

SOUND POP

ACADEMY

Child Protection Policy

This policy was created, endorsed OR last edited by Sound Pop Academy on

09/12/2021

Designated **Safeguarding Lead** and Child Protection Officer:

Mike Evans

Designated **Mental Health & Wellbeing Lead** & Deputy Safeguarding Lead:

Dan Cooper

Once you have read this Child Protection Policy, and should you have no questions, please tick the checklist box on your CharlieHR account to show that you have read, understood and agree to it.

This policy will be reviewed and updated (as appropriate) in line with current legislation and best practice.

Sound Pop Academy
MAST Mayflower Studios
142 - 144 Above Bar Street
Southampton
SO14 7DU

Company Number : 11374570

Policy Statement

At Sound Pop Academy, we believe that a young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a duty of care to all young and vulnerable people involved in our programme. The safety and wellbeing of our members is at the forefront of everything we do and is paramount to the running of the business.

Sound Pop Academy is proud to be an inclusive, accessible and nurturing group, therefore we strive to offer the most supportive programme to all young people no matter of age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity.

To commit to this, we ensure that all adults aged 18 and over and who are connected with Sound Pop Academy go through enhanced background screening, receive the correct training in order to fulfil their role and to ensure that Sound Pop Academy remains a safe environment for all its members and/or participants.

This policy applies to every responsible adult who is involved with Sound Pop Academy which includes but is not limited to; directors, paid employees and freelancers, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of Sound Pop Academy.

Policy Purpose

- To promote the protection of children and young people aged 5-17 who attend Sound Pop Academy workshops, sessions, performances, trips and socials while allowing them to participate in fun, educational and life-changing experiences.
- To provide all staff and volunteers with the overall principles that form our approach to safeguarding and child protection.
- To ensure that staff and volunteers understand the processes of how Sound Pop Academy takes actions to safeguard young people.
- To ensure that general safety of each young person while in attendance of Sound Pop Academy is the main focus for every member of staff and volunteer.
- To respect and promote the rights and feelings young people and ensure every child's wishes are heard.
- To ensure that all staff and volunteers understand the ways in which to respond to and or report a child protection allegation, concern or breach.
- To ensure a review is undertaken regularly and that this Policy is updated in line with the growth or change of the business and that changes in the policy are communicated with all staff and volunteers.
- To ensure that other organisations or businesses who have direct contact with Sound Pop Academy, such as rehearsal or performance venues or other groups who are working alongside Sound Pop Academy in public spaces; abide, adopt and help implement our safeguarding policy and practices to Sound Pop Academy's members and/or participants.

Principles

The welfare and safety of young people is everyone's responsibility, especially when it comes to protecting them from abuse.

- The welfare of children and young people is the primary concern of all activity.
- All young people, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- It is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns about abuse and the responsibility of the Social Work Department and the Police to conduct, where appropriate, a joint investigation.
- All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018).
- We consider a young person to be aged 0-17 and an adult to be aged 18 and over.

Review

This policy and these procedures will be regularly monitored and reviewed;

- As Sound Pop Academy grows and new procedures and policies are introduced and come into place.
- In accordance with changes in legislation and statutory guidance on the protection of children and young people.
- Following any issues or concerns raised during the lifetime of Sound Pop Academy and/or any changes that Sound Pop Academy introduce to strengthen safety of young people at Sound Pop Academy.
- In all other circumstances, at least annually.

Induction

It will also ensure procedures are in place to safeguard its employees and itself from potential allegations. All staff and volunteers will be subject to recommended checks.

Sound Pop Academy will endeavour to protect the safety of young people and provide a safe environment by ensuring the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers are carefully followed and by carrying out the appropriate vetting procedure for those being considered for appointment to posts with access to young people.

Child Protection Training is offered when necessary to raise awareness of their role in recognising child abuse and to familiarise them with the Sound Pop Academy's Child Protection Policy.

Our Duty of Care

At Sound Pop Academy, we recognise that we have a duty of care to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) about individuals who may pose a risk ensuring that potential threats to young people can be identified and dealt with. There are criminal penalties for barred individuals who seek or undertake work with vulnerable groups and for employers who knowingly take them on.

Staff and Volunteers who seek engagement with Sound Pop Academy may be required to attend Child Protection Training and provide personal details that allow us to obtain a DBS certificate for that individual. We may also request both a professional and personal/character reference for each paid member of staff.

