

GUITAR ACADEMY

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Including health and safety, low-level concerns, complaints and whistleblowing

Policy owner	Vincent Hearn, partner, Guitar Academy
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Vincent Hearn · 07385 921 406 · dsl@guitaracademyuk.com
Version	2.1
Date adopted	25 August 2026
Date of last review	25 August 2026
Date of next review	Annually, and immediately after any safeguarding incident, allegation or near miss
Applies to	The owner, all self-employed teachers and their approved substitutes, and any contractor or volunteer engaged by Guitar Academy who has contact with children or vulnerable adults
Read alongside	The Code of Conduct at Schedule 2 of each teacher's contract, and the Department for Education guidance "After-school clubs, community activities, and tuition: safeguarding guidance for providers"

Every teacher must be given a copy before their first lesson and must sign the declaration at Appendix D. A copy is given to every parent or guardian at enrolment.

1. Policy statement

1.1 Guitar Academy provides guitar and music tuition to students of all ages, including children and young people under 18. We may also teach adults who are vulnerable by reason of disability, illness or circumstance.

1.2 **The welfare of the child is paramount.** Every child, whatever their age, ability, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation or background, has an equal right to protection from all forms of harm or abuse.

1.3 Under no circumstances will any teacher, contractor or volunteer inflict physical or psychological harm on a child.

1.4 We are committed to creating an environment in which children feel safe, are listened to,

and know that any concern they raise will be taken seriously and acted upon.

1.5 Everyone who works for or with Guitar Academy has a responsibility for safeguarding. **Safeguarding is everyone's job, and it takes priority over the lesson, the schedule and the fee.**

1.6 We recognise that we are a small organisation and that our teachers frequently work alone with children, sometimes in hired rooms away from our own studio and sometimes online. This makes clear procedures, open practice and prompt reporting more important, not less.

2. Scope and legal framework

2.1 This policy applies to the owner, all self-employed teachers and their approved substitutes, and any contractor or volunteer engaged by Guitar Academy.

2.2 Teaching children one-to-one is **regulated activity** under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 where the frequency conditions are met — broadly, unsupervised teaching of a child more than three times in any 30-day period, or once a week or more. Most of our tuition meets that threshold. Guitar Academy is therefore a regulated activity provider, with the duties that follow, including the duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service set out in section 9.

2.3 This policy has regard to:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government)
- After-school clubs, community activities, and tuition: safeguarding guidance for providers (Department for Education, non-statutory)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education — which applies to schools and colleges rather than to us, but which we draw on as good practice
- The Crime and Policing Act 2026, which introduces a statutory duty to report child sexual abuse (section 8)
- Equality Act 2010, Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Occupiers' Liability Act 1957
- UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018

2.4 Where we deliver tuition in a hired room, hall or other third-party premises, we also comply with the safeguarding, fire and site policies of that venue. Where those differ from this policy, the stricter standard applies. We complete our own activity-specific risk assessment for every venue we use (Appendix C) — the venue's own assessment does not replace ours.

2.5 We teach at our studio at Unit 4A Penns Road, Petersfield, Hampshire GU32 2EW, at our remote site at 104 The Hornet, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 7JR, at other hired rooms and halls, and online. Each venue has its own risk assessment under section 13.2.

2.6 We do not provide full-time education, and we do not operate as a school. We do not provide childcare requiring registration with Ofsted. If either changes, we will take advice before proceeding.

3. Key people and contacts

3.1 **These are the current contact details.** They are kept displayed in the studio where teachers can see them, and are reviewed whenever they change.

