



Child Safeguarding Policy 2026/27

Updated September 2026

Written in consultation with Safeguarding professionals at: **NSPCC**

Names of staff with safeguarding responsibility as of (September 2026):

Role	Name	Contact details
Safeguarding Mailbox	Main point of contact for safeguarding related matters.	safeguarding@rocksteadymusicschool.com
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Richard Bushby	richard.bushby@rocksteadymusicschool.com Rocksteady Office: 03301131987
Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Erin Laing	erin.laing@rocksteadymusicschool.com Rocksteady Office: 03301131987
Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Tom Ward	tom.ward@rocksteadymusicschool.com Rocksteady Office: 03301131987
Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Becca Jeffries	rebecca.jeffries@rocksteadymusicschool.com Rocksteady Office: 03301131987
Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Caedmon Salter	caedmon.salter@rocksteadymusicschool.com Rocksteady Office: 03301131987

Policy reviewed annually by Director of Education Richard Bushby in consultation with Safeguarding professionals at the NSPCC.

Next review date: September 2027

IMPORTANT:

Rocksteady Music School is a national company, therefore this Child Safeguarding Policy should be read in addition to any child safeguarding or protection policies and procedures in place at the host school.

If the school policy is not readily displayed at the school, staff teaching there should request a copy of the policy. All Rocksteady staff will familiarise themselves with the names of the company DSL and deputy DSL and those in place for the school in which they work.

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1 Introduction

Rocksteady Music School's Child Safeguarding policy describes the management systems and arrangements in place to create and maintain a safe learning environment for all students who are taught by Rocksteady staff. It describes the actions that should be taken if concerns are disclosed or identified. As well as being available to view on our website, a copy of this Child Safeguarding Policy is available on request. This policy and supporting procedures apply to all teaching and support staff who come in to contact with children in schools that we teach.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. All professionals working with children at Rocksteady should ensure they work in a child-centered way and always consider the best interests of the child. All staff are advised to uphold an attitude regarding child safeguarding of 'it could happen here'.

Rocksteady Music School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Richard Bushby and deputies (DDSL) are Erin Laing, Tom Ward, Becca Jeffries and Caedmon. The DSL coordinates child protection issues and liaises with our schools and external agencies (e.g. Social Care, the LSCP and Ofsted).

1.1 Description of Rocksteady Music School

Rocksteady Music School is a progressive and inclusive independent music service that teaches children across the country how to play an instrument in a band setting.

Our team of Band Leaders work in schools every day, inspiring children through inclusive music education.

Policy Statement

Rocksteady is committed to maintaining a safe learning environment and protection for all students regardless of age, disability, sex, race, religious belief, ethnicity or sexual orientation or identity. We recognise that a more personalised or contextualised approach may be required for more vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some SEND children.

KCSIE 26 encourages schools and colleges to be **more sensitive in their use of terms** like "victim" and "perpetrator," acknowledging that not all children subjected to abuse identify with these labels.

Rocksteady seeks to establish and maintain an ethos where students feel secure, are encouraged to talk freely to any of our teachers in school if they are worried or concerned about something.

We are committed to building a 'culture of safety' within our organisation in which the children in our care are protected from abuse, harm, and radicalisation. We have a culture of openness and honesty which allows us to be reflective about our practice and recognise that, however good we are, we can always improve.

1.2 Aims

The aims of this policy and procedures were created to adhere to the elements of safeguarding outlined below:

1.2.1 Prevention

Create a culture of safeguarding at Rocksteady that contributes to a positive atmosphere in schools we serve, through high quality teaching and awareness of pastoral support to students we teach.

1.2.2 Protection

All staff are aware and follow agreed procedures set by both Rocksteady and individual schools. Our staff are appropriately recruited, trained, and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns.

1.2.3 Support

Provide support for students, and awareness of support networks in schools for children who may have been subject to abuse or neglect, and to supporting Rocksteady staff who may respond to those concerns.

1.3 Objectives

We will achieve our safeguarding aims using the following actions:

- working alongside each schools' individual safeguarding policy, reporting any concerns to the designated safeguarding team at that school, as well as Rocksteady's own internal designated safeguarding lead,
- knowing our students well, particularly when we are made aware of vulnerable children, being alert to their needs and any safeguarding issues at school, home or in the community,
- ensuring we practice safe recruitment, checking the suitability of adults who have unsupervised contact with children and supervising others who are temporarily in school but not undertaking 'regulated activity',
- ensuring all members of staff receive safeguarding training and have read, understood, and follow the relevant sections of, the DfE statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education',
- all staff can recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and know the procedures for reporting concerns and abuse of schools they are working,
- maintain confidential records, stored securely, and shared appropriately with other professionals,
- ensure our policy and procedures are regularly updated and submit to a regular external audit.

1.4 Review

Our policy will be reviewed annually by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, working in consultation with expert safeguarding professionals at the NSPCC.

2 Statutory guidance

The DfE statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' is the first point of reference for child protection and child welfare issues in schools. This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, DfE (2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE (2026)
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in schools and colleges DfE, (2021)
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Those Working with Children and Young People in Education Settings (February 2022)
- Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services (May 2024).
- The Prevent Duty Guidance: England and Wales (2023), Home Office (statutory guidance issued under Section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, updated March 2024)
- Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation – procedural information, Home Office (October 2015)
- The Domestic Abuse Act (2021)

3 Definition of safeguarding

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm. It includes a wide range of issues relating to pupil's welfare, health, and safety, (Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills, Ofsted, September 2019).