Definitions of Abuse

The common denominator for all forms of child abuse is that it makes children feel bad and worthless. Child abuse can occur in a number of ways so the actual harm caused cannot always be easily categorised. There are five main categories of abuse:

Physical abuse – is the deliberate physical injury to a child or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. For children with disabilities it may include confinement to a room or cot, or incorrectly giving drugs to control behaviour

Emotional abuse – is the persistent emotional ill treatment 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 in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corrupting of children.

Sexual abuse – involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect – is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve failure to provide adequate food, shelter or protection from physical harm or danger, and failing to ensure adequate medical care in case of injury or a lack of stimulation and supervision.

Peer on Peer – is a form of abuse that occurs when there is any kind of physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse or coercive control exercised between children. It includes bullying, cyberbullying, sexual violence, harassment and sexting. It should be recognised that the behaviour in question is harmful to both the perpetrator (who is a child) and the victim. Behaviour may be intimate or non-intimate.

Recognising Abuse

Everyone who works with children and young people should be able to recognise, and know how to act upon, indicators that a child's welfare or safety may be at risk.

Abuse can occur from:

- Parents;
- Others with parental responsibility;
- Adults in a position of authority;
- People within the wider family circle or neighbourhood;
- Complete strangers;
- Other children.

Abuse or harm occurs as much from omissions and lack of protection as from commission of actual acts of abuse. Child protection processes should always consider the wider needs of the child and family; broad-based family support services should always be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect.

Children with Disabilities

The particular and varied needs of children with disabilities may make initial recognition more difficult. Disclosures of abuse may be less likely to come from children who are disabled because of communication difficulties, isolation, or lack of awareness. Signs may be subtler, more confusing, or explained away as a result of the child's disability

General Indicators of Abuse

Some of the identifying characteristics of potential abuse may include:

- Changes in mood - sudden outbursts / temper
- Demeanour - becomes quiet and withdrawn
- Emotional distress or different patterns of behaviour
- Fear of a particular adult - particularly of one with whom a close relationship would be expected or an adult showing a particular interest in a child
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or language
- Children who are reluctant to go home or parents who fail to collect child
- Sudden weight loss
- Nervousness when touched
- Unexplained injuries including scalds and burns
- Bruising in places not normally associated with general bumping into things or falls
- Physical state and/or appearance - Neglect

It should be recognised that the presence of one or more of these indicators does not prove that abuse has occurred or is occurring, as other factors such as the birth or death of a family member may also affect behaviour in children.

It is not the responsibility of untrained professionals to diagnose abuse, but it is their responsibility to be aware of and report any concerns.

It is important that accurate written records are made as soon as practicable and passed to Sound Pop Academy directors who will deal with all accusations.

Practices to Be Avoided

The following practices should be **avoided** except in emergencies.

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others. Staff and volunteers should never be alone with a child. Always be in groups of three as a minimum.
- Taking or dropping off a child to an event.

If a case arises where these situations are unavoidable (e.g. the child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a rehearsal), it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the Academy or the child's parents/legal guardians and not traveling alone with the child.

Practices Never To Be Sanctioned

You should **never** -

- Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves.

It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the carers involved. You should never put yourself in a position that you feel uncomfortable with and Sound Pop Academy will support your decision should you choose not to assist.

Photographing, Videoing and Filming

There is evidence to suggest that some people have used entertainment venues and activities as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs/film footage of young people.

Prior consent should be sought from parents/guardians before photographing, videoing or filming children at an event or activity, and certainly before using any of the images taken.

Consent from the parent or guardian of all children and young people must be given before any photo or video is taken. We give permission for you to take photos on your own devices, but these should be deleted once you have fulfilled the primary purpose (uploading to business social media platforms). All photos belong to Sound Pop Academy and Sound Pop Academy reserves the right to carry out random spot checks on personal devices to ensure that the above has been complied with.

All staff will be informed of which children (if any) have not given consent for photos and videos to be taken.

Where reasonable, all materials promoting an event or activity should state clearly that accredited photographers will be present.

No unsupervised access or one-to-one photographic sessions should be permitted with children unless it is with the prior approval of the parent/guardian and Sound Pop Academy management.

Particular care must be taken in publishing photographs, video, film footage of 'vulnerable' children (those with learning, physical or language disabilities), as they could be particularly vulnerable to abuse.

The use of images to promote activities on the Sound Pop Academy website will be carefully monitored. It is possible for the content of any photo to be manipulated or adapted for inappropriate use. Only images of children and young people in suitable dress should be used to limit potential 'inappropriate use'.

