

Child Protection

Policy and Plan

The Bee's Keys

Initiative for Prevention and Response

Crowood House, Swindon, SN2 8YY

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Preamble

The Bee's Keys and its teachers, employees and volunteers care not only about a quality music education for our pupils but also about their wellbeing and safety. To that end, we believe it is in everyone's best interest to enact this *Child Protection Policy and Plan*.

Definitions

Abuse and/or Maltreatment -- these words broadly describe any action (or lack of action) that foreseeably inflicts or contributes to physical, sexual, or psychological harm – through influence, authority, physical force/coercion, or the failure to meet a need

Adult – refers to anyone 19 years of age and over.

Child – refers to anyone under the age of 16, unless otherwise specified.

Child Protection Plan – the document outlines the studio's strategy for reducing risk to children attending piano lessons at The Bee's Keys.

Child Protection Policy – the document outlining the commitments adopted by The Bee's keys to ensure that the studio operates responsibly and out of concern for the best interests of children and youth

Low risk – denotes that no indicators are suggesting future risk. The wording "no risk" is not used because The Bee's Keys recognises that risk can never be wholly eliminated from human situations, as there is contact with others at studio events.

Position of Trust – includes the adult(s) defined below as the teacher(s)

Screening – the process of gathering and disclosing information to assess for indicators or risk

Studio – refers to the space in which lessons are given/received, the building in which the studio is housed, including the waiting area and washroom facilities, and the car park and walkway on the immediate property.

Studio owner – the primary piano teacher and proprietor of the piano studio, who works either in the sole position of teacher or in charge of hiring other teachers and volunteers who also work in the studio.

Teacher – refers to the adult(s) offering piano lessons, either the primary/sole piano teacher in the studio or a teacher hired by the studio owner.

Youth – refers to anyone 16 of age and over.

Youth Volunteer – a youth (16 years or older) who volunteers with children of a younger age

Child Protection Policy

Scope

This Child Protection Policy is intended to cover the educational programs offered on-site at Crowood House and Online Lessons under the oversight of The Bee's Keys teacher(s) and/or volunteers. Programs or activities hosted off-site or offered in conjunction with another studio or community group may require additional safety considerations. We will provide further information to parents in these circumstances, and permission slips and/or liability waivers may be necessary.

Enactment and Enforcement

According to the directives outlined in The Bee's Keys' Child Protection Plan and the procedures described therein, this policy will be implemented and enforced. The *Child Protection Plan* shall be reviewed annually by the studio teacher to evaluate its efficacy and practicality in a changing teaching environment.

Use of Volunteers

At the discretion of the teacher, programs, events and activities may be co-organised and co-directed by parent or youth volunteers.

Screening

The studio will screen all teachers and volunteers intending to work with children and/or youth (see exception). The screening regulations will be outlined in the studio's *Child Protection Plan*, and only those persons assessed as "low risk" to children will be permitted to serve in a position of trust.

Exception: Volunteers wishing to volunteer on a single occasion or for a one-time event (such as a piano recital or joint event with another studio or piano teachers' association event) may not be required to complete formal screening. Unscreened individuals may serve at the teacher's discretion, provided that the unscreened individuals work in collaboration with an approved leader(s) and/or volunteers(s). All work with children or youth must be visible to the approved leader(s) and/or volunteer(s).

Records

The studio will maintain a confidential record associated with each potential, active, and declined employee, teacher and volunteer who works at The Bee's Keys. Records of active employees, teachers and/or volunteers must include: all submitted resumes, volunteer applications, supporting documentation, and any allegations against an individual or information received that, if correct, could increase the risk to a child or

children. Screening documentation kept on record must include a criminal record check for all individuals over the age of 16.

The Bee's Keys must update teacher, employee and volunteer records regularly according to the protocol in The Bee's Keys' *Child Protection Plan*. Records of inactive and/or declined individuals will not be kept indefinitely but shall be destroyed according to the Child Protection Plan's directives.

All studio records must be held in a secure location. This includes the personal information of children and their families collected on permission slips and registration forms.

Teaching and Supervision of Children

The Bee's Keys *Child Protection Plan* must outline clear expectations for teaching, and supervising children enrolled for piano lessons.

The Bee's Keys is not licensed to provide formal childcare services.

Discipline of Children

The Bee's Keys does not permit the use of corporal punishment by teachers or volunteers. Likewise, harsh, humiliating, belittling or degrading comments are not acceptable responses to children's behaviour and will not be tolerated by teachers or volunteers. Guidelines for the appropriate discipline of children shall be included in the *Child Protection Plan*.