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment, inside or outside the home, including online
- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- preventing impairment of children's mental or physical health or development,
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care,
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is an aspect of safeguarding but is focused on how we respond to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm. Safeguarding covers more than just child protection and schools are charged with ensuring that the child is looked at holistically and at the centre of decision-making.

4 Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of EVERY member of staff at Rocksteady to ensure that they carry out the requirements of this policy and always work in a way that safeguards and promotes the welfare of all children. This includes the responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

4.1 Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team are accountable for ensuring the effectiveness of this policy and compliance with it. They have responsibility to ensure staff are supported to understand and are effective in adhering to their role and responsibilities under Part one of KCSIE 2026 to ensure that safeguarding underpins all aspects of process and policy.

4.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is appointed by the Director of Education and takes lead responsibility for the day-to-day oversight of safeguarding and child protection, including online safety and understanding what filtering and monitoring systems schools have in place. Rocksteady Music has one deputy DSL who is trained to the same standard as the DSL.

During term time, the DSL or deputy are always available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns that occur within any school where Rocksteady Music staff are present. The DSL and Deputy will be introduced to new teachers upon their induction, and all staff are reminded formally of the correct people to contact for safeguarding concerns termly via online or in person training.

The DSL and deputy will undergo appropriate and specific training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their role. The DSL's training will be updated formally every two years but will have refresher training at regular intervals, at least annually, to keep up to date with any developments relevant to their role.

Duties of DSL

- Ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of filtering and monitoring which is in place at schools,

- liaise with DSL at individual schools and ensure that all cases of suspected abuse reported by Rocksteady staff are referred appropriately to local statutory children's services agencies, and support is given to staff who make referrals, and understanding children's views,
- refer individual incidents or issues to the Police in accordance with NPCC guidance 'When to call the Police',
- liaise with school staff, including pastoral support, SENDCOs on matters of safety and safeguarding,
- act as a source of support, advice and expertise to Rocksteady staff on matters relating to online and digital safety, and Prevent,
- be aware of the process for making referrals to Children's Social Care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.
- understand the unique risks associated with online safety and how to keep children safe online at school,
- recognise the additional risks that children with SEND face from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation,
- keep detailed, accurate and secure written records of concerns and referrals and understanding relevant data protection legislation and regulations. KCSIE 26 placed greater emphasis on information sharing and managing child protection files.

4.3 Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

As a national company Rocksteady do not maintain a list of relevant LADO for each school that we work with. Rocksteady teaching staff should familiarise themselves with the host school's child safeguarding policy including contact details of LADO to be referred to should the need arise to make contact.

4.4 All staff

All staff have responsibility to provide a safe environment for children and work in a child-centered way, always considering the best interests of the child.

All staff will read and understand the following guidance and policy:

- 'Keeping Children Safe in Education Information for All School and College staff' (Part one) (or Annex A, where appropriate),
- DfE guidance 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused',
- Code of Conduct for staff within Rocksteady's 'Staff Handbook'.
- Rocksteady's annually reviewed Child Safeguarding Policy and the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child regardless of the presumed seriousness of the case, both from Rocksteady and the policies in place for the schools where they are placed.

By attending appropriate training and having read the recommended guidance and school policy, all staff are expected to be aware of the following safeguarding actions:

- how to raise a concern about a child's welfare, by speaking to the DSL (or deputy) at the school and Rocksteady in order to agree on a course of action,
- staff should always refer to the DSL or deputy, however, in exceptional circumstances where the DSL or deputy is not available, appropriate action should not be delayed and members of staff must speak to a member of the School Leadership Team and/or take advice from children's social care. In these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the DSL (or deputy) as soon as practically possible,
- if there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a member of staff should call the police on 999, and any member of staff can make a referral to Children's Social Care, but should ensure they inform the DSL as soon as possible,

- know what to look for in early identification of abuse and neglect to be able identify cases where children may need help or protection,
- know how to respond if a child tells them they are being abused, exploited, neglected, or otherwise at risk of harm,
- be aware of behaviours linked to safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm, e.g., drug taking and or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education, and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude images,
- be aware that a child experiencing mental health issues can in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect, or exploitation, which should be referred to the DSL or deputy,
- the process for making referrals to Children's Social Care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.
- understand the host school's safeguarding response to children who go missing from education,
- that children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face, and that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues,
- online abuse can be child-on-child and take the form of abusive, harassing, messages and the non-consensual sharing of indecent images.

5 Definitions of Abuse

A child may be subject to abuse or neglect by a person inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family, or in an institutional or community setting. This could be by those known to them, or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children, and can include children witnessing the ill treatment of others, including children who see, hear or experience domestic violence and its effects. Abuse can also take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Definitions of physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect are found in DfE statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026](#), throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child.

5.1 Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males, women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

5.2 Emotional abuse

Is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as

overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

5.3 Neglect

Is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food and clothing, shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment),
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger,
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caretakers),
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment,
- emotional unfulfillment of a child's basic emotional needs.

6 Other categories of abuse

6.1 Child-on-child abuse

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer-on-peer abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online. Rocksteady recognises that child-on-child abuse is preventable. Staff should be vigilant in identifying early indicators of harmful behaviour and intervene appropriately before behaviours escalate.

Particular consideration should be given to times when children may be at increased risk, including before school, after school, during unstructured periods and whilst accessing online platforms.

It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify and respond to reports. All staff should be clear on the important role they have to play in preventing child-on-child abuse and should understand, that even if there are no reports in school it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. KCSIE 26 emphasises early intervention, a trauma informed approach and ongoing support for affected pupils.

If staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or deputy). It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Child-on-child abuse can include, but not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying),
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers,
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse),
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence),

- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes, and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse,
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party,
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery),
- up skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm,
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

6.2 Violence Against Women and Girls

Rocksteady recognises that harmful attitudes towards women and girls, including misogyny, can contribute to sexual harassment, sexual violence and abusive behaviours. Staff should challenge inappropriate language, stereotypes and behaviours and report concerns where these may indicate safeguarding risks or harmful sexual behaviour.

6.3 Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in school

All Rocksteady teachers should read Part Five of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026). Staff should also be familiar with the Department for Education guidance Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges (2021), which provides supplementary advice on managing reports of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment.

All staff should acknowledge that sexual violence and sexual harassment between children can happen at this school. Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way from primary to secondary stage and into colleges. It may exist on a continuum and may overlap. It can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally). It can happen both inside and outside of school. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will likely adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attend the same school.

All victims should be reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. Some groups are potentially more at risk and evidence shows girls, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Staff must recognise that a child abusing another child may have been abused themselves, therefore, the need may be to support the alleged perpetrator.

When referring to Sexual Harassment, this includes:

- unwanted conduct of a sexual nature,
- sexual remarks,
- sexual taunts,

- physical behaviour, or
- online sexual harassment,

When referring to sexual violence, this is defined under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, described below:

6.3.1 Rape

A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus, or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

6.3.2 Assault by Penetration

A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

6.3.3 Sexual Assault

A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (Schools should be aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.)

6.3.4 Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent

A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.

6.4 Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.

Further information about CSE including definitions and indicators is included in KCSIE '26 Annex B. The statutory definition of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) can be found in the guidance document Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners (DfE 2017).

6.5 Child criminal exploitation (CCE)

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting, or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may

still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Further information about CCE including definitions and indicators is included in KCSIE '26 Annex B.

6.6 County lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms of “deal line”.

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move, and store, drugs, and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

Further information about County lines including definitions and indicators is included in KCSIE '26 Annex B

6.7 Domestic violence

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse.

The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children if they see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse; and they are related to the abusive person.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Part 1) defines domestic abuse as any of the following behaviours, either as a pattern of behaviour, or as a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:

- (a) physical or sexual abuse,
- (b) violent or threatening behaviour,
- (c) controlling or coercive behaviour,
- (d) economic abuse (adverse effect of the victim to acquire, use or maintain money or other property; or obtain goods or services); and
- (e) psychological, emotional, or other abuse.

'Personally connected' is defined as where persons are or have been married to each other, or civil partners, or have agreed to marry or become civil partners. Also, if the two people have been in an intimate relationship with each other, have shared parental responsibility for the same child, or they are relatives.

6.8 Honour based abuse

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.

Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBA, they must inform the school Designated Safeguarding Lead and Rocksteady Music DSL as a matter of urgency.

6.9 Female genital mutilation

Female genital mutilation refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice is illegal in the UK.

FGM typically takes place between birth and around 15 years old; however, it is believed that in most cases, this happens between the ages of 5 and 8.

Risk factors for FGM include:

- low level of integration into UK society,
- mother or a sister who has undergone FGM,
- girls who are withdrawn from PSHE,
- visiting female elder from the country of origin,
- being taken on a long holiday to the country of origin,
- talk about a 'special' procedure to become a woman.

Whilst all staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) about any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific legal duty on teachers. If any teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police.

6.10 Forced marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices to coerce a person into marriage. In addition, since February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence threats or another form of coercion are not used. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage and it is important that all staff are aware of their responsibilities to pass on any concerns.

7 Children Missing Education

Children with unexplained and/or persistent absences from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeated occasions can act as a vital warning sign to vital safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation – particularly county lines.

Early intervention is essential to identify any underlying safeguarding risk. It is important that when staff become aware of pupils that are persistently absent that they raise the issue with the schools DSL and Rocksteady Music DSL and follow the schools' safeguarding procedures.

8 Context

Staff should be aware of contextual safeguarding at the school they are teaching by being aware of the issues highlighted in the school safeguarding policy and in discussion with the DSL or SLT on induction. Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. Safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and can occur between children outside of these environments. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.

Staff, but especially the DSL (and deputy) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse, sexual abuse, serious youth violence, county lines or sexual or criminal exploitation in situations outside their families and should understand how to handle reports of sexual violence and harassment between children, both on and outside school premises, in line with the DfE guidance 'Sexual Violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'.

9 SEND

Rocksteady acknowledges that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities, or certain health conditions, can face additional safeguarding challenges as they may have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse. They may have speech, language, and communication needs, which may make it difficult to tell others what is happening, may be abused more than their abled peers, may find it difficult to express their views, needs and opinions.

Members of staff are encouraged to be aware that children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by safeguarding concerns such as bullying. All members of staff will be encouraged to appropriately explore possible indicators of abuse such as behaviour, mood change, or injuries and not to assume that they are related to the child's disability and be aware that children with SEN and disabilities may not always outwardly display indicators of abuse.

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges because:

- there may be assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood, and injury, relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and
- difficulties may arise in overcoming communication barriers.

Rocksteady recognises that children questioning their gender may experience bullying, isolation, mental health difficulties and online harm. Staff should respond sensitively, avoid assumptions and seek advice from the DSL where safeguarding concerns arise.

Rocksteady staff should ensure that they are vigilant of any pupils within their setting who might need more support to be kept safe or to keep themselves safe.