Sound Pop Academy does not allow for cameras to be used in dressing rooms or private, personal spaces. This includes cameras on smart phones.

Sound Pop Academy reserves the right to prohibit the use of photography, videoing or filming at any event or activity which it is organising.

Reporting Allegations/Suspicious of Child Abuse

It is hoped that you will never have to deal with an alleged incident of child abuse but it is important that you know what to do in this situation. Sound Pop Academy will fully support you in your reporting of allegations and suspicions of abuse. There are four likely scenarios which you should be aware of and be prepared to deal with if necessary. These are:

- There is suspicion or evidence that a child is being abused by a member of staff or other person associated with Sound Pop Academy.
- A child accuses a member of staff, volunteer or other person associated with the Sound Pop Academy of abusing them.
- Abuse takes place or is suspected within the Academy or at an event organised by Sound Pop Academy by an individual unrelated to the Academy.
- A child discloses abuse happening elsewhere e.g. at home

Dealing with Disclosure:

Do:

- Stay Calm
- Listen
- Accept
- Reassure
- Report & Record in writing

Don't:

- Panic
- Promise to keep secrets
- Ask leading questions
- Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily
- Delay
- Start to investigate

The one thing you MUST NOT do is NOTHING.

In all cases you must:

- Be prompt, calm, assured and professional
- Report the matter immediately to the Sound Pop Academy directors who will record details of the allegation/concern.
- Keep any details **strictly confidential** and share only on a 'need to know' basis.

Information about Suspected Abuse

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible a detailed record should always be made at the time of disclosure/concern. See Form 1 for a copy of the Recording Allegations of Abuse Form that must be completed. Details include:

- The child's name, age, date of birth, home address and telephone number
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incident(s).
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred using the child's own words.
- Have the parents been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a Sound Pop Academy Director, you can contact the child's local team or alternatively find contact details for the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline or the Police at the end of this policy.

SOUTHAMPTON

MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)
Civic Centre
Southampton
SO14 7LU

Telephone (office hours): 023 8083 3336 or Out of hours: 023 8023 3344
You may also contact MASH by emailing: mash@southampton.gov.uk

HAMPSHIRE

Children's Services Department
Hampshire County Council
Elizabeth II Court North
The Castle
Winchester
SO23 8UG

You may also contact MASH by emailing: childrens.services@hants.gov.uk
Telephone (office hours): 0300 555 1384 or Out of hours: 023 8023 3344

If you are not a professional involved with the child or family, you do not have to give your name and your conversation will be treated confidentially.

You must state if you wish to remain anonymous at the start of your message, but professionals cannot remain anonymous.

If any child or young person is at immediate risk of harm then you should call 999.

Action

(i) Concerns about Poor Practice by a member of Sound Pop Academy staff or volunteer.

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, Sound Pop Academy directors, who are responsible for human resource issues, will deal with it as a potential misconduct issue.

(ii) (a) There is suspicion or evidence that a young person is being abused by a Sound Pop Academy member of staff, volunteer or other person associated with Sound Pop Academy OR a young person accuses a member of academy staff, volunteer or other person associated with the academy of abusing them.

- Any suspicion or evidence that a young person has been abused by either a member of staff, volunteer or a person associated with the Academy (external party working in the Academy, visitor, volunteer etc) should be reported to the Academy Directors who are the DSL or the DDSL. These are who will complete a Recording of Allegations of Abuse Form
- Sound Pop Academy directors who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- Sound Pop Academy directors will refer the allegation to the Social Services department which may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of- hours.
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted by the Sound Pop Academy directors as soon as possible following advice from the Social Services department.
- Sound Pop Academy directors will contact solicitors who will deal with any media enquiries.

(ii) (b) Allegations of previous abuse by a member of Sound Pop Academy staff , volunteer or other person associated with Sound Pop Academy.

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or concerning a member of staff or someone associated with the Academy who is still currently working with children).

Where such an allegation is made, the same procedures as detailed above should be followed and the matter reported to the Social Services or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside the Academy, may be at risk from this person.

Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

(iii) Abuse takes place or is suspected within the Academy or at an event organised by Sound Pop Academy by an individual unrelated to the Academy. (For example there is suspicion or evidence that a young person is being abused by a leader from another group who is performing with Sound Pop Academy)

- Report your suspicions to the Sound Pop Academy directors, who will complete a Recording of Allegations of Abuse Form.
- Sound Pop Academy directors will contact Social Services/Police
- Sound Pop Academy directors will contact the head of the organisation visiting the event, theatre, venue or space with the details of the allegation/ suspicion.

