



THE SONGWRITING CHARITY

Empowering young people and communities through songwriting and music production

Nathan Timothy Foundation | Charity No. 1146228 | Company No. 7719125

SAFEGUARDING POLICY (January 2026 – January 2028)

Chief Executive: Nathan Timothy

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Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Peter Rhodes

DSL Email: peter@songwritingcharity.org

Review Date: January 2028

At The Songwriting Charity, we will often encounter young people in situations that give cause for concern and that need to be handled confidentially. It is essential that we differentiate clearly between issues that arise from a young person's bullying or being bullied (which can be dealt with within the organisation), and situations that appear to involve the emotional, psychological, physical or sexual abuse of a young person (which should be referred to social services and/or the police). This policy exists to address situations where there is a suggestion that abuse has occurred.

This Safeguarding Policy forms part of the terms and conditions of employment for all staff, members of the management committee and partners of The Songwriting Charity, and applies to all activities where children and young people under 18 years of age are present, and to all working in such activities, whether as an employee, volunteer, management representative or partner.

1. Mission Statement

The Songwriting Charity is concerned about the welfare and safety of all the young people that it works with and attempts to create an environment in which young people feel secure, valued, listened to and are taken seriously.

2. General Principles

- All Songwriting Charity staff and volunteers should be alert to signs of abuse and report any concerns or suspicions to the designated member of staff for safeguarding.
- All partners who participate in our workshops (whether parents, teachers, youth workers, etc.) are responsible for the safety and well-being of the young people in their charge.
- The designated member of staff for safeguarding is responsible for co-ordinating action within The Songwriting Charity and for liaising with other agencies on safeguarding issues. All staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding should receive appropriate training.

3. Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Peter Rhodes (peter@songwritingcharity.org). The role of the DSL is to:

- Ensure that The Songwriting Charity's Safeguarding Policy is implemented throughout the organisation's work.

- Ensure that all necessary safeguarding-related enquiries, procedures and investigations are carried out (e.g. all staff and volunteers must be police checked before commencing work with young people, or having access to any sensitive information regarding the young people we work with), and to report the results of such screening enquiries to the Management Committee.
- Ensure secure and confidential record-keeping on safeguarding matters, that a "need to know" confidentiality policy is preserved and that all staff, volunteers, and members of the management committee apply themselves fully to the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Liaise with social services and the police in the relevant boroughs on safeguarding matters, both formally and informally.
- Report on the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy at all management committee meetings.
- Report allegations and suspicions of abuse to the appropriate authorities.
- Ensure adequate and appropriate induction and training for all staff and volunteers on safeguarding matters.
- Ensure that all activities carried out by The Songwriting Charity satisfy safeguarding requirements with regard to personnel, practices and premises.
- Check and countersign all incident reports made by staff and volunteers, making such reference to outside agencies as is appropriate after consultation with the Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive for The Songwriting Charity is Nathan Timothy. He will ensure active compliance with this policy by all working within or for the organisation, and shall work closely with the DSL.

4. Personnel Checks

The Songwriting Charity's aim is to ensure, as far as is possible, that anyone — paid or voluntary — who seeks to work on behalf of The Songwriting Charity with young people and who gains substantial access to them is as safe to do so in safeguarding terms as can be guaranteed. The DSL will ensure that the following checks are carried out on all prospective members of the management committee, staff, and volunteers:

- An enhanced background check with the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS).
- A personal reference from someone nominated by the applicant, who cannot be related to the applicant and who is preferably in a position to comment on the applicant's character, trustworthiness and any previous experience of working with children and young people.

Written consent must be obtained from an applicant before these checks can be carried out. No application can proceed unless such permission is given. No applicant may start to work unsupervised with young people until the above checks have been completed. The Chief Executive may, in consultation with the DSL, authorise an applicant to commence work under one-to-one supervision until checks are completed where there is no reason to believe any difficulty will arise.

The Songwriting Charity's policy is to recheck all staff, volunteers and management committee members with the DBS after two years' service. The onus is on the applicant/employee/volunteer to reveal any conviction, caution, bind-over, probation order or pending prosecution, whether imposed prior to or within the period that they work on Songwriting Charity activities.

The applicant shall produce proof of identity, preferably photographic (e.g. a passport), and of residence (e.g. a utility bill). The DSL shall not accept any previous reference, police check, or social services endorsement provided by an applicant — The Songwriting Charity must in all cases make its own independent enquiries.