10 Counter Terrorism and Prevent Act 2015 (The Prevent Duty)

As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools have a duty to 'prevent people being drawn into terrorism'. This has become known as the 'Prevent Duty'.

Where staff are concerned that children and young people are developing extremist views or show signs of becoming radicalised, they should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of

help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately.

DSLs should receive training about the Prevent Duty and tackling extremism and be able to support staff with any concerns they may have. The DSL will consider the level of risk and decide to which agency this concern should be referred. This could include Channel guidance, the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, that staff and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a pupil. In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321

Further information about the Prevent Duty and to Prevent Radicalisation including definitions and indicators is included in KCSIE '26 Annex B.

11 Recognising types of abuse and significant harm

Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children. It gives local authorities a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes where there are concerns about maltreatment, including all forms of abuse and neglect, or other so-called honour-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage), and extra-familial threats like radicalisation and sexual exploitation. All staff should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation.

Abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another, therefore staff should always be vigilant and always raise any concerns with their DSL or deputy.

All staff should be aware of contextual safeguarding as safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and can occur between children outside of these environments. Staff, but especially the DSL (and deputy) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse, sexual abuse, serious youth violence, county lines or sexual or criminal exploitation in situations outside their families and should understand how to handle reports of sexual violence and harassment between children, both on and outside school premises, in line with the DfE guidance 'Sexual Violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'.

12 Mental health awareness

Rocksteady Music staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect, exploitation, or other adverse childhood experiences. Mental health concerns may also leave children vulnerable to further harm and may require a safeguarding response.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to diagnose mental health conditions. However, staff are well placed to observe children on a day-to-day basis and to identify those whose behaviour, presentation, or emotional wellbeing may suggest they are experiencing mental health difficulties or may be at risk of developing them.

Where children have suffered abuse, neglect, exploitation, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact on their mental health, behaviour, attendance, relationships, and educational outcomes. It is therefore essential that staff understand the ways in

which trauma and adversity can affect children and young people and remain vigilant to signs that a child may require help, support, or protection.

Staff should be alert to indicators that may suggest a child is experiencing mental health difficulties, including but not limited to:

- significant or sustained changes in behaviour;
- persistent difficulties sleeping;
- withdrawal from social interaction or activities previously enjoyed;
- signs of self-harm, self-neglect, or suicidal ideation;
- indicators of eating disorders; and
- any other concerning changes in presentation, mood, or functioning.

Rocksteady Music staff are not expected to diagnose or treat mental health conditions. Their role is to identify concerns, record them appropriately, and take action in line with safeguarding procedures. Where staff have a concern about a child's mental health that may also be a safeguarding concern, they must act immediately and report the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL. Staff should maintain an attitude of professional curiosity and consider whether mental health concerns may be linked to abuse, neglect, exploitation, or other safeguarding risks

Further information about mental health, safeguarding indicators, and staff responsibilities can be found in KCSIE 2026 Part One and Annex A (Further Information).

13 Dealing with disclosures

13.1 Concerns from staff

Sometimes referrals are made in response to a single incident such as an injury or report of abuse, but some concerns accumulate over time and are evidenced by building up a picture of harm.

If Rocksteady staff have concerns about a child, they should raise these with the DSL at the school, or in their absence the deputy DSL. The concern should also be raised with the Rocksteady DSL who will contact the school and establish whether steps have been taken to:

- manage support for the child internally via the school's own pastoral processes,
- seek consent from the family for an Early Help assessment, or
- make a referral for statutory services.

Staff are required to report any concerns by following the child protection procedures for the school they are working, submitting the concern in writing and then follow it up by talking to the DSL and Rocksteady Music DSL.

All information about the suspected abuse or disclosure, or concern about radicalisation, will be recorded on Rocksteady's 'Logging a concern' form as soon as possible after the event. The record should include:

- date of the disclosure, or the incident, or the observation causing concern
- date and time at which the record was made
- name of the child involved
- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern/ a factual report of what happened.
- If recording a disclosure, you must use the child's own words

The record will be sent to Rocksteady Music School's DSL who will liaise with the school and decide on the most appropriate course of action.

A copy of the 'Logging a concern' form should also be given to the relevant school's DSP.

If a staff member feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, either by the school DSL or Rocksteady DSL, they may refer their concerns to the children's services directly, or seek advice from the NSPCC whistleblowing advice line on 0800 028 0285 email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Where there is a risk of significant harm to a child the Rocksteady DSL or deputy will work with the school to refer the situation to Social Care by phone and follow up in within 48 hours. The local authority should decide on next actions within one working day of a referral and let the referrer know the outcome. The DSL will follow if this does not happen. If the child's situation does not improve the DSL will press for reconsideration.

If any adult has concerns for the immediate safety of a child, they should ring the police on 999.

In situations of alleged abuse involving staff members (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors), see guidance in the Managing Allegations and Whistleblowing sections of this policy, and the child protection policy of the school where staff are based.

13.2 Disclosures by a child

Where there is a safeguarding concern disclosed by a child, staff will listen to the student's wishes and feelings and take them into account when determining next actions.

In order to support a child who discloses abuse, members of staff will ensure the following actions:

- believe what the child says and not jump to conclusions,
- stay calm,
- listen carefully to the words the child uses,
- not ask leading questions or put words in a child's mouth,
- reassure the child they are right to tell,
- tell the child what you are going to do and why,
- speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy at the school,
- speak to Rocksteady Music DSL or Deputy
- complete Rocksteady Music 'logging a concern' form and the required procedure for the school,
- include a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, details of how the concern was followed up and resolved, a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome,
- follow up the referral with the DSL to make sure action has been taken.