It is not the responsibility of Sound Pop Academy staff or volunteers to determine whether abuse has taken place or not.

(iv) Concerns outside the Immediate Academy environment (e.g. A Parent or Carer):

- Report your concerns to the Sound Pop Academy directors, who will complete a Recording Allegations of Abuse Form and report the Allegation/ Suspicion as appropriate.
- Sound Pop Academy directors will contact Social Services or police with details of the alleged abuse as soon as possible
- On advice from Social services, Sound Pop Academy directors will decide how to involve the parents/carers.
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.

(v) Concerns made about the DSL or directors of the Academy:

- If an accusation is made about the LEAD DSL , report your concerns to the DEPUTY DSL (DDSL), who will confidentially progress the allegation made (if deemed necessary) to the relevant parties, such as the police or local child protection authorities.
- If an accusation is made about the DEPUTY DSL, report your concerns to the LEAD DSL, who will confidentially progress the allegation made (if deemed necessary) in line with this Child Protection Policy.
- If an accusation is made about both the LEAD DSL & DEPUTY DSL, report your concerns to directly to the child's local authority or if necessary, the police.

MASH, the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline or the Police.

Responding to Allegations or Suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for Sound Pop Academy, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

Sound Pop Academy will assure all staff and volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports his/her concern that a team member is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff or volunteer there may be three types of investigation:

- a criminal investigation
- a child protection investigation
- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily. Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser

Internal Enquiries and Suspension

Sound Pop Academy's DSL or DDSL (the academy directors), who have responsibility for human resource, will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and Social Services.

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries a disciplinary panel will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled.

Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

This includes the following people:

- Sound Pop Academy directors, the parents/guardians of the person who is alleged to have been abuse.
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services/police
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child).
Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws. See Sound Pop Academy's data protection policy.

Support to Deal With the Aftermath of Abuse

Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents or members of staff may need. Use of help lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.

The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189;
www.bacp.co.uk

This is an entirely confidential service and any discussions an employee has with a counsellor will be strictly confidential unless the employee agrees otherwise.

Consideration will also be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

Action If 'Peer on Peer' Bullying Is Suspected

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above. All allegations of bullying should be made to the Sound Pop Academy directors who will investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe.

Action To Help The Victim And Prevent Bullying:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns. (It is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately). Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority.
- Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the Sound Pop Academy directors.]

Action towards Bullies:

- Assure will be treated seriously, immediately and confidentially and any appropriate actions will be taken.
- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Inform the bully(ies)'s parents if appropriate
- Insist on the return of 'borrowed' items
- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress if the bullying is ongoing
- Inform appropriate staff on actions taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.

Recognising Mental Health and Wellbeing as a Safeguarding Issue.

Mental health is as important to a child's safety and wellbeing as their physical health. It can impact on all aspects of their life, including their educational attainment, relationships and physical wellbeing. Mental health can also change over time, to varying degrees of seriousness, and for different reasons. Negative experiences such as abuse and neglect can adversely impact a child's mental health. Mental health issues can also sometimes lead to safeguarding and child protection issues, for example if a child's mental health begins to put them or other people at risk of harm.

Supporting children with mental health issues

It can be hard for adults to recognise when a child needs support with mental health issues. And it can be difficult for young people to speak out about the challenges they're facing. So it's crucial that anyone who works or volunteers with children is able to recognise the signs that a child may be struggling with their mental health. And that they know how to take appropriate action to support children and young people in getting the help they need. We've put together some information to help you recognise and respond to concerns about children and young people's mental health.

What does mental health mean?

Mental health is an individual's cognitive, behavioural and emotional wellbeing. It's something we all have - including every child and young person.

We use the term "mental health issues" to refer to mental health problems, conditions and mental illnesses. These issues may or may not be medically diagnosed.

Who is at risk?

Any child or young person can develop mental health issues. But research has shown there are some factors that are associated with children and young people's long-term mental health.

Abuse and neglect

The traumatic impact of abuse and neglect increases the likelihood of children developing a range of mental health issues - both during childhood and in later life. These include anxiety, depression, eating disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Specific types of abuse may be connected to certain mental health issues. Children who have experienced emotional abuse may be more likely to develop anxiety and depression compared with children who have experienced other types of abuse. One study found that almost three quarters (74%) of young people who had experienced sexual assault developed PTSD.