Reporting

In accordance with the *Child Protection Plan*, all teachers, employees and volunteers at The Bee's Keys must immediately report the following:

- a) incidents of child abuse in the studio setting;
 - b) suspicious, threatening, or escalating behaviour by a studio staff member or volunteer;
 - c) non-compliance with the *Child Protection Plan*;
 - c) disclosures of abuse by children – at home, in the studio setting or otherwise;
- Studio staff must also report potential indicators of child abuse, including physical marks on a child or suspicious unexplained changes in a child's physical, mental, or emotional health.

The *Child Protection Plan* must include procedures for reporting against teachers. Reporting guidelines in the *Child Protection Plan* must comply with all government legislation. If any discrepancies exist, government legislation takes precedence over any guidelines outlined in the *Child Protection Plan*.

Education and Information

All teachers, employees and volunteers who work with children and/or youth must be aware of the contents of this *Child Protection Policy* and the *Child Protection Plan*. It is the responsibility of The Bee's Keys through the studio owner to ensure this information has been communicated through individual meetings, group sessions, and/or other means as outlined in the *Child Protection Plan*.

Copies of the *Child Protection Policy* and *Child Protection Plan* must be available to the families of enrolled students. Copies of the *Child Protection Policy* and *Child Protection Plan* will be distributed upon request.

Additional information will be provided to parents, teachers, and volunteers for activities and/or events beyond the scope of these documents.

Child Protection Plan

Overview: Reducing Risk

The Bee's Keys recognises the following risks associated with the teaching of children:

- a. A child may become physically ill or injured during a lesson or studio activity at no fault of the teacher.
- b. A child may be subject to abuse or mistreatment by an adult.
- c. A child may be subject to maltreatment or accidental injury due to insufficient supervision and/or adult assistance.
- d. An adult or teen volunteer may be subject to reputation-harming allegations of abuse or misconduct.

The Bee's Keys strives to mitigate these risks by:

1. Having a clear plan for responding to medical needs.
2. Teacher screening and maintaining a record of volunteers.
3. Mandating minimum child-adult ratios and having clear expectations regarding supervision.
4. Having a visible teaching space.
5. Having clear expectations of teacher responsibilities and limitations.
6. Having clear protocols for reporting and documenting.
7. Reviewing studio directives and protocols annually to assess their effectiveness in the changing teaching environment.

Physical Health and Medical Response

Regular Students

Registration forms are required for every student enrolled in lessons at The Bee's Keys. This includes but is not limited to private lessons, group lessons and online lessons. The registration form will request information identifying all relevant physical/health and education needs of the child. This information will be maintained in a secure location by the studio owner. Should the studio owner not be the primary teacher, the owner will share the relevant information with the teacher who works directly with the child. The limits of confidentiality will be stated on the registration form.

Communicable Illness, First Aid, Medication

Parents/guardians are asked not to bring their child to piano lessons if they have a communicable illness. A parent will be contacted if illness becomes evident during a lesson or event.

The Bee's Keys values teachers and volunteers who have first aid training; however, the studio does not guarantee that all teachers will have first aid training. If an injury occurs, a teacher or volunteer with the appropriate training will attend to the child (if present). The child's parent/guardian will be notified immediately, and additional medical assistance will be sought (if required). A first aid kit will be available in the studio at all times.

If your child has been prescribed emergency medication (like an EpiPen), it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to ensure the teacher(s) know of its whereabouts and how to administer it should the need arise.

Chronic Illness, Disability, Allergies, Dietary Restrictions

Parents or guardians who enrol their children in piano lessons at The Bee's Keys must disclose any chronic illness, disability (including any learning disability) or allergy that may impact the child's health and/or safety and/or learning requirements while they are under the supervision and instruction of the studio teacher.

Screening and Accountability

Everyone (age 16+) wishing to teach or volunteer with children at The Bee's Keys must apply and be formally approved. To ensure that The Bee's Keys has adequate information to assess the suitability of the applicant for teaching children, the applicant must submit:

- A completed Application
- An Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check

In addition, the applicant will be expected to:

- Provide a minimum of two references (as outlined on the application)
- Engage in a one-on-one interview with the studio owner

Supervision and Visibility

Supervision

The adult-child ratio will adhere to the following:

- One (1) approved adult educator per student in private lessons
- One (1) approved adult for every (4) school-aged children in group lessons at the studio
- One (1) approved adult for every (3) school-aged children in online group lessons

While following this guideline, The Bee's Keys is not claiming to offer daycare services.