	Name: Vincent Hearn · Mobile: 07385 921 406 · Email: dsl@guitaracademyuk.com
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	
Named contact for parents and guardians	As above — parents may raise any safeguarding concern directly with the DSL, or with the contacts below.
If the DSL cannot be reached, or the concern is about the DSL or the owner	Go straight to the LADO, children's social care or the police, using the contacts below. You do not need permission. You must not wait.
Local authority designated officer (LADO) Allegations about an adult who works with children	Hampshire — search "LADO" at hants.gov.uk and use the "allegations against people in a position of trust" referral form. (Hampshire no longer operates a LADO telephone line.) West Sussex , for students taught at Chichester — LADO@westsussex.gov.uk, advice line 0330 222 6450 (9am–5pm), referral form at westsussexscp.org.uk.
Children's social care Concerns about a child	Hampshire Children's Services 0300 555 1384 (Mon–Thu 8.30am–5pm, Fri 8.30am–4.30pm) · childrens.services@hants.gov.uk · professionals 01329 225379 / csprofessional@hants.gov.uk · out of hours 0300 555 1373. Professionals complete the Inter-Agency Referral Form (IARF). West Sussex Integrated Front Door 01403 229900 (Mon–Fri 9am–5pm) · out of hours 033 022 26664 · WSChildrenservices@westsussex.gov.uk. Note: a referral about a child goes to

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Name: Vincent Hearn · Mobile: 07385 921 406 · Email: dsl@guitaracademyuk.com
	the authority where the child lives — Petersfield students will usually be Hampshire, Chichester students West Sussex.
Police	999 in an emergency; 101 otherwise
NSPCC Helpline Also our consultation route when unsure	0808 800 5000 — help@nspcc.org.uk
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line	0800 028 0285
Childline (for children)	0800 1111 — childline.org.uk
Local safeguarding partnership	Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership — hampshirescp.org.uk
Prevent (extremism concerns)	Hampshire has no single named Prevent lead contact. Concerns about a child: 0300 555 1384. Professionals refer using the Prevent national referral form on the Hampshire County Council Prevent page. ACT Early support line: 0800 011 3764.

3.2 Guitar Academy is a small business, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead is also the owner. **We do not have a second internal safeguarding contact.** This is a deliberate and openly stated position, and it carries one consequence which every teacher must understand: you have **standing authority to go directly and immediately to the LADO, children's social care or the police** — if the DSL cannot be reached, if the concern is about the DSL or the owner, or if you simply believe an external referral is the right course. You do not need permission, you do not need to explain yourself internally first, and you will face no consequence of any kind for going direct. **Never delay a report because you cannot reach someone.**

3.3 Because we have no deputy, the DSL uses the NSPCC Helpline and Hampshire children's social care as a consultation route before deciding whether to refer. Discussing a concern with children's social care before making a formal referral is normal practice and is encouraged.

4. Recognising harm

4.1 The four recognised categories of abuse are **physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect**. Abuse can happen in person or online, can be carried out by adults or by other children, and rarely presents as a single obvious sign. It includes child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation. Children who see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse are themselves victims of it.

Possible indicators

- Unexplained injuries, or injuries which do not match the explanation given
- A marked change in behaviour, mood, engagement or attendance

- Becoming withdrawn, anxious, clingy, aggressive or unusually compliant
- Sexual knowledge or behaviour that is not age-appropriate
- Appearing hungry, unwashed, inadequately dressed for the weather, or persistently tired
- Reluctance to go home, or fear of a particular adult
- Talking about things that are worrying, either directly or in passing
- Self-harm, disordered eating, or talk of suicide
- Signs of exploitation: unexplained money, gifts or phones, older “friends”, going missing

Child-on-child abuse

4.2 Abuse between children is a safeguarding issue and is never dismissed as banter, horseplay or "just kids". It includes bullying and cyberbullying; physical abuse; abuse within intimate relationships between children; sharing of nude or semi-nude images; sexual harassment, violence or activity without consent; upskirting; and initiation or hazing rituals. It is reported in exactly the same way as any other concern, **including where the incident happened outside Guitar Academy.**

Mental health and wellbeing

4.3 Signs may include withdrawal from friends and family, persistent low mood, tearfulness or irritability, sudden outbursts of anger, loss of interest in things once enjoyed, and problems eating or sleeping. Mental health difficulties can also make a child more vulnerable to exploitation, grooming and radicalisation, and can themselves be indicators of abuse. We are not qualified to diagnose; where we are worried, we raise it with the parent or guardian and, where there is any suggestion of harm or risk of harm, report it as a safeguarding concern.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities

4.4 Disabled children and children with SEND face additional barriers. Signs of possible abuse — behaviour, mood or injury — may be wrongly assumed to relate to the child’s disability without further exploration. Communication barriers may make it harder for a child to report. These children may be more prone to peer isolation and disproportionately affected by bullying without showing outward signs. **Never attribute a possible indicator to a child’s disability without exploring it.**

4.5 Under the Equality Act 2010 we must not discriminate on grounds of disability, including in admission, and must make reasonable adjustments so that a disabled child is not disadvantaged. We discuss any additional needs with parents at enrolment and record what we have agreed.

Extremism and radicalisation

4.6 Teachers should be alert to children being drawn towards extremist material or views, including online, and to the risk of any adult connected with Guitar Academy holding or

promoting extremist views. Concerns are reported to the DSL, who will contact the local authority Prevent lead.

Online risks

4.7 Online risks fall into four areas: **content** (illegal, inappropriate or harmful material), **contact** (harmful interaction, including adults posing as children), **conduct** (the child's own behaviour, including making or sharing explicit images and online bullying) and **commercialisation** (exploitation for financial gain). Online and offline abuse frequently occur together.

4.8 You are **not expected to decide whether abuse has occurred**. You are expected to notice, record and pass on. A concern that turns out to be nothing is a good outcome, not a wasted report. Never wait for a child to tell you directly before acting, and never let concern about cultural sensitivity or about being wrong stand in the way of reporting.

5. If a child tells you something

5.1 A disclosure is often partial, indirect and made at an awkward moment — at the end of a lesson, while tuning, or in an online chat. Take it seriously however it comes.

Do

- **Listen.** Stay calm. Give the child your full attention and let them speak without interruption.
- **Reassure them** that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- **Use open prompts only** — “Can you tell me more about that?”, “What happened next?”
- **Explain what happens next**, if the child is old enough to understand.
- **Record it** in the child's own words as soon as possible afterwards, using Appendix A.
- **Report it to the DSL the same day**, or externally under section 3.2.

Do not

- Do not promise to keep it a secret. You cannot, and you must not.
- Do not ask leading questions, or ask the child to repeat the account for someone else.
- Do not investigate, confront the alleged abuser, or contact the parents to check — this can jeopardise a police or social care investigation and the prosecution of an offender.
- Do not express shock, disgust or judgement, about the child or about anyone they name.

- Do not delay because you are unsure, because it is the end of the day, or because you might be wrong.

5.2 If a child is in **immediate danger**, call 999 first, then tell the DSL.

6. How to report a concern

6.1 **Step 1 — Same day.** Tell the DSL by phone, and follow up in writing using Appendix A. Do not rely on a text or a message left unanswered. If you cannot reach the DSL within about two hours, go straight to children's social care or the LADO under section 3.2.

6.2 **Step 2 — Record.** Write down what you saw or were told, in the child's own words where possible, with the date, time, location, who was present, and anything you said. Stick to fact; mark opinion clearly as opinion. Sign and date it.

6.3 **Step 3 — The DSL decides and acts.** The DSL will consider the information, seek advice from children's social care or the NSPCC Helpline where the position is not clear, and make a referral where the threshold is met, following the local authority's referral process. Where a child is suffering or likely to suffer immediate harm, the referral is made at once and the police are contacted.

6.4 **Step 4 — Feedback.** The DSL will confirm to the reporter that the concern has been received and acted on. You may not be told the detail of what follows; that does not mean nothing has happened.

6.5 **Step 5 — If you are not satisfied.** If you believe a concern has not been acted on properly, you must make your own referral to children's social care or the LADO. Loyalty to Guitar Academy is never a reason to leave a child at risk, and section 17 protects you for doing so.

7. Recording and record keeping

7.1 All safeguarding records are kept securely by the DSL, separately from ordinary student records, with access restricted to the DSL. Paper records are kept in a locked place; electronic records are encrypted and password protected.