Abuse and neglect can also make children more vulnerable to developing more than one mental health condition at one time (known as composite mental health issues).

Providing effective mental health support for children who have experienced abuse and neglect can help them recover from its effects.

Additional needs and disabilities

Children and young people with additional needs and disabilities may face a range of challenges including:

- reduced mobility
- prejudice, discrimination and bullying.

These challenges may lead to lower self-confidence, difficulty forming peer networks and social exclusion, putting them at higher risk of developing mental health issues.

Adults may confuse the signs of learning disabilities with the symptoms of mental health issues.

This can mean concerns aren't recognised and responded to quickly or appropriately.

Children from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities

Children from black and minority ethnic groups may experience:

- racism, discrimination and prejudice - this can be direct, indirect or institutional
- an increased stigma around mental health issues in the community.

This can lead to inequalities and issues in accessing appropriate care and support for mental health needs

Life events

Stressful or traumatic situations and experiences, such as bereavement or sudden changes in environment, can trigger mental health issues.

Living in care

Children in care are more likely than their peers to have a mental health difficulty. This can be due to isolation and loneliness. Children in care may also have experienced abuse or neglect, which increases the likelihood of developing mental health issues

LGBTQ+ children and young people

LGBTQ+ children and young people may experience:

- prejudice, discrimination and bullying
- a fear of or an actual rejection from family and/or friends
- feeling excluded or like an outsider.

They may also experience gender dysphoria: the distress when someone's assigned gender does not match their identity.

These factors and experiences mean they are more likely than their heterosexual and cisgender peers to experience a range of mental health problems.

Recognising issues

Professionals need to be able to recognise the signs that a child may be struggling. However, it's important to remember that some mental health issues may not have visible signs. There are also factors that might make it more difficult for a child or young person to ask for help. Some children and young people may try to hide how they are feeling or what they are doing. This might be because they:

- worry they won't be taken seriously
- believe others won't understand
- have had a negative experience talking about their thoughts and feelings in the past
- feel that no one can help them
- fear being dismissed or labelled an attention seeker or 'crazy'

Children and young people may not always have the language or ability to communicate how they feel. They may be unsure who to talk to and how to talk about their problems.

Some signs of mental health issues may also look like normal child behaviour. For example, tantrums in younger children or teenagers keeping feelings to themselves.

Children who have experienced abuse or neglect

Children who have experienced abuse may be reluctant to talk about how they are feeling, particularly if they haven't yet told anyone about the abuse. They may feel that something is wrong with them or that things may get worse if they talk about it.

Identifying and responding to mental health concerns may be one way of helping children who are experiencing abuse to get the support and protection that they need.

Signs of child mental health issues

There are ways you can identify if a child needs support with their mental health.

By being attentive to a child or young person's mood and behaviour, you can recognise patterns that suggest they need support.

Common warning signs of mental health issues include:

- sudden mood and behaviour changes
- self-harming
- unexplained physical changes, such as weight loss or gain
- sudden poor academic behaviour or performance
- sleeping problems
- changes in social habits, such as withdrawal or avoidance of friends and family.

These signs suggest that a child may be struggling, but there could be a number of different explanations for them.

Don't attempt to diagnose mental health issues yourself or make assumptions about what's happening in a child's life.

Recognising that a child or young person may be struggling with their mental health is the first step in helping them. The next step is to respond appropriately.

Responding to child mental health issues

All children and young people should have someone they can talk to about whatever they're going through, regardless of whether they have a mental health condition. Children may not want to talk specifically about their mental health, but about the struggles and issues in their daily lives. If you are concerned that a child may be struggling, it's important not to wait for them to talk to you before trying to start a conversation. Encourage them to talk with you or with other trusted adults.

Talking with a child about their mental health

If you're talking with a child or young person about their mental health and wellbeing, be prepared that conversations may not be easy or straightforward. There are things you can do to make these conversations as easy as possible.

The following principles will help you discuss mental health and wellbeing sensitively.

Use the right language

When talking with a child, use language that they understand. This will differ according to their age and stage of development. Avoid using technical or diagnostic language which children might find unfamiliar, confusing and distant from their experiences.

Make sure you understand the language the child is using and how they are using certain terms. For example, a child may use the word "anxiety" to describe a feeling of general nervousness or as a way to describe severe anxiety attacks.

By paying attention to the language children use to describe their feelings, you can reflect the terms they use in your own language. This will help them feel listened to.

Some children may have difficulty communicating, for example if they have additional needs or disabilities. Make sure you give these children the time and support they need to talk.