Members of staff speaking to a child making a disclosure will NOT:

- agree to keep secrets or confidences (they will explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe),
- investigate or interrogate,
- make promises about outcomes,
- panic or attach blame,
- take photographs of an injury,
- do nothing, assuming that someone else will take the necessary action.

13.3 Early help / Family help

Staff have a responsibility to identify children who may benefit from early help and understand their role in it. This includes:

- identifying emerging problems,
- providing help for children,
- promoting children's welfare and preventing concerns from escalating,
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and is in alternative provision or pupil referral unit,
- has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending,
- liaising with the school DSL, and flagging to Rocksteady DSL
- sharing information with other professionals to support early identification whether this is when problems are first emerging or where a child is already known to Children's Social Care,
- be aware that children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face and that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues,
- understand that online abuse can be child-on-child and take the form of abusive, harassing, messages and the non-consensual sharing of indecent images.

13.4 Child-to-Caregiver Abuse

Staff should be aware that children may display abusive behaviour towards parents, carers or other family members. This may include physical violence, intimidation, coercive behaviour, emotional abuse, damage to property or financial abuse. Such behaviour may indicate unmet needs, trauma, exploitation, mental health concerns or other safeguarding issues requiring assessment and support.

14 Safeguarding procedures

14.1 Consideration by DSL

Following any information raising a concern, the Rocksteady designated safeguarding lead, or deputy in DSLs absence will consider:

- any urgent medical needs of the child,
- if appropriate actions/considerations are being taken by the school DSL ie:
 - whether the child is subject to a child protection plan,
 - discussing the matter with other agencies involved with the family,
 - consulting with appropriate professionals in the area where the school is located or known to the child e.g. Early Help Service Manager, Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST), medical professional working with the child and/or Safeguarding Advisor for Education,
 - the child's wishes.

14.2 Decisions by DSL

After consideration, and in consultation with the school DSL, a decision will be made as to whether it is necessary:

- to talk to parents, unless to do so may place a child at risk of significant harm, impede any police investigation and/or place the member of staff or others at risk,
- whether to make a child protection referral to the local authority because a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm and if this needs to be undertaken immediately,
- if a concern arises outside the UK, report to local police for information to be passed to authorities in the country where the child is resident through Interpol procedures.

OR

- not to make a referral at this stage,

- if further monitoring is necessary,
- if it would be appropriate to undertake an assessment (e.g., Early Help assessment) and/or make a referral to the Early Intervention Panel and/or to other services.

14.3 Action following a child protection referral

All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented.

If the DSL is of the view that concerns are not being responded to appropriately then these concerns will be escalated until the DSL feels that some resolution has been achieved.

All staff have the right to make a referral to the local authority or police directly if, for whatever reason, there are difficulties following the agreed protocol, for example, they are the only adult on the school premises at the time and have concerns about sending a child home.

Rocksteady will work with the school to ensure the designated safeguarding lead or other appropriate member of staff will:

- make regular contact with the social worker involved to stay informed,
- wherever possible, contribute to the strategy discussion,
- provide a report for, attend, and contribute to any subsequent child protection conference,
- if the child or children are made the subject of a child protection plan, contribute to the child protection plan, and attend core group meetings and review conferences,
- where possible, share all reports with parents prior to meetings,
- where in disagreement with a decision made by Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST) e.g., not to apply child protection procedures or not to convene a child protection conference, follow the guidance in the Local Authority Safeguarding Children Procedures on resolving multi agency professional disagreements and escalations,
- where a child subject to a child protection plan moves from the school or goes missing, school will immediately inform the Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST).

15 Online safety

Online safety is categorised into four areas of risk: content, contact, conduct and commerce.

Rocksteady recognise that the use of technology presents challenges and risks to children and adults both inside and outside of school.

Online safety can be broadly categorised into four areas of risk:

- Content, being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material, including misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
- Contact, being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users
- Conduct, personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm
- Commerce, risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues and report any concerns they have about children's online safety in the same way they would any other concern. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline. Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content.

Many children use mobile and smart technology with unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks. This access means some children, whilst at school, sexually harass, bully, share indecent images consensually or non-consensually, and view and share pornography and other harmful content. Staff should be aware of these issues and how this is managed in schools in which they are working.

Schools and colleges should recognise that sexual violence and sexual harassment occurring online (either in isolation or in connection with face-to-face incidents) can introduce a number of complex factors. Amongst other things, this can include widespread abuse or harm across a number of social media platforms that leads to repeat victimisation.

15.1 Grooming behaviour

Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking. Children and vulnerable adults can be groomed online or face-to-face, by a stranger or by someone they know, for example a family member, friend or professional. Groomers may be male or female of any age.

It can be difficult to tell if a child is being groomed as the signs not always obvious and may be hidden. Older children might behave in a way that seems to be "normal" teenage behaviour, masking underlying problems. A child is unlikely to know they've been groomed. They might be worried or confused and less likely to speak to an adult they trust.

Some of the signs you might see include:

- being very secretive about how they're spending their time, including when online
- having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- having money or new things like clothes and mobile phones that they can't or won't explain
- underage drinking or drug taking
- spending more or less time online or on their devices
- being upset, withdrawn, or distressed
- sexualised behaviour, language, or an understanding of sex that's not appropriate for their age
- spending more time away from home or going missing for periods of time.

