



Todmorden Orchestra Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Background

Todmorden Orchestra is a symphony Orchestra based in the Pennine town of Todmorden, a place with a long tradition of music making, and is a thriving part of Todmorden's cultural life. Our players come from Todmorden and beyond, from Manchester to Halifax. The orchestra is managed by a committee of members, who are elected annually, and meets to rehearse on a weekly basis.

Todmorden Orchestra has around 45 regular players, who are keen amateur musicians from a variety of backgrounds. We advertise vacancies on our website and social media and invite prospective members for an audition or to join us on a trial basis before offering a regular position. We are usually joined at our concerts by a number of guest players to perform solos or play parts we don't usually cover through our regular membership, and to fill in gaps within the orchestra. Our guest players are a mixture of professional musicians, music students and adult amateur musicians.

Todmorden Orchestra is for adult, amateur musicians and we do not actively seek members who are under 18 years of age. However, the orchestra is occasionally approached by prospective members who are under 18 years, and there may be circumstances in which players who are under 18 join us as a guest player or soloist for a concert. While the orchestra doesn't actively recruit members younger than 18, it is the orchestra's intention to welcome children and young people into the orchestra should the occasion arise, and we recognise that playing with the orchestra can be a valuable part of the child's musical development. We are involved in a project with Music for the Many (a musical charity to benefit Todmorden's children) to get their children playing in an orchestra and their families experiencing the excitement and inspiration of live orchestral music. We perform at least one concert each year with children involved in the Music for the Many charity and local schools.

This policy and guidance are written for those occasions when children or young people play with the orchestra. For the purposes of this policy and guidance, a child is anyone who has not yet reached statutory school leaving age, and a young person is between statutory school leaving age and 18 years. It is not designed to provide advice concerning children, young people and vulnerable adults attending our concerts. These are public events, and children in the audience would normally be accompanied by their parents. We have no control over who attends our concerts and cannot be reasonably expected to monitor children in the audience who are not under parental supervision. However, in the event of an incident involving a child attending a concert, the orchestra would deal with the matter in the spirit of this policy. The committee is responsible for ensuring that this policy and guidance are observed by all members and have responsibility for promoting best practice and the highest standard of conduct among its members in relation to the safety of children on any occasion in which they are playing with the orchestra. For the purpose of this policy, wherever appropriate, reference to 'members' includes not only subscription-paying full members of the orchestra,

but also the conductor, committee members, guest players and anyone else participating in the orchestra's activities. The orchestra is committed to practices which protect children from harm and help protect members from misunderstandings and erroneous allegations.

Todmorden Orchestra recognises that:

- The welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount.
- All children, young people and vulnerable adults regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity, have a right to equal protection from all kinds of harm or abuse.
- Some children, young people and vulnerable adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Working in partnership with children, young people and vulnerable adults, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare.
- Abuse is a violation of a person's human and civil rights by any other person. Abuse can happen anywhere. Abuse can take many forms, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

Policy Intent:

Todmorden Orchestra believes that a child, young person or vulnerable adult should never experience abuse of any kind. We understand that we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all and to keep them safe. We are committed to practicing in a way that protects them. As we do not regularly work with children, young people or vulnerable adults, we do not carry out Disclosure and Barring Service checks on any of our members. However, a number of our members work with children in their professional lives and so have current checks in place. As of November 2024, these include:

- Karen Gordon - Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP)
- Diana Doherty – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person
- Frances Healey – Committee Member

This policy aims to:

- Protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who perform with Todmorden Orchestra, including the children of adults who are involved with the orchestra.
- Raise awareness among members about the appropriate ways to act and behave in relation to these groups, and how to report a safeguarding concern.
- Create a safe environment in which everyone can feel comfortable and secure while engaged in a rehearsal, concert or associated activity officially arranged by the orchestra.