Create an open environment

It's important to create an open and safe environment where children and young people are comfortable speaking about their mental health. Make sure children and young people know who they can talk to – and make this pool of people as wide as possible.

In schools, for example, discussions about mental health and wellbeing can be integrated into the curriculum and put on an equal footing with physical health.

Some children with mental health problems will have experienced abuse. An open environment will help them talk about the challenges they are facing and may help them feel able to tell you what's been happening to them.

Promoting mental health and wellbeing

Anyone who works with children and young people has a responsibility to promote their mental health and emotional wellbeing. This can include:

- helping with online wellbeing
- encouraging exercise
- maintaining routines

Doing OK - Struggling - Unwell - In Crisis

When you speak to a child for the first time, or during ongoing conversations, you may find it useful to think about whether they're doing OK, struggling, unwell or in crisis.

This continuum is based on a model used by Childline counsellors, alongside other tools, that helps them understand how a child is feeling at that particular point in time. You can use it to better understand a young person's mental health and wellbeing.

It's important to remember that a person's mental health changes continuously - so you should refer to this continuum regularly.

Doing OK

- Communicates effectively with others
- Seeks help when needed
- Can focus on specific issues
- Has healthy relationships
- Identifies and tries to solve problems
- Uses healthy coping strategies

Struggling

- Struggles communicating with others
- Is unsure how to access help
- Relationships are beginning to suffer
- Begins to use unhealthy coping strategies
- Has some sleep issues, low energy and fatigue
- Is able to engage well in some areas

Unwell

- Feels overwhelmed and isolated
- Struggles to focus on specific issues
- Struggles to access and/or engage with services
- Has disturbed sleep
- May have suicidal thoughts
- Relies on unhealthy coping strategies
- May already have a mental health diagnosis
- Is ambivalent towards change

In crisis

- Has made recent suicide attempts
- Is distrustful of support services
- Mental health symptoms are unmanageable
- Has escalating self-harming behaviours
- Distress may not reduce when talking
- Not engaging at home or school
- Is resistant to change

Taking appropriate action

Mental health issues indicate that a child or young person needs support. If possible, discuss with them what help could be put in place.

What if a child doesn't want to talk to me?

If a child isn't able to engage with a discussion about their mental health you should still consider what support can be put in place for them. Follow your organisation's procedures to share any concerns you have about a child's wellbeing. For example, you could talk to the person who is responsible for pastoral care in your school or organisation.

Safeguarding and child protection issues

You must always consider whether you need to take any action to protect a child or those around them from harm.

If you identify a safeguarding or child protection issue, you must follow your organisation's policies and procedures.

Safeguarding issues include:

- a child being in immediate and/or significant danger
- someone else being in immediate and/or significant danger
- a child being at risk of or experiencing abuse.

Confidentiality

If a child is confiding in you about their mental health they may ask you not to tell anyone what they've said. But if you're concerned about someone's safety and welfare you must share this information with relevant professionals.

You should never promise to keep what a child tells you a secret. Explain from the outset that you might have to talk to someone else who can help.

Getting support

There are lots of different types of support available for children with mental health issues. These include the following.

Contacting a GP

GPs may be able to diagnose mental health conditions, suggest next steps and provide medication.

Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)

Across the UK, [CAMHS](#) is a free NHS service for children and young people that aims to help with mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, self-harm and eating disorders.

Teachers, social workers, GPs and parents can refer a young person to CAMHS. Services differ from area to area.

In England, you can find CAMHS services in your area through the [NHS CAMHS webpage](#).

Counselling and therapeutic services

Counselling services are available to help children and young people with their mental health. Services can include helplines, one-to-one counselling sessions in person, online or by phone, and online chats and forums.

These services are available through a range of fee-paying and free services including schools and the NHS.

Childline

Children and young people can get free, confidential [support from a Childline counsellor](#) via online chat, email or phone.

NSPCC services

We provide therapeutic services help children, young people and families get their mental health back on track after abuse.

Hear and Now

[Hear and Now](#) is a therapeutic service that aims to address behavioural and emotional issues faced by children who have been affected by sexual abuse.

Letting the Future In

Letting the Future In is a play-therapy service that helps children who have been sexually abused.

The Lighthouse

The Lighthouse is a multi-agency service that provides guidance and support to help children and young people recover from sexual abuse.

Life Story Work

Life Story Work is a direct support service that works with children in care to help them understand and accept their personal history.