Grooming is a criminal offence and occurs where an adult to engages in sexual communications that relates to sexual activity and communications for the purpose of obtaining sexual gratification (Serious Crime Act 2015, part 67).

15.2 Sharing nudes

Sharing nudes or semi-nudes is a term used to describe when persons under 18 send or post nude or semi-nude images, videos, or livestreams online. More precisely referred to as Consensual and Non-Consensual Sharing of Self-Generated Intimate Images and Videos, but not the language school staff use or seen in KCSIE 2026.

It's important that any incident involving children and nudes is considered a potential safeguarding concern.

An incident should always result in a child protection referral if:

- The incident involves an adult.

- There is reason to believe that a child or young person has been coerced, blackmailed, or groomed, or there are concerns about their capacity to consent (e.g., learning disability).
- The image depicts sexual acts not appropriate for the young person's development stage or are violent.
- The images depict sexual acts with any child under 13.
- Reason to believe that the child is in immediate risk of harm due to the sharing of the image, e.g., presenting as suicidal or self-harming.

15.3 AI-Generated and Deepfake Abuse

Staff should be aware that artificial intelligence can be used to create, manipulate or distribute self-generated intimate images, deepfake images, audio, video content and other harmful material. Concerns relating to AI-generated sexual imagery, image-based abuse, impersonation, extortion, blackmail or online exploitation should be treated as safeguarding concerns and reported immediately through safeguarding procedures. Staff will receive regular updates on emerging technology-related safeguarding risks.

15.4 Mobile phone expectations

Rocksteady staff will familiarise themselves with, and adhere to, the host school's mobile phone policy and understand how restrictions on mobile devices contribute to safeguarding and online safety.

15.5 Filtering and monitoring

KCSIE 2026 makes it clear that all staff should be aware of the roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring. Rocksteady Music are not responsible for those systems but need to be aware of the systems that are in place in the schools they are working in and how school devices and networks are monitored. Staff working in schools should familiarise themselves with the schools child safeguarding policy which should document which systems are in place.

The Department has published [Generative AI: product safety expectations](#) to support schools to use generative artificial intelligence safely and explains how filtering and monitoring requirements apply to the use of generative AI in education.

15.6 Training

Appropriate online safety training should be included in the safeguarding and child protection training which should be regularly updated including updates via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings as required, to ensure that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguarding children effectively, particularly in relation to emerging online threats and new online harms arising.

16 When to call the police

All Rocksteady staff follow the advice by NPCC 'When to call the police' which covers incidents on school premises where students have potentially committed a crime. It provides guidance on what schools and colleges should bear in mind when considering contacting the police and aims to support schools and college to make defensible decisions when considering whether to involve the police.

This advice covers the following situations:

- Assault
- Criminal damage

- Cyber crime
- Drugs
- Harassment
- Sexual offences
- Theft
- Weapons

17 Safety and security

All Rocksteady staff will ensure that they are familiar with the host schools health and safety policies and procedures, which include identifying, reporting, and dealing with accidents, hazards, and faulty equipment. They must take all reasonable steps to ensure staff, children and others are not exposed to risks and are aware of the schools' risk assessments process.

18 Record keeping, retention and storage

Staff will record any welfare concerns about a child on the appropriate records of the host school and additionally on Rocksteady's 'Logging a Concern' form. Records must be completed as soon as possible after the incident/event. Staff must be aware that their records might have to be used as evidence in court and must therefore be mindful of the need to distinguish fact from opinion. Staff must not attempt to investigate the situation themselves.

Records should be made in writing and include all concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions. Information will be kept confidential and stored securely. Records will include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern,
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved,
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached, including the rationale for any decision made and the outcome.

Child protection records are stored in private folders on our secure server and only shared on a 'need to know' basis. They will be kept for seven years after they reach the school leaving age.

A record will be made of all incidents where students have expressed racist, homophobic, extremist, or radical views which will be monitored at a senior level. The Headteacher of the school in question will be kept informed of any significant issues by the DSL.

Records of concerns about adults are kept in their personnel file at least until they reach their normal retirement age or for 10 years – whichever is longer. Records are kept for the same amount of time regardless of whether the allegations were unfounded. Records of malicious allegations are destroyed immediately.

19 Training and induction

All staff will undertake an appropriate level of safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction. All staff will undertake as a minimum:

- Online and in person child protection training on induction and every two years,
- annual training on KCSIE and a knowledge check to ensure staff understand their responsibilities,,
- regular safeguarding and child protection refresher training as part of the CPD programme every half-term.

Part 1 and Annex B of KCSIE 2026 should be read and followed by all members of teaching staff and the management team.

All staff, irrespective of role, will read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and confirm this annually.

Rocksteady's Senior Leadership Team with responsibility for safeguarding will receive safeguarding training from a strategic perspective which will be updated regularly, to be disseminated to the rest of the leadership team.

The Director of Education will ensure the DSL and the Deputy DSL attend the required safeguarding training when they first take up the role which will provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role effectively. The training will be updated every two years. In addition to formal training, their knowledge and skills will be updated at least annually, to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

20 Safer recruitment

Rocksteady has a culture of safe recruitment with procedures that help deter, reject, or identify people who might abuse or be a risk to the safety or welfare of children. The Recruitment Team will act reasonably in making decisions about the suitability of prospective employees, supply staff, volunteers and contractors based on checks and evidence including criminal record checks (DBS checks), barred list checks and, in the case of teaching staff, prohibition checks together with references and interview information.