7.2 Records are factual, contemporaneous, signed and dated. The DSL records every concern, what was done about it, and the reasons for each decision — including a decision not to refer.

7.3 Records are kept only as long as necessary. Safeguarding records are retained substantially longer than routine records; where a matter has been referred, the DSL takes advice on retention before destroying anything.

7.4 Safeguarding information is shared on a need-to-know basis. **Data protection is never a reason to withhold information where a child may be at risk**, and it does not prevent us asking questions about a person's suitability to work with children.

8. The duty to report child sexual abuse

8.1 The Crime and Policing Act 2026 introduces a statutory duty on people in regulated activity with children in England to report child sexual abuse to the police or the local authority where they are told about it by a child or a perpetrator, or witness it themselves. It also creates an offence of attempting to deter someone from making such a report.

8.2 At the date of this policy the duty has received Royal Assent but is **awaiting commencement**, with regulations and guidance still to be published. We will update this policy when it comes into force.

8.3 In the meantime, and regardless of the commencement date, **our own requirement is the same**: anyone teaching for Guitar Academy who is told about, or witnesses, child sexual abuse must report it — to the DSL, and where the DSL is not immediately available or the matter is urgent, directly to the police or children's social care. No one at Guitar Academy may discourage, delay or filter such a report.

9. Allegations against a teacher, the owner or any adult

9.1 This section applies where it is alleged that any adult working for Guitar Academy has: harmed a child or may have harmed a child; possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm; or behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children — including outside of work.

9.2 **The allegation must be reported to the DSL immediately. The DSL will report it to both the local authority designated officer and the police as soon as reasonably practicable**, and will contact children's social care where the child may need protection. The DSL will not investigate the allegation, and will not interview the child.

9.3 The person against whom the allegation is made must **not** be told until the DSL has spoken to the LADO, the police or children's social care, as doing so may prejudice an investigation.

9.4 The DSL will keep written records of the allegation and of everything that follows, will contact the parents of the child to explain how the matter will be managed unless doing so would place the child at risk or prejudice an investigation, and will explain to everyone involved that confidentiality matters while the matter is being looked into.

9.5 The teacher will normally be **suspended from teaching** while the matter is considered, under the suspension clause of their contract. Suspension is a neutral, precautionary act and is not a finding of wrongdoing. No fees are payable for lessons not delivered during suspension.

9.6 Where an allegation concerns the owner, the report is made directly to the LADO and the police by whoever holds the concern.

9.7 **Duty to refer to the DBS.** Where Guitar Academy withdraws permission for a teacher to engage in regulated activity because their action or inaction has harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm, because they meet the harm test, or because they have been cautioned or convicted of a relevant offence, we have a **legal duty to refer that person to the Disclosure and Barring Service**. The duty applies even if the person has resigned, retired or left, and even

if a referral has also been made to children's social care or the police. **Failure to make the referral is a criminal offence.**

9.8 Records of allegations, including those found to be unsubstantiated, malicious or unfounded, are retained by the DSL in accordance with national guidance.

10. Low-level concerns

10.1 A **low-level concern** is any concern that an adult working for Guitar Academy has behaved in a way that is inconsistent with the Code of Conduct, but which does not meet the threshold for referral to the LADO. "Low-level" does not mean insignificant.

10.2 Examples: staying alone with a student well beyond the lesson time; an ill-judged joke or remark; giving a student a lift in an emergency; responding to a student's message from a personal account; being over-familiar; singling a student out for special attention.

10.3 **Everyone must report low-level concerns — about themselves as well as about others — to the DSL.** Self-reporting is expected and is not held against you. It is far better that an incident capable of being misunderstood is on record, in your own words, on the day it happened.

10.4 Low-level concerns are recorded on the form at Appendix B and held by the DSL. They are not disciplinary in themselves. The DSL reviews them periodically to identify patterns; a series of low-level concerns about the same person may together meet the LADO threshold, and if it does, the DSL will consult the LADO.