Todmorden Orchestra committee will:

(It is assumed that some responsibilities will be delegated to particular nominated members of the committee as appropriate)

1. Share this policy with all members at the start of each year (or on joining) and circulate any updates as they occur. The policy will be published on the orchestra's website and will be reviewed annually.
2. Ensure the DSP is aware of any children, young people and vulnerable adults who will be attending rehearsals or performing in a concert with the orchestra.
3. Seek written permission from parents/guardians prior to children and young people rehearsing or performing with the orchestra.
4. Communicate clearly with parents/guardians regarding dates and venues, timings and any other arrangements.
5. Ensure that images of children, young people and vulnerable adults taking part in orchestra activities are only used for publicity purposes and seek permission from the individual concerned (if age-appropriate) and their parent or guardian beforehand. If a photograph of a child is used, the child must not be named.
6. Apply for the relevant Body of Persons Approval (BOPA) through Calderdale Council and follow their guidance on occasions where children under statutory school leaving age will be performing with the orchestra (DSP/deputy DSP).
7. Appoint a registered chaperone to supervise children before, during and after a performance with the orchestra and ensure they are aware of and understand their responsibilities.
8. Hold a secure register containing emergency contact numbers for all children, young people and vulnerable adults rehearsing or performing with the orchestra and be the main point of contact for parents and guardians.
9. Report any concerns about a child, young person or vulnerable adult, or member's behaviour towards a child, using the procedures laid down in this policy.
10. Take action following any expression of concern; the DSP and committee chair will be responsible for making any referrals to statutory child protection agencies.
11. In the event of any allegation or disclosure concerning the welfare of a child, young person vulnerable adult playing with the orchestra, the DSP and chair will ensure that information is recorded as soon as possible. Information should normally be gathered within 48 hours, and appropriate action taken within 7 days. Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned when an allegation has been made and is being investigated.

Todmorden Orchestra members will:

1. Avoid inappropriate physical contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Physical contact is only appropriate in very limited circumstances.
2. Not put themselves in a position where they are alone with a child young people and vulnerable adults, unless they are the parent or guardian.
3. Not take children, young people and vulnerable adults on a journey alone in a car, unless a parent or guardian has given prior consent, and then only in exceptional circumstances.

4. Avoid intentionally using suggestive or inappropriate comments to or about a child, young person or vulnerable adult even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted. Inappropriate comments might include innuendo, swearing and discussing personal relationships.
5. Not communicate with a child, young person or vulnerable adult via text message or email (this should be done by the secretary to the parent or guardian).
6. Never communicate or make friends with a child, young person or vulnerable adult via Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp or any other social media.
7. Avoid any behaviour which could be construed as 'grooming' a child, young person or vulnerable adult for example giving money, presents or favours, or talking or behaving in an inappropriate unprofessional manner towards them.
8. Take any disclosure from a child, young person or vulnerable adult seriously and report it to the DSP. The orchestra recognises that it is important not to deter children, young people or vulnerable adults from making a disclosure of abuse through fear of not being believed, and to listen to what they have to say. Guidance on responding to and reporting an allegation of abuse is set out in the next section of this document.
9. Report any concerns about the conduct of another member in relation to a child, young person or vulnerable adult playing with the orchestra, to the DSP.

Parents and guardians will:

1. Complete all relevant paperwork given by the secretary before their child or young person first attends.
2. Make sure that all contact details and medical information is correct and updated as appropriate.
3. Accompany their child or young person to and from the rehearsal or concert venue or make arrangements that the committee considers acceptable for safeguarding them. For children under statutory school leaving age, parents will be expected to stay at the rehearsal venue for the duration of the rehearsal as we are unable to provide chaperones until the day of performance.
4. Sign their child in and out of the rehearsal or concert venue as instructed.
5. Inform the secretary if their child or young person cannot attend for any reason.

NB Parents or guardians who are also members of the orchestra will assume responsibility for their child during rehearsals. If they deem their child needs a higher level of supervision than they can provide whilst also being involved, it is their responsibility to ensure another appropriate family member attends.