Arrival and Dismissal

The children who take piano lessons represent a variety of ages, needs, and levels of maturity. The piano studio recognises that some children have the maturity and developmental readiness to act with more self-direction than others. The child's parent/guardian is best able to assess when a child can act with increased autonomy. Therefore The Bee's Keys operates under the following guidelines for arrival and dismissal unless alternate arrangements are agreed upon between the parent and primary music teacher.

- The parent/guardian will ensure safe entry of the child into the studio waiting area at the time of drop-off and will be ready and on time for collection.
- The teacher will keep a record of attendance.
- No child under the age of 12 who is taking piano lessons at The Bee's Keys will be dismissed from the studio facility property autonomously.
- All children under the age of 12 must remain inside the studio facility until the parent/guardian has come inside to retrieve them.
- The child will be dismissed to an alternative adult only if the primary parent/guardian has made prior arrangement by email earlier in the lesson day.
- A child 12 years of age or older who arrives at piano lessons autonomously (e.g. an older child or a youth who walks to piano lessons) may also leave piano lessons autonomously. If a child over the age of 12 is brought to lessons by a parent or guardian, the child will not be dismissed to leave the facility autonomously unless the parent or guardian notifies the teacher that this is permissible.

- If a child is brought to piano lessons by someone other than the child's parent/guardian, it is presumed that the person who dropped off the child has the authority also to pick the child up.

Visibility: Physical Space and Oversight

The physical space designated as the "studio" must be visible to others. Ideally, the studio door will either have a window in it (with a clear view of the teaching piano) or, if the door is solid, be left ajar or open for the duration of all lessons. If this is not possible, the teacher requests that lessons be recorded either by audio or video technology for the entirety of the lesson time.

For group lessons with volunteers, the studio acknowledges that there may be times when one teacher must leave the room momentarily, if:

- One teacher or volunteer must escort a child to the bathroom or to their parent;
- One teacher or volunteer must leave to respond to an emergency;
- One teacher or volunteer must otherwise leave for a period of no more than five minutes.

The remaining teacher(s) must still maintain visibility at all times.

Teacher Responsibilities and Limitations

Washroom

Students are required to go to the bathroom on their own, and for this reason, the studio reserves the right to decline teaching children who are not old enough to do so autonomously. Because piano lessons usually take one hour or less, parents must request that they ensure their child has used the washroom prior to arriving for their lesson.

When a child asks for permission to use the washroom, the teacher is responsible for tracking the child's whereabouts. It is expected that the child will go straight to and from the washroom without delay and will respect the washroom facility. If the child does not respect the facility, the teacher will note the behaviour and inform the parents.

Controlled Access

Children taking piano lessons are to be under the supervision of an approved teacher and volunteers only. Adults who have not been approved will not be permitted to

facilitate. Exceptions to this rule include parents coming to pick up or drop off their children and parents attending studio-related events.

Discipline

The teacher is expected to communicate clear boundaries of acceptable behaviour to The Bee's Keys students. The teacher is expected to:

- Introduce themselves to any new students, explain the teacher's role, and explain what is expected of the students in lessons.
- Remind all children of expected behaviour prior to an activity that takes place off-site (e.g. at a piano recital hall or community venue).

Intervention first includes a verbal warning (unless immediate threat precludes).

Acceptable interventions include:

- Assertive, but calm, verbal correction
- Redirecting a child to another activity or behaviour

Under no circumstances are the following considered acceptable forms of discipline:

- Yelling or screaming at children
- Threatening a child
- Corporal punishment (striking hands or any form of physical recourse)
- Humiliation (e.g. insulting the child, taunting, "making an example" of a child)
- Use of a "naughty chair" or sitting a child in the corner
- Denying food (including any planned group lesson snack)

Physical Touch

It is the primary goal of the teacher to ensure the comfort of students. Piano teaching requires a limited amount of hands-on instruction. *For the purpose of instruction*, the piano teacher may, with the student's consent, touch them instructionally in very limited circumstances. The teacher may need to touch students in the following circumstances as there is no better way to instruct them in their physical approach to the piano:

- *correct hand position*: move arms, elbows, wrists and hands to adjust and improve technique;
- *slur gestures*: manipulate arms and elbows;
- *pedal technique*: move feet and ankles;
- *seated posture*, adjustments to shoulder and backbone.