10.5 Where the DSL is in any doubt whether something is a low-level concern or a matter for the LADO, the DSL consults the LADO.

11. Safer recruitment

11.1 No one teaches for Guitar Academy until every item on the Academy's Pre-Engagement Checklist is complete. We do not rely on any single check, and we do not rely on a personal recommendation.

- an **enhanced DBS certificate including a check of the children's barred list**, with the original seen and recorded, and either a DBS Update Service subscription or renewal at least every three years. Since 21 January 2026 self-employed teachers can obtain this in their own name through a registered DBS umbrella body — not direct to the DBS. Alternatively we can submit the application on their behalf and make the suitability decision ourselves;
- verification of identity, proof of address, and the right to work in the UK;
- **two references, requested directly from the referee** and preferably from a senior person with authority. We do not accept open "to whom it may concern" testimonials, references from friends or family, or information supplied by the candidate without verification. We check employment history for consistency and

completeness, ask why previous roles ended, and follow up any concern by conversation before confirming the engagement;

- a check of the teacher prohibition list held by the Teaching Regulation Agency, and a section 128 check where relevant;
- an overseas criminal record check where the person has lived or worked abroad, since a DBS check covers UK records only;
- verification of qualifications;
- a signed contract and a signed Code of Conduct declaration (Schedule 2 of the agreement);
- evidence of current safeguarding training and first aid training; and
- evidence of public liability and professional indemnity insurance.

11.2 An unexplained gap in employment history, reluctance to give a reference from a role involving children, or a vague answer about why a role ended, are explored directly before engagement.

11.3 A DBS certificate is a snapshot at a point in time. We do not rely on one indefinitely, and we review suitability annually — confirming that DBS status, insurance, first aid and safeguarding training remain current. This annual check is a compliance review only and does not extend to appraisal or supervision of a self-employed teacher's teaching.

11.4 It is a criminal offence for a regulated activity provider knowingly to engage someone in regulated activity who is barred from working with children.

11.5 All teachers are under a continuing obligation to tell us immediately of any arrest, charge, caution, conviction, investigation, allegation or DBS change, whether or not connected with their work.

12. Safe practice in teaching

One-to-one teaching

- Teach with the door open, or in a room with a clear glazed panel or window giving an unobstructed view.
- Make sure another adult knows the lesson is happening, where, and with whom.
- Never teach a child in a locked, concealed or unobserved space.
- **Written parental consent to one-to-one tuition is obtained at enrolment for every student under 18** and must be on file before the first lesson. Where a student is 16 or 17 we still consider whether parental consent is appropriate, and we take the young person's own view into account.

- Parents and guardians are always welcome to be present, or to wait nearby. We tell them so at enrolment and never discourage it.
- If you find yourself alone with a child unexpectedly, move to where others can see you and tell the DSL afterwards so it is on record.

Physical contact

- Avoid physical contact unless genuinely necessary for posture, hand position or technique, or for first aid.
- Where necessary: explain what you are going to do and why, ask first, keep it brief and minimal, stay in open view, and stop immediately if the child seems uncomfortable.
- Offer demonstration or verbal instruction as the first alternative — with guitar, it almost always works.

Relationships — absolute prohibition

12.1 No teacher, contractor or volunteer may enter into, pursue, invite or encourage any sexual, romantic or intimate relationship or conduct with a student under 18, or with a student who has turned 18 within the previous 12 months and is still in tuition with us.

12.2 This is an **absolute rule of this organisation**. It applies regardless of the age of consent, and regardless of whether the student appeared to initiate or consent. Teachers should understand that the statutory "position of trust" offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 were extended to those who coach, teach or instruct in **a sport or a religion** — they do **not** cover music tuition. The criminal law therefore does not do this work for us, so we impose the rule ourselves, and we enforce it by immediate termination and referral to the LADO, the police and the DBS.

12.3 Any teacher towards whom a student, parent or guardian behaves in a way that is or could be construed as romantic or sexual must tell the DSL immediately and must not respond to or continue that contact.