Consent for treatment

It's best practice to get parental consent for children's therapeutic and medical treatments. But there may be times when a child or young person does not want their parents to know. In this case, you should assess whether the young person has the capacity to make this decision for themselves.

Supervision of Children

Sound Pop Academy has a duty to ensure that there is adequate supervision of young people at all times whilst in a session, at a social trip, performance or any other Sound Pop Academy event. Any persons in charge should know where all young people are at all times and must also be satisfied that any other persons accompanying children are fully competent and vetted to do so. Parents of any young people are only allowed to look after their own child and not a group unless properly vetted.

Adult (Staff) /Child (Member) Ratios

The ratio of staff to young people will be considered when a new activity is undertaken which includes but not limited to workshops, sessions, trips and performances. Sound Pop Academy will look to support young people by having male and female staff.

Sound Pop Academy (Ages 9-17)

The recommended ratios for **in-house rehearsal** sessions are: 9 - 17 years 1 adult per 30 children

The recommended ratios for **out-of-house** performances are: 9 - 17 years 1 adult per 15 children

The recommended ratios for **out-of-house** socials, trips and events are: 9 - 17 years 1 adult per 20 children

Little Sound Pop Academy (Ages 5-8)

The recommended ratios for **in-house rehearsal** sessions are: 5 - 8 years 1 adult per 10 children

The recommended ratios for **out-of-house** performances are: 5 - 8 years 1 adult per 10 children

The recommended ratios for **out-of-house** socials, trips and events are: 5 - 8 years 1 adult per 10 children

Supervision ratio's for disabilities or special needs are dependant upon each individuals needs and will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Body Of Persons Licence - To Perform

Sound Pop Academy will apply to perform under a Body of Persons License (BOPA) which will allow for all young people to perform at events and shows in designated towns and cities. Sound Pop Academy will submit details of each performance to the performers (child's) local authority of where the child resides. Sound Pop Academy will follow the local authorities licensing rules and regulations that are stipulated at time of issue. Sound Pop Academy will renew this license yearly or as required by each local authority. Sound Pop Academy will collect specific information about each performer, for each performance. The member will only be able to perform if they provide the information requested. This information will be passed to the child's local authority in order for the local authority to understand and assess whether an inspection will be carried out. Sound Pop Academy will supply each local authority details of each performance, three weeks prior to the performance date.

Other Concerns

If there are instances that Sound Pop Academy staff or volunteers are concerned about suspicious behaviour, they must report it immediately to the Sound Pop Academy directors, who will deal with the concerns as appropriate.

Dressing Rooms & Toilets

Toilets should be made available for the sole use of young people aged under 17 where possible. Where this practice isn't practical such as in public spaces, events or at socials where there are adults aged 18 and over, Sound Pop Academy staff will ensure that no young person is left on their own with an unknown adult in a public space.

At performances and shows, backstage spaces will be split by genders where appropriate. If there is a need for young people to change clothing or costume then all young people will be split into respective dressing rooms based on their gender.

For young people who identify as a gender opposite to their current legal gender, a private space will be made available for them to use.

Risk Assessments & Public Liability

Risk Assessments will be completed by Sound Pop Academy for every rehearsal venue or performance organised by Sound Pop Academy. Where Sound Pop Academy isn't the primary organiser, Sound Pop Academy will seek the relevant legal paperwork such as Risk Assessments and Public Liability Insurance before attending the particular activity.

Carrying Out Checks as Part of Recruitment and Selection

(a) Paid Employees / Paid Freelancers

The recruitment of all positions within Sound Pop Academy is carried out by Sound Pop Academy directors or authorised staff.

For every new paid employee and paid freelancer, Sound Pop Academy will seek to obtain:

- 1) Personal details and personal and/or professional/characters references.
- 2) A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. Staff who have sourced their own DBS check from other work will be able to use this as their DBS for Sound Pop Academy.

Staff who do not hold a valid DBS certificate and would like Sound Pop Academy to process one on their behalf will be charged at cost price to carry out the check and this amount will be deducted from the employee or freelancers next pay. The named applicant will be charged by invoice even if the DBS comes back and prevents the applicant from working with Sound Pop Academy.

(b) Volunteers

Volunteers giving their time to Sound Pop Academy will be asked for consent to carry out the necessary DBS checks.

1) Volunteers who give their time to Sound Pop Academy will have a DBS processed and issued free of charge, with no fee to pay. Should the named volunteer already has a valid DBS certificate from within the last three years or access to the Update Service, then Sound Pop Academy will not process a new DBS check.

