position. This will be based on a thorough risk assessment of that position and having considered the relevant legislation, which determines whether or not a Standard or Enhanced Disclosure is available to the position in question. Where an AccessNI Disclosure is deemed necessary for a post or position, all applicants will be made aware at the initial recruitment stage that the position will be subject to a Disclosure and that MFNI will request the individual being offered the position to undergo an appropriate AccessNI Disclosure check
6. In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions)(Northern Ireland) Order 1979 (as amended in 2014), MFNI will only ask about convictions, which are defined as "not protected" for the purposes of obtaining a Standard or Enhanced disclosure.
7. MFNI undertakes to ensure an open and measured and recorded discussion on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be considered relevant for the position concerned e.g. the individual is applying for a driving job but has a criminal history of driving offences. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of the conditional offer of employment.

8. MFNI may consider discussing any matter revealed in a Disclosure Certificate. MFNI is only able to discuss what is contained on a Disclosure Certificate, and not what may have been sent under separate cover by the Police, with the subject of that Disclosure before considering withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

9. MFNI ensures that all those in MFNI who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of Disclosure information. MFNI also ensures that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to employment of ex-offenders (e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978).

10. MFNI undertakes to make every subject of an AccessNI Disclosure aware of the existence of the Code of Practice, and to make a copy available on request.

HAVING A CRIMINAL RECORD WILL NOT NECESSARILY DEBAR YOU FROM WORKING WITH MFNI. THIS WILL DEPEND ON THE NATURE OF THE POSITION, TOGETHER WITH THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND BACKGROUND OF YOUR OFFENCES OR OTHER INFORMATION CONTAINED ON A DISCLOSURE CERTIFICATE OR PROVIDED DIRECTLY TO US BY THE POLICE.

\*MFNI is only able to discuss what is contained on a Disclosure Certificate and not what may have been sent under separate cover by the Police.

## **APPENDIX 6: USEFUL NUMBERS**

### **MFNI Designated Child Protection Officer:**

Ms. Becca Hopkins– 07870 683757

### **Deputy Child Protection Officer:**

Ms. Denise Quinn – 07719 572070

### **Social Services**

Family and Childcare Gateway Team

414 Ormeau Road, Belfast

Telephone number - 02890 507000

Regional Centralised Out of Hours Team (after 5pm and at weekends) – 028 9504 9999

## **OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS**

- NSPCC Helpline Freephone – 0800 800 5000  
(8am-10pm weekdays / 9am-6pm weekends)
- Police Service NI – 028 90 650222
- Police Central Referral Unit – 02890 259299 (or 101 extension 30299)
- Nexus (Counselling for Victims of sexual abuse and rape, 17 years plus)  
– 028 90 328603
- Childline 0800 1111
- Contact Youth/Lifeline - 0808 808 8000
- Domestic & Sexual Abuse Helpline – 0808 802 1414
- Volunteer Development Agency (training, advice, documents re child protection policy and procedures, Access NI, Vetting & Barring Scheme etc) – 028 90 236100



# Child Protection: In Case of a Concern...

Social Services: **Gateway Team**  
110 Saintfield Road, Belfast  
Telephone number - 02890 507000  
Regional Centralised Out of Hours Team  
(after 5pm and at weekends)  
– 028 9504 9999

**Designated CPO:** Ms. Becca Hopkins  
07870 683757  
Singing.beccahopkins@gmail.com  
**Deputy CPO:** Ms. Denise Quinn  
07719 572070  
Denisemariequinn@googlemail.com