Communication and contact outside lessons

- All communication about a student under 18 goes through the parent or guardian, using Guitar Academy systems.
- No personal phone numbers, personal email, social media connections or messaging apps between teachers and students under 18.
- No meeting socially, no lifts in vehicles, no gifts beyond a token given openly.

Online lessons

- Use only the approved platform and, where provided, the Guitar Academy account.

- Joining details are issued through Guitar Academy to the parent or guardian, never directly to the child.
- A parent or guardian must be at home and aware that the lesson is taking place, and must have consented to online delivery in writing.
- Teach from an appropriate room, appropriately dressed, with an appropriate background; avoid bedrooms where any alternative exists.
- No recording, screenshotting or photography without written consent from the parent or guardian and Guitar Academy.
- End the session properly and confirm the meeting has closed.

Photography and images

- No image or recording of a student is made, used or published without written parental consent, which is specific about how the image will be used, where, and for how long it will be kept. Consent is reviewed annually and can be withdrawn at any time.
- At concerts or events, we tell families in advance what our position is on personal photography and filming, and we ask that images of other people's children are not shared publicly.
- Teachers do not post about students, lessons or Guitar Academy on personal social media.

Visitors

- People who are not part of Guitar Academy should not be present while children are there. Any visitor signs in and out, is asked for identification, and is never left alone with a child.
- Visiting parents and carers are not exempt from this policy — **a child is never left unsupervised with another child's parent or carer.**

Behaviour

- Physical punishment, humiliation, sarcasm directed at a student, shouting and intimidation are never acceptable.
- Teachers must not attend a lesson under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Teachers report their own mistakes and anything capable of being misinterpreted, promptly, under section 10.

13. Health, safety and emergencies

13.1 We have a legal duty of care to take reasonable steps to ensure that children are safe where we teach them. Because we have fewer than five staff we are not required to write down

a full health and safety policy, but we must have assessed the risks, know what to do in an emergency, and be able to explain to a parent what steps we have taken.

13.2 Risk assessment. A venue risk assessment (Appendix C) is completed for the studio and for every hired room or hall before it is first used, reviewed at least annually, and repeated whenever the room, layout or arrangements change. Where a venue supplies its own fire risk assessment and insurance statement, that does **not** replace our own activity-specific assessment.

13.3 Fire and evacuation. Every teacher must know, at every venue: the fire exits, the evacuation route, the assembly point, how to raise the alarm, and where the first aid kit is. They must be able to account for every student present. At a hired venue this information is obtained from the venue before the first lesson.

13.4 First aid. Teachers hold current first aid training appropriate to the ages they teach, and paediatric first aid certification where any student aged five or under is taught. A first aid kit is available at each venue and its location is known. Teachers do not administer medication. In a medical emergency: call the emergency services, then the parent or guardian, then the DSL, and record it in writing the same day.

13.5 Registers and contact details. A register is taken at the start of every session. We hold **at least two emergency contact numbers** for every student under 18, together with the parent's full name, home address, the school the child attends, and any medical condition, allergy or additional need. We ask parents to confirm these details annually.

13.6 Illness. Children with symptoms of an infectious disease should stay away. Children with mild respiratory symptoms who are otherwise well may attend. Where a child has a confirmed or suspected infectious disease and a parent insists on attendance, we may refuse the lesson in order to protect others.

If a child goes missing

- Tell the DSL immediately. Search inside and outside the building.
- If there is no sign of the child, contact the parent or guardian to establish whether they have gone home.
- If the child is still missing, discuss with the parent whether to contact the police. **The parent is responsible for contacting the police; we may do so on their behalf with their agreement.** If the parent does not want the police contacted and we consider that unreasonable and the child at significant risk, we contact them anyway.
- **If the missing child is five or under, contact the police immediately.**
- Keep searching while waiting for the police, and never leave other children unattended in order to search.

If a child is not collected

- Stay with the child in a visible, public area. Contact the parent or guardian and the DSL.
- Never take the child anywhere, including home.
- If no contact can be made after a reasonable period, contact children's social care or the police.

