

Teaching Online Policy for under 18s and vulnerable adults (vulnerable learners)

1. Introduction

1.1 The main objective of the Blackheath Conservatoire (The Conservatoire) is to provide inspiring and life enhancing learning opportunities for people of all ages to develop their creative potential in the fields of music, art and drama.

2. Purpose

2.1 This policy outlines the guidelines for parents/ guardians, learners and tutors, as well as confirms the commitment and responsibilities of The Conservatoire to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults in respect of online teaching.

3. Statement

3.1 The Conservatoire takes its responsibilities to protect and safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults seriously, as it does to promote and protect the welfare of all of its learners – safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

3.2 Tutors should ensure that safeguarding carries the same importance during an online lesson as face to face, and all aspects of our safeguarding policy apply within these lessons. In all our work the welfare of the learner is paramount. All learners, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

4. Scope

4.1 This policy relates to teaching online, and within this context, tutors should:

4.1.1 Take all suspicions and/or allegations of abuse or risk to children and vulnerable adults seriously, respond swiftly and appropriately using the procedures as set out in The Conservatoire Safeguarding policy.

4.1.2 Support the timely sharing of information, with relevant authorities, when there are concerns about the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults.

5. Policy Details

5.1 Tutors must use the Conservatoire's chosen online teaching tool (Zoom) solely for The Conservatoire lessons, and not for any other interactions with learners. Tutors will host the Zoom call and admit learners appropriately, one by one.

5.2 Video calls should ideally take place on the device of a parent or guardian, or a device which the parent or guardian is comfortable for them to use.

5.3 For individual tuition, it is advised that a parent or guardian be nearby in the household and identify themselves on the video at the beginning of the lesson. They are however not required to be visible on the video link for the duration of the lesson.

5.4 For group classes, it is advised that the parent or guardian identify themselves on the video at the beginning of the first lesson and be available throughout the first session if required. Tutors will advise if parents can be off-screen in subsequent sessions but they should always be on hand in case their learner needs help.

5.4. At the end of the lesson, it is advised that the parent or guardian sign off and confirm the lesson is ending and the tutor will close the session.

5.5 The lesson must not be recorded on any devices at any time unless there is a specific arrangement to do so between the parent and The Conservatoire.

5.6 Tutors should use a business-like profile picture and establish a serious and professional manner when teaching online. It should be emphasised to learners and their parents or guardians that the video conference platform is to be used for lessons only.

5.7 The Conservatoire will require parents or guardians to ensure that students restrict their own profiles so that they can only receive calls from known contacts. All communication should be made to the parent or guardian by email, with links sent to the approved platforms to download and view resources.

5.8 When teaching online, tutors and learners should dress appropriately. There should be no inappropriate activity going on in the same room e.g. children present or TV or other device audible.

5.8 When the lesson is conducted with the learner at home it is advisable to be in an appropriate room or space which is openly visible. Ideally, there should be no other activities going on e.g. siblings playing, TV or other devices audible. Should anything deemed inappropriate occur, the session should be ended (without necessarily drawing attention to anything in particular) and The Conservatoire informed.

5.9 The Conservatoire tutors will report any suspected misuse or problem to the Executive Director or Artistic Director immediately and record online safety incidents in the same way as any safeguarding incident and report in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

5.10 The Conservatoire tutors will not engage in online discussion on personal matters or attribute personal opinions to The Conservatoire.

6. Further Guidance

6.1 Parents/ guardians must agree to the same terms and conditions for the virtual lessons as the face to face lessons.

6.2 Parents and guardians are assured that the same standards and expectations regarding safety as the usual face to face lessons are relevant to online lessons.

6.3 Tutors are advised to protect themselves from accidental inappropriate contact with learners by restricting their profile and not accept contact requests from students. Parents/ guardians should ensure that this is understood by the learner.

6.4 Tutors will emphasise to learners and their parents or guardians that the chosen online platform is to be used for lessons only and not for other contact, e.g. sharing photos or general messaging. Parents and guardians must ensure that learners restrict their own profiles so that they can only receive calls from known contacts. All communication will be made to the parent or guardian via email, with links to the approved video conference platforms and to download and view resources.

6.5 Parents or guardians must report any issues to The Conservatoire without delay through contacting patrick.holden@conservatoire.org.uk or mairead.sheerin@conservatoire.org.uk.

7. Review

7.1 This policy will be reviewed regularly, and will undergo a full review every 3 years.