The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring that Rocksteady follows safe recruitment processes outlined within 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education) and maintenance of the Single Central Record; and an application, vetting and recruitment process which places safeguarding at its centre, regardless of employee role.

Recruitment procedures will reflect any changes to the definition of regulated activity introduced through the Crime and Policing Act 2026. Where individuals undertake teaching, training, instruction, care or supervision activities with children, the organisation will assess whether the role falls within regulated activity and will obtain DBS and barred list checks where legally required

We will ensure that we have processes in place for continuous vigilance, maintaining an environment that deters and prevents abuse and challenges inappropriate behaviour so that staff feel comfortable discussing matters both within and outside of the workplace which may have implications for the safeguarding of children.

The Recruitment Team will ensure that at least one person taking part in any candidate interview panel has undertaken safer recruitment training and that the training is updated as necessary.

21 Code of Conduct

Rocksteady have high expectations of professionalism and care from staff and expect them to behave appropriately in schools at all times by:

- Always putting the safety and welfare of the children first and adhering to the individual schools and Rocksteady's safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Always having DBS and photo ID available on request.
- Always using polite and appropriate language, when talking to children, colleagues, or school staff.
- Never using a personal device, such as a mobile phone, in the presence of children.
- Always using appropriate adult/staff toilets within a school.

Use of iPads, mobile phones and cameras

Photographs will only be taken of children with their parents' permission. Only cameras or iPads belonging to Rocksteady Music School will be used to take photographs of children. To protect staff and children, personal mobile phones can only be used by staff when children are not present.

Recording Media

Recording videos of children performing in lessons or in a concert to be published on our website is a positive part of Rocksteady culture, and a great way of showing the children (and parents) how much they have progressed. However, it can be a very sensitive issue, both legally and emotionally, and the following must be adhered to by all employees:

- Consent must be obtained by the child's parents before any filming can take place
- This consent must be recorded digitally in our system.
- All recording must be done on approved Rocksteady equipment provided.
- Media may only be published through approved Rocksteady channels
- Only Rocksteady media taken from a public source eg. the Rocksteady website can be shared by staff
- After staff finished uploading, processing or otherwise using the media, it should be deleted from the device within 24 hours.

21.1 One-to-one lessons/before or after school lessons

Rocksteady teaches band lessons where children will largely be taught in a group. When one-to-one lessons are necessary, staff will take steps to ensure you are seen and heard by others in the school if working alone with a student, ie; by keeping the door open. When teaching one-to-one staff should be aware that students are particularly vulnerable to misinterpretations or inappropriate behaviour. Staff should be even more vigilant to keep professional boundaries, as you would with a whole class.

If teaching a before school or after school band staff should ensure that they have spoken to the school about arrangements for signing children in and out upon parents collecting or dropping off their child.

Staff who are asked to work in inappropriate locations or conditions should raise a concern with the school and Rocksteady Music DSL.

21.2 Boundaries and grooming behaviours

Staff should remember that it is possible for a student, another teacher or parent to misinterpret your actions, however well intended. You should ask yourself are my actions fair, reasonable, warranted, proportionate, measured, safe and applied equally?

Teaching staff should consider the following:

- take steps to prevent any student from accessing any of your personal accounts on social networking sites,
- treat everyone with respect,
- report any unusual gifts you receive and ensure they are not of significant value or intention
- remember that an allegation could be made against you.

DO NOT

- develop extensive communication with a student directly outside of lesson time,
- reveal personal information to the student, exchange mobile numbers, or email addresses,
- intimidate, threaten, coerce, or undermine anyone,

- engage in any sexual activity whether consensual or not with a student under 18 years of age with whom you are working,
- play games or have physical contact that is inappropriate,
- make suggestive remarks or gestures, tell jokes of a sexual nature, or engage in inappropriate verbal banter,
- give gifts to students only as part of an agreed reward system,
- use your position to gain access to information for your own advantage or another's detriment.

Occasionally staff may encounter students who display attention seeking behaviour or claim to be attracted to them. In such circumstances staff should:

- deal with those situations sensitively and appropriately,
- ensure that their behaviour is not misinterpreted,
- inform the DSL at school and Rocksteady music of the behaviour.

21.3 Position of trust

All adults who work with children and young people at Rocksteady Music hold a position of trust. All staff should ensure that:

- all relationships are conducted appropriately to the age, gender and understanding of the children and young people involved, personal conduct and use of language does not invite any speculation as to the appropriateness of any relationship with a child or young person.

22 Managing allegations

Rocksteady recognises that it is possible for teachers and other staff to behave in a way that might cause harm to children and takes any allegation made seriously. If a member of Rocksteady staff is made aware of an allegation or concern about inappropriate treatment of children by a member of staff at a host school (including support staff, volunteers, and contractors), they should report this to the Headteacher, or Deputy in the Headteacher's absence, at the host school. The allegation should also be logged as a concern to Rocksteady Music DSL.

22.1 Harm Threshold

The harm threshold refers to the level of behaviour where allegations or concerns that might indicate a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in their present position, or in any capacity with children in school or college. Such allegations or concerns must be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Behaviour in the harm test is described as:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

This includes behaviour that might have occurred outside of the school or college, known as "transferable risk which could still make the individual unsuitable to work with children.

If there is any doubt as to whether the allegation has reached the threshold test, guidance should be sought by the DSL from the LADO.

22.2 Low-level Concerns

Low-level concerns refer to any behaviour by an adult that is inconsistent with Rocksteady code of conduct but does not meet the threshold of harm to warrant referral to a LADO. Low-level concerns are part of a broad spectrum of behaviour and include inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour, or that might be considered inappropriate depending on the circumstances.