14. Practical situations

14.1 **A parent arrives appearing intoxicated or unfit to take the child.** Do not release the child if you believe they would be at risk. Delay, offer to contact another adult on the child's record, and contact the DSL. If the situation escalates or the child leaves at risk, call the police.

14.2 **A child discloses about another child.** Treat it as a safeguarding concern in the ordinary way, including where the incident happened outside Guitar Academy.

14.3 **A student turns 18 during tuition.** The relationship prohibition in section 12 continues for a further 12 months. Communication may move to the student directly, with their agreement.

14.4 **A concert or public performance.** If a performance is one we charge for, is held somewhere licensed to sell alcohol, or is broadcast, a child performance licence may be required for each child under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, applied for at least 21 days in advance, with an approved chaperone. The DSL checks with the local authority before any such event is arranged.

15. Training

15.1 **The DSL** completes, before taking up the role, the Department for Education's free safeguarding e-learning for out-of-school settings together with an introductory safeguarding and child protection course from a recognised provider, refreshed at least every two years, and keeps up to date with changes in legislation and local procedures in between.

15.2 There is **no statutory requirement** for a formal designated lead qualification in a setting of this kind. Out-of-school settings are not regulated under education or childcare law, and the relevant Department for Education guidance is non-statutory. We have taken a proportionate decision not to require lead-level training at present. We will review that decision if we begin working under contract to venues or organisations that require it, if the number of teachers grows, or immediately following any safeguarding incident or allegation.

15.3 **All teachers** hold current safeguarding and child protection training covering online safety, at introductory level as a minimum, refreshed at least every three years and evidenced by certificate. Teachers hold and maintain this training as part of their own professional practice.

15.4 **All teachers** read this policy and the Code of Conduct before their first lesson and sign the declaration at Appendix D, and re-sign at each annual review.

15.5 The DSL keeps a **training register** recording, for each teacher, the courses completed, the dates, and the refresh dates, and keeps copies of certificates.

16. Confidentiality and information sharing

16.1 Safeguarding information is shared only with those who need it in order to protect the child.

16.2 Teachers must not discuss a safeguarding concern with other teachers, with parents, with other students, or with anyone outside the process.

16.3 We will normally inform parents of a concern and seek their consent to a referral, unless doing so would place the child at increased risk, prejudice an investigation, or where the concern relates to the parents themselves. The DSL takes advice where unsure.

16.4 Consent is not required to share information where a child is at risk of significant harm. Information about a child is not given to any other party without the child's consent, or the parent's consent where the child is under 13, except for the legitimate sharing of safeguarding information.

17. Complaints, whistleblowing and no detriment

17.1 **Complaints.** Any student, parent or guardian who is unhappy about a lesson, a teacher, or how a concern has been handled may complain to the DSL, in person or in writing. We acknowledge complaints within five working days and respond within twenty. A complainant may go directly to the LADO, children's social care or the police at any time, and does not need to complain to us first. Our complaints procedure is given to parents at enrolment.

17.2 **Whistleblowing.** Anyone working for Guitar Academy who is worried about how the organisation is being run, about the conduct of another adult, about the treatment of a child, or about unsafe practice, should raise it — with the DSL, or externally with the LADO, children's social care, the police, or the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285.

17.3 **No detriment.** We will not terminate anyone's engagement, withhold or reduce their work, or subject them to any other detriment because they have raised such a concern in good faith, whether internally or externally, and whether or not it turns out to be well founded. No one is required to raise a concern internally first.

17.4 We give this undertaking **as a contractual promise, in each teacher's contract**. We do so deliberately: statutory whistleblowing protection may not extend to a self-employed contractor, and we do not want anyone weighing that question while deciding whether to speak up.

18. Review

18.1 This policy is reviewed **annually**, and immediately after any safeguarding incident, allegation, complaint or near miss, and whenever relevant legislation or guidance changes.

18.2 Every teacher is issued with the current version and signs Appendix D to confirm receipt. Every parent or guardian is given a copy at enrolment and told where to find the current version.