Approved teachers and volunteers need not refuse social physical contact with children; however, the following guidelines must be observed for children's safety and emotional well-being and to protect the adult(s).

A teacher/volunteer may:

- Return a hug that a child initiates in a public space visible to others/volunteers.
- Offer high-fives, handshakes, and fist-bumps

A teacher/volunteer must not:

- Kiss a child.
- Request a hug from a child.
- Touch a child in a sexually suggestive way.
- Allow or invite a child over the age of five to sit on a teacher or volunteers lap.
- Touch a child who denies consent, is upset by touch, and/or pulls away.
- Physically discipline a child (slap hands)

Reporting

The Bee's Keys' *Child Protection Plan* Requires that the studio owner and/or teachers, employees and volunteers report all:

Non-compliance with the Child Protection Plan;

Suspicious, threatening or escalating behaviour by a teacher, employee or volunteer;

Incidents of child abuse in the teaching setting;

Disclosures of abuse by children – at home, in the teaching setting or otherwise;

Potential indicators of child abuse, including physical marks on a child or suspicious unexplained changes in a child's physical, mental, or emotional health

When to Report to a Child Protection Agency

Abuse by Parents or in a Child's Home

Children should be able to live without fear of abuse. Parents and/or guardians are required to provide for their children's physical, emotional and developmental needs. A piano teacher does not have the information, tools or authority to intervene if he/she suspects a child is being neglected or abused. In Swindon, the

<https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk> has programs and services designed to support children and their families. This department employs people trained to investigate allegations of abuse and who have the authority to intervene when necessary through [The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub](#).

Professionals working in Swindon Safeguarding Partnership need as much information as possible to make accurate and informed assessments, match families with appropriate resources and intervene when necessary to reduce risk to a child/children. Therefore, it is the legal requirement that all citizens report to the swindonmash@swindon.gov.uk if they have information about a child who has experienced or is at risk of experiencing:

- Physical, emotional or sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Exposure to illegal drug use
- Exposure to family violence

In line with this legal responsibility, The Bee's Keys requires all teachers, employees and volunteers to contact a child protection agency if they:

- Witness a parent abuse their child.
- Are told by a child that they: have been abused at home (by anyone), are fearful of abuse at home, or that another child in their home has experienced abuse.
- Are told by a child of drug abuse or violence in their home.

If more than one person witnesses the abuse or receives a disclosure, each person is legally obligated to report the information to a child protection agency.

Abuse in the Piano Studio

If abuse is alleged to have happened in the context of piano teaching, the studio owner will:

Immediately notify the child's parents/caregiver

- a. Notify the studio's insurance company
- b. Consult legal representation
- c. Notify the police or a child protection agency (if applicable)
- d. Suspend the teacher/volunteer

A verified allegation of abuse will always result in the dismissal of a teacher/employee/volunteer.

How do I tell if it's abuse?

It is the responsibility of the child protection agencies to investigate any suspicions and allegations of abuse. You do not need to be certain that abuse has occurred before you make a report. No one who makes a report in good faith will be held responsible for misunderstandings or inaccurate information. Follow your instincts. Use your discernment. If you suspect abuse has occurred or may occur, report it.

Dismissal of Teachers, Employees or Volunteers

Reasons for Dismissal

A teacher, employee or volunteer will be dismissed:

- immediately, upon confirmation that a teacher or volunteer has hurt or abused a child (inside or outside the piano studio context)
- on the recommendation of the studio owner based on confidentially-held information suggesting the future potential of risk to a child
- at the recommendation of the studio owner based on new information that suggests that the teacher or volunteer may, or may have already put a child at risk for any reason (note: allegations against a person do not have to be conclusively verified before a teacher or volunteer is dismissed).
- recurring or unresolved issues of non-compliance with the child protection plan or policy
- on the recommendation of the studio owner if a teacher or volunteer breaches the trust of the studio in another area

Dismissal Process

Whenever safe and possible, warnings should be given before dismissal. If dismissal is likely or required, the teacher or volunteer should be notified in person, if possible and safe to do so. The record of teachers and volunteers must be updated with respect to that person.

Record Keeping and Documentation

All physical records must be kept in a locked cabinet or drawer. Any records stored electronically must be encrypted or kept in a password-protected folder. Access to files must be restricted to the studio owner.

- Access to privileged information about a child or their family (as contained on registration forms, permission slips, etc.) should be restricted to the studio owner. Pertinent information, including but not limited to: allergies, developmental needs and/or safety concerns, should be communicated to other teachers if needed by the studio owner.
- Access to privileged information about teachers and volunteers/volunteer applicants should be limited to the studio owner, who is responsible for approving and/or dismissing teachers and volunteers.