2) Personal, professional or characters references may be required upon request.

For both paid employees and volunteers, DBS' are required to be updated once every three years from the date of issue unless the named person has signed up to the DBS Update Service. In this instance, the physical DBS will not be required to be renewed so long as the Update Service fee is paid for yearly. Sound Pop Academy will not cover the cost of the Update Service.

For both types of engagement, reasonable personal details such as applicants name and email address may be kept on our database to help with current and future selection processes. We may contact unsuccessful applicants to ask whether we can keep their contact details on record for future employment possibilities. Any details kept on our dates remain fully inline with our Data Protection Policy.

Dealing with Missing Children

The NSPCC's Safe Child Scheme is a partnership approach to helping reunite young children with their parents or adult carers if they become separated while out shopping or in a crowd. Most children who become separated from their families are reunited with them very quickly, but a lost child is a vulnerable child, so it is best to help prevent children getting lost in the first place and teaching them what to do in case it should happen.

If a child is reported missing by a parent/carer, contact a Sound Pop Academy director or Academy leader immediately with a clear description of the child and make a search of the surrounding areas. If the child cannot be found in agreement with the parent/carer contact the police.

Policy on Use & Storage of Disclosure Information

Sound Pop Academy fully complies with the Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage retention and disposal of Disclosure Applications and Disclosure information. We also comply fully with its obligations under the and other relevant legislation pertaining with the safe handling, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure information. See Data Protection Policy for details.

Social Media

The way we use social media changes regularly. It is down to each individual member of the team to take responsibility for how social media channels are used. You should avoid being in situations where you might receive private or direct messages from any young person. This means that friend requests on Facebook should be declined and young people should not be followed on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat or any other social media platform.

To help protect yourself on social media you should make sure that your accounts are secure. This could be by making sure you sign out of your accounts on any shared devices or by ensuring that your passwords are secure and that you understand the security and privacy settings on all of your social media accounts.

Be vigilant with regards to any content that you may post online. Anything posted online can never truly be deleted and written text can often be taken out of context. If you are contacted directly by a young person, keep a written record and inform a member of the Sound Pop Academy team. Do not respond to the message.

REPORT FORM

Recording Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse

1. Name, Age and Gender of Child
2. Are there any special factors?
3. Name of Parent(s)/Guardians and home address. Please include telephone number if available.
4. Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or passing on those of somebody else? Make distinction between what is fact and what is hearsay.
5. What has prompted the concerns? Include dates, times etc of any specific incidents. Are there any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?
6. Has the child been spoken to? By whom? If so, what was said? (Continue on an additional sheet if required)
7. Have the parents been contacted? By whom? If so, what was said
8. Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, record details.
9. Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details and outcome of consultation
10. Name of person reporting the concerns and position

All allegations or suspicions of abuse should be written and emailed to Mike Evans. Please try to answer as many of the questions above as soon as possible. The email should be written and sent as soon as possible and as a matter of urgency.

Our Details

If you have any questions, concerns or comments then please get in touch. We're here to work with you and support you throughout your Sound Pop Academy adventure. If you need to get in touch, our contact details are below. Give us a call or drop us an email.

Mike Evans - Director & Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Email: mike@soundpopacademy.co.uk

Mobile Phone No: 07507 655 511

Office: 023 8254 7324

MAST Mayflower Studios, 142-144 Above Bar Street, Southampton, SO14 7DU

Dan Cooper - Director & Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Email: dan@soundpopacademy.co.uk

Mobile Phone No: 07853 192 902

Office: 023 8254 7324

MAST Mayflower Studios, 142-144 Above Bar Street, Southampton, SO14 7DU

Multi-Agency Hub Contact Telephone Numbers:

MASH - SOUTHAMPTON	Main Line	Tel: 023 8083 3336
	Out Of Hours	Tel: 023 8023 3344
MASH - PORTSMOUTH	Main Line	Tel: 023 9268 8793
	Out Of Hours	Tel: 0300 555 1373
MASH - HAMPSHIRE	Main Line	Tel: 0300 555 1384
	Out Of Hours	Tel: 0300 555 1373

Other Contact Telephone Numbers

NSPCC	Main Line	Tel: 0808 800 5000
	Textphone	Tel: 0800 056 0566
	Asian Helpline	Tel: 0800 096 7719
	Cymru/Wales Helpline	Tel: 0808 100 2524
Childline	Main Line	Tel: 0800 1111
Police	Main Line	Tel: 999