APPENDIX A — SAFEGUARDING CONCERN RECORD

Complete as soon as possible after the event. Use the child's own words. Stick to fact; label opinion as opinion. Give to the DSL the same day and keep no copy.

Your name

Date and time of this record

Child's name and age

Date, time and place of the incident or disclosure

Who else was present

What was said or seen (the child's own words where possible)

What you said or did in response

Any visible injury or physical sign (describe only — do not photograph)

Action taken and who was informed

Your signature

Received by DSL — name, date, time

DSL decision, action and reasons (including a decision not to refer)

APPENDIX B — LOW-LEVEL CONCERN RECORD

For conduct inconsistent with the Code of Conduct that does not meet the threshold for referral to the LADO. Use this to report yourself as well as others. Reporting is expected; it is not disciplinary.

Reported by

Date and time of this record

Person the concern relates to

Is this a self-report? Yes / No

Date, time and place

What happened

Was any child affected, and how

What has been done since

Signature

DSL received — date

DSL view: low-level, or refer to LADO?

Reported by

Pattern check — any previous records for this person?

Action and date reviewed

APPENDIX C — VENUE RISK ASSESSMENT

Complete for the studio and for every hired room or hall before first use. Review annually and whenever anything changes. This is our own activity-specific assessment — it is required even where the venue supplies its own.

Venue name and address

Assessed by

Date

Review due

Hazard	Who is at risk	Control measures in place	Further action needed
Room cannot be observed from outside	Students	Use a room with a glazed panel or teach with the door open; refuse isolated or lockable rooms	
Fire — evacuation	All	Exits, route, assembly point and alarm identified before first lesson; register taken each session	
Injury — no first aid available	All	First aid kit location confirmed; teacher holds current first aid training	
Trailing cables, amps, leads	All	Cables taped or routed away from walkways; equipment checked before each session	
Heavy or unstable equipment	Students	Amps and stands positioned safely;	

Hazard	Who is at risk	Control measures in place	Further action needed
Slips, trips, poor lighting	All	students not to move equipment Floor and lighting checked on arrival; hazards reported to the venue and the DSL	
Unsupervised access by others	Students	Room kept in sight of others; visitors signed in; no lone adults with students	
Child leaves or is not collected	Students	Collection arrangements confirmed with parents; procedure at section 13 followed	
Medical condition or allergy	Individual students	Conditions recorded at enrolment and known to the teacher before the first lesson	

APPENDIX D — TEACHER DECLARATION

To be signed by every teacher, substitute, contractor and volunteer before their first lesson, and again at each annual review.

I confirm that:

- I have read and understood this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy in full, and the Code of Conduct at Schedule 2 of my contract.
- I know who the Designated Safeguarding Lead is and how to contact them.
- I understand that there is no second internal safeguarding contact, and that I may go directly to children's social care, the LADO or the police at any time — without permission and without raising it internally first — including if the concern is about the DSL or the owner, or if I believe a concern has not been properly acted upon.

- I understand that I must report any safeguarding concern the same day, that I must not investigate it myself, and that I must never promise a child confidentiality.
- I understand my duty to report **low-level concerns**, including about my own conduct, and that self-reporting will not be held against me.
- I understand that any sexual, romantic or intimate conduct with a student under 18 — or with a student who turned 18 within the last 12 months and is still in tuition — is absolutely prohibited, regardless of the age of consent and regardless of whether the student appeared to consent.
- I will not teach a student under 18 one-to-one unless written parental consent to one-to-one tuition is on file.
- I will complete a venue risk assessment before teaching at any venue for the first time.
- I hold current safeguarding training, current first aid training, and a current enhanced DBS certificate including a children's barred list check, and I will tell Guitar Academy immediately if any of these changes.
- I will disclose immediately any arrest, charge, caution, conviction, investigation or allegation concerning my conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult, whether or not connected with my work.

Name

Signature

Date

Policy version read

**Safeguarding training — course
and date**

First aid — course and expiry

Training refresh due

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