Examples of such behaviour include, but not limited to:

- being over friendly with children,
- having favourites,
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy,
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or
- humiliating pupils.

In many cases a low-level concern will simply require a conversation with the member of staff about the concern. The conversation should include being clear about why the behaviour is concerning, problematic or inappropriate, an explanation of the change in behaviour that is required, and being clear about the consequences if they fail to reach the required standard or repeat the behaviour in question.

Where a low-level concern relates to a teacher or other staff at a school where Rocksteady are engaged, that concern should be reported to the DSL at that school, and Rocksteady DSL.

22.3 Allegation against Rocksteady Music staff

If a high-level concern allegation is made against a member Rocksteady staff, by a host school, parent or other party, the allegation will be recorded on a Logging a Concern form and an internal investigation will commence. Additionally:

- the allegation will be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- the LADO will advise if other agencies (e.g., police) should be informed
- any telephone reports to the LADO will be followed up in writing within 48 hours
- following advice from the LADO, it may be necessary to suspend and/or remove the member of staff from the host school pending the result of a full investigation of the allegation
- the DSL at the host school will be informed that an allegation has been made
- Rocksteady will work with the LADO and the host school to ensure all parties are confident with how the investigation has been handled

22.4 Referral to DBS

The role of the DBS is to help prevent unsuitable people from working with children and vulnerable adults. Rocksteady Music has a legal duty to make a referral to the DBS where they remove an individual from a regulated activity (or would have removed an individual had they not left) and they believe the individual has:

- engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and/or adults,
- satisfied the harm test in relation to children and/or vulnerable adults, or
- has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence.

Referrals will be made as soon as possible when an individual is removed from regulated activity. How to refer to the DBS. [DBS barring referral form - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/forms/dbb-form)

The legal duty to refer applies equally in circumstances where an individual is redeployed to another area of work that is not regulated activity, they are suspended, dismissed or when they have resigned.

23 Whistleblowing

Members of staff have an individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior leadership and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

The NSPCC runs a whistleblowing helpline which members of staff can if they do not feel able to raise concerns regarding failures internally. Staff can call: **0800 028 0285** (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Follow Rocksteady's Whistleblowing Policy found within the staff handbook for full details of the guidance and procedures.

24 Information sharing

Safeguarding and child protection information is confidential and personal. Other than the agreed communication lines in school, it is for the DSL to decide what information needs to be shared, with whom, how and when, and whether consent needs to be gained for this process. If in any doubt, the DSL can seek advice from the local authority.

Further guidance is available in DfE document Data protection: a toolkit for schools (Annex 10.1), [Data protection: a toolkit for schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672222/Data-protection-a-toolkit-for-schools.pdf) the DfE document 'Information Sharing – Guidance for Safeguarding Practitioners' and the 'Flowchart of When and How to Share Information'. [Information sharing: advice for practitioners \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672222/Information-sharing-advice-for-practitioners.pdf)

Staff should not assume a colleague, or another professional will act and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Neither the Data Protection Act 2018 nor UK GDPR prevent, or limit, the sharing, or withholding, of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Information which is sensitive and personal will be treated as 'special category personal data'. Legal and secure information sharing between schools, Children's Social Care and other agencies is essential. Information can be shared without consent where there is good reason to do so, and that the sharing of information will enhance the safeguarding of a child, but it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk. When parents do not give permission to share information staff must consider if a child is at risk of harm, before a decision to not share information is made; when there is disparity between parent's views and those of their children, professionals must maintain focus on the child. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of protecting the safety of children. As with all data sharing, appropriate organisational and technical safeguards will be in place.

Under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR, schools are permitted to withhold students' personal data where, for example, a child is in a refuge or other form of emergency accommodation and to provide the information would place a child at risk.

All staff are made aware that they cannot keep secrets and absolute confidentiality with children, and that if a child discloses abuse or gives information that suggests they may be at risk, this **MUST** be passed on to the DSL as soon as possible. The child should be told who their disclosure will be shared with and what will happen next.

25 Related policies

Safeguarding is fundamental to the welfare of all children in our care. This policy is therefore one of a series in Rocksteady Music's integrated safeguarding portfolio and should be read in conjunction with the policies, guidance documents or procedures as listed below. Relevant documents are available on our website and on request:

- Safer Recruitment Policy and procedures
- Health and Safety Policy and procedures
- Privacy Policy and procedures
- Energy Management Policy and procedures

Code of Conduct for Rocksteady Staff (within Rocksteady Staff Handbook)

26 Contacts

Band Leader Hotline @ Rocksteady HQ: 0330 113 1987

Email: safeguarding@rocksteadymusicschool.com

Local Authorities

These contact numbers will vary depending on region but here are some of the local bodies/authorities working together to safeguard children.

Social Care or Social Care out of hours contact

LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)

LSCP (Local Safeguarding Children Partnership)

Local Authority Prevent Co-Ordinator

National

Police: 101 (non-emergency) or 999 (emergency)

Anti-terrorist hotline: 0800 789 321

NSPCC: 0808 800 500

Ofsted: 0300 123 1231

[Report child abuse to a local council - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Policy reviewed annually by Head of Curriculum and Teaching Standards (DSL) Richard Bushby in consultation with Safeguarding professionals at the NSPCC.

Next review date: September 2026

Richard Bushby

Head of Curriculum and Teaching Standards.

Date: 1st September 2026