4a. Reporting of Personnel Check Results

The DSL will indicate to the Chief Executive whether an applicant is suitable to work on Songwriting Charity activities according to the results of the Personnel checks. Where a Schedule 1 offence is indicated, the DSL must rule an applicant unsuitable, and that person must not undertake any form of

work for The Songwriting Charity. If such an attempt is made by a convicted Schedule One offender or by any person prohibited under legislation from working with children, the DSL shall immediately inform social services and police.

At each meeting of the management committee, the DSL will recommend on the acceptance or rejection of applicants. No details other than that an applicant was accepted or rejected shall be given or minuted. Once all results from personnel checks have been received, the applicant will be invited to attend an interview with the DSL and the Chief Executive. Any discrepancies revealed between the applicant's statements and the results of the checks must be investigated thoroughly.

5. Personnel Records

The DSL shall maintain a confidential file at The Songwriting Charity offices on each applicant which shall contain:

- Copies of all forms, consents and replies.
- A progress check form indicating progress of the checks and replies received.
- Notes for file (where the DSL receives a phone call or other non-written communication, the main points shall be recorded and filed with the applicant's records).

The file of an unsuccessful applicant shall be kept for six months and then safely destroyed. The file of any member of staff who leaves the service of The Songwriting Charity shall be kept for 12 months from the date of leaving employment and then safely destroyed. Anyone working with The Songwriting Charity has the right to inspect the contents of their own confidential file by applying to the DSL, who shall respond within one working day.

6. Activities

Prior to any activity involving children and young people, the DSL shall ensure that the space in which that activity is to take place is adequate and appropriate, and that the organisations that own the premises have the appropriate health and safety procedures in place.

- No volunteer shall be left with fewer than three young people for more than 10 minutes without supervision from a member of staff.
- As a general rule, each group of young people should have a volunteer and a member of staff supervising, or at least two volunteers who are visited by a member of staff at regular intervals.
- All sessions with young people shall be conducted with the provisions and mission statement of this policy in mind.
- All workers shall be aware of the possibility that any of the young people they work with may be suffering abuse outside the project.
- For their own protection, and as good practice and common courtesy, there shall be no physical contact between young people and Songwriting Charity staff or volunteers.

7. Allegations Against Workers or Management

If a child or parent makes allegations against any person working for the organisation, whether paid or unpaid, or a member of the management committee, the following procedure must be followed and incident reports will be made at all stages, as appropriate:

- The Songwriting Charity worker to whom the complaint is made will contact the Chief Executive, who will contact the DSL and the Chair of the management committee immediately. As soon as notified, the DSL will contact Social Services to appraise them of the situation — by informal channels, except where a criminal allegation has been made, in which case formal contact will be made with the Duty Social Worker and the Police.

- The Chair of the management committee should inform the worker against whom the complaint has been made as soon as possible, unless this might prejudice a criminal investigation. The Chair should consult with police to ascertain this.
- If the allegation is of a criminal nature (e.g. sexual abuse, physical assault or inappropriate behaviour), the Chair will start disciplinary proceedings and suspend the person from any activity for reasons of alleged gross misconduct. The matter must then be reported immediately to the Police and Duty Social Worker.
- If no criminal allegation has been made, the DSL will conduct an investigation by gathering as much detail as possible from available sources. The DSL should consider whether suspension of the worker is advisable and make a recommendation to the Chair of the management committee.

In cases where no criminal allegation has been made, once the DSL has conducted the investigation, he/she will report on the outcomes to the Chair and recommend whether the matter should be treated as a disciplinary issue (misconduct or gross misconduct with associated rights of appeal) or dismissed as based on unfounded allegations.

8. Induction and Training

The Songwriting Charity shall ensure that there is adequate and appropriate induction and ongoing training and information to all employed staff, members of the management committee and voluntary workers concerning safeguarding. This training shall be the responsibility of the Chief Executive to devise/ commission and implement, in consultation with the DSL. All members of the management committee, employees and voluntary workers shall have this policy drawn to their attention on joining The Songwriting Charity.

9. Review of This Policy

The management committee, in consultation with the Chief Executive and the DSL, shall review this policy, its effectiveness and issues regarding its implementation every two years. The DSL and the Chief Executive shall ensure that the views of all workers, paid and voluntary, are sought and reflected in this review process, and that any statutory authority input is sought if appropriate.

 **This Policy is Due for Review: January 2028**