Guidance on responding to a child, young person or vulnerable adult making an allegation of abuse

1. Stay calm. Listen carefully to what is said, but don't ask leading questions or interrupt.
2. Explain that it is likely the information will need to be passed onto someone else, but only those who need to know – do not promise to keep secrets.
3. Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
4. Explain what you will do next, including who the information will be shared with.

5. Make no judgement about what you have been told.
6. As soon as possible, record in writing what is said using the child's own words as much as possible. Note the date, time, any names mentioned and who was present, and sign and date the record.
7. Report the disclosure immediately to the DSP in the first instance, or if unavailable, the deputy DSP.
8. Remember that whilst you may have been the first person to hear this allegation, it is not your responsibility to decide whether abuse has occurred. That is for professional agencies following a referral from the DSP.

Reporting procedures

1. Any allegation of abuse made by a child, young person or vulnerable adult or by a member of the orchestra reporting concerns regarding another member towards them, should be referred to the DSP.
2. The DSP should inform the chair and together decide an appropriate course of action. They will ensure the committee is kept informed of events, though they may choose to withhold details, including the names of those accused, while the matter is being dealt with.
3. Any instances of inappropriate behaviour towards children will be taken extremely seriously. The DSP and Chair will consider that those who abuse children can be of any age, gender, ethnic background, or class, and will not allow personal preconceptions about people to prevent appropriate action being taken.
4. The DSP and Chair will seek and follow advice from professional child protection agencies concerning how the matter should be handled. Where appropriate, they will refer the matter to the police or local authorities, decide to deal with the matter internally or decide not to take any further action.
5. The DSP will keep a log of any allegations or concerns reported, conversations that have followed and any actions taken. This will be stored securely.
6. The DSP and Chair will make the utmost effort to treat the matter in confidence, including the identity of any member accused of abuse or inappropriate behaviour, until it is resolved. They will recognise that an unfounded accusation that becomes public knowledge could be highly detrimental to the reputation of the member.
7. In the event of the allegation or concern involving the DSP or Chair, the other should nominate the deputy DSP, or one of the society's other nominated elected officers (secretary or treasurer), and act in conjunction with them to decide on an appropriate course of action.
8. In line with the orchestra's policy of zero tolerance of any abuse or inappropriate behaviour towards others playing with the orchestra, the committee has the power to terminate membership of the orchestra for anyone found to be guilty in accordance with the procedures laid out in the orchestra's governing constitution. The orchestra's responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults who come into contact with the orchestra will always take precedence over the value of any member's contribution to the orchestra musical activities.

Resources used in developing this policy:

NSPCC

Advice on children protection issues can be sought from the NSPCC's free 24-hour Child Protection

Helpline - 0808 800 5000.

www.nspcc.org.uk

Charity Commission

Any serious incidents must be reported to the Charity Commission by the trustees of the charity (who are the elected members of the committee).

www.charitycommission.gov.uk

Making Music

This policy has been drawn up following advice from Making Music, the umbrella organisation for voluntary music in the UK. CSO is a member organisation of Making Music.

www.makingmusic.org.uk

Incorporated Society of Music

This policy has been derived from the ISM's own policy. The ISM website provides extensive advice on child protection issues.

www.ism.org

Legal Framework

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0-25 years – Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities; HM Government 2014.
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers; HM Government 2015.
- Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; HM Government 2015.

Contact details:

Designated Safeguarding Person – Karen Gordon
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person – Diana Doherty

Nominated committee members:

Chair – John Moorhouse

Secretary – Jennifer Moorhouse

To report a safeguarding concern or to speak to one of the safeguarding officers, please email safeguarding@todmordenorchestra.org.uk in the first instance.

This policy was originally approved for adoption by Todmorden Orchestra committee in January 2025.

To be reviewed in January 2026

Appendices:

1. Personal information and consent form
2. Register
3. Safeguarding concern report form
4. Signing in/out record
5. First aid log
6. Statement of fitness medical questionnaire
7. Guidance for chaperones