Volunteer Records

The Bee's Keys must have both a master record of all teachers and volunteers and their approval status and individual files containing each applicant/volunteer's personal information/volunteer.

Master Record

The Bee's Keys will keep a master record listing: all teachers, their status (pre-approved, not approved, active, retired, dismissed), and their years served. This list will be updated annually. It is recommended that this is done simultaneously as an annual training/information session for new and/or returning teachers and volunteers.

Individual File: Pre-Approval

Before an applicant can be approved as a piano teacher or volunteer at The Bee's Keys, they must successfully go through an approval process.

As part of the approval process, the studio owner will gather:

- A completed volunteer application
- Criminal record checks (for those 16+)
- Child protection checks (for those 16+)
- Enhanced DBS Check
- Any relevant concerns documented from references

The final approval decision will also be documented.

All pre-approval documentation will remain on file for all approved, active volunteers.

Documentation associated with applications left incomplete may be destroyed after one year.

Individual File: Unapproved Applicants

The status of unapproved applicants will remain on the master record. The reason(s) for their status will be documented, but no further file is required.

Individual File: Active teachers, employees and volunteers

The Bee's Keys will maintain an open file for all approved, active teachers, employees and volunteers. The file must include the teacher's or volunteer's application and supporting documentation and any new documentation required for ongoing assessment.

Formal performance evaluations are not required of teachers, employees or volunteers. Active files are only intended to collect information relevant to assess risk. Active files must also include a written record of:

- all formal complaints made against the teacher, employee or volunteer;
- details of any resulting investigations and conclusions;
- any related (studio-offered or sponsored) training received and/or workshops the individual attended; and
- any documentation received that prompts a reassessment of a teacher's, employee's or volunteer's approval status

Individual File: Retired Individuals

If an approved teacher, employee or volunteer has not been active in the studio for one year (12 consecutive months) or longer, they will be considered "retired" and will lose their approval.

The studio owner is not required to keep detailed records of retired persons. At the discretion of the studio owner, portions of a retired teacher's, employee's or volunteer's *active file* may be preserved, such as a record of complaints. All other information may be destroyed, always in compliance with data information and privacy laws.

Individual File: Dismissed Individuals

After the dismissal of a person, their status must be immediately updated on the master record. The reason for their dismissal must be noted in their file.

Records of any complaints, follow-up, and disciplinary action that preceded dismissal may also be kept on file. This information may be kept for the purpose of reassessment, should the dismissed person reapply for a volunteer position or as required for legal purposes or investigations.

Education and Information

New Teachers, Employees and Volunteers

Every new piano teacher, employee and volunteer must be given a copy of The Bee's Keys' *Child Protection Policy* and *Child Protection Plan*. Each one must be given the opportunity to ask questions about its purpose and/or its implementation. This may occur through any of the following means:

- In a meeting with the studio owner and other teachers
- In a one-on-one meeting with the studio owner
- In a workshop/information session offered by the studio (offered annually)

All new teachers, employees and volunteers must become familiar with and agree to adhere to, The Bee's Keys' *Child Protection Plan* prior to teaching, working or volunteering. A signed declaration is required.

Information and Training

The Bee's Keys will offer an annual workshop/information session to educate all teachers, employees and volunteers on: indicators of child abuse, reporting, safety in private teaching, and to highlight the studio's *Child Protection Policy and Plan*. This workshop will be open to the entire staff but is required for all new teachers, employees and volunteers. All active teachers, employees and volunteers are strongly encouraged to participate.

Updated copies of the *Child Protection Policy* and *Child Protection Plan* will always be available upon request.

Efficacy

As per the *Child Protection Policy*, this *Child Protection Plan* shall be reviewed annually by the studio owner or board to evaluate its efficacy and practicality.

At each review, it must be asked:

- Does the scope of this plan continue to reflect the needs of today's teachers and students? Should it be expanded or revised?
- Have there been changes to legislation or insurance policies that require revisions to this Plan?
- Does the studio still have the people and resources required to follow the directives of this Plan?
- In the previous year, have there been child protection concerns? Were they foreseeable? Did this document provide an appropriate framework to respond?
- Has this Plan provided clarity, or does it need clarification?

If the review identifies inadequacies in the *Child Protection Plan*, The Bee's Keys must make a plan to revise the Plan.