RUSSIAN SCHOOL

AND CHOIR IN

GUILDFORD

Safeguarding Policy September 2026

Contents

Safeguarding Contacts..... 3

1. Promotion of safe practice – policy outline.....4
2. Protecting children from harm, abuse or exploitation.....4
3. Commitment to respond to allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse …….. 5
4. Staff and volunteers..... 6
5. Procedures for dealing with concerns and incidents of abuse..... 6
6. DBS checks.....8
7. GDPR.....8
8. RSCG Chaperone Code.....9
9. Child Performance Licenses..... 9

Online Safety.....9-10

Useful external contacts..... 10-11

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Important Safeguarding Contacts

Role	Name	Contact Details
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Marina Shakhnova	nonet@list.ru
Deputy DSL	Olesya Kasparis	olkasparis@yahoo.co.uk

Russian school and choir in Guildford (RSCG) is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people, and recognizes its duty of care under the following legislation and regulations.

- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- The Children Act 1989
- The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)

This safeguarding policy applies to the Principal of school, Classes teacher and Musical teacher, accompanists, staff and all volunteers working with RSCG. Working together, these individuals will endeavor to foster an ethos that embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children, young people and adults.

In order to underpin its approach to safeguarding, RSCG will:

- Take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice
- Protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation; and
- Act appropriately to respond to any allegations, reports or suspicion of abuse.

1. Promotion of safe practice – policy outline

There are six main elements to our policy:

- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Raising awareness, including training key members in child protection issues.
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers follow safe working practice.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse.
- Supporting school and choir members who have particular needs.
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

2. Protecting children from harm, abuse or exploitation

In this policy, we adopt the NSPCC's definition of 'abuse', current at the time of writing, as follows. Child abuse is when a child is intentionally harmed by an adult or another child – it can be over a period of time but can also be a one-off action. It can be physical, sexual or emotional and it can happen in person or online. It can also be a lack of love, care and attention – this is neglect.

Given their regular contact with RSCG's students, the school team and adult helpers with RSCG are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. RSCG will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Make sure that school students know there are adults in RSCG whom they can approach if they are worried.

We will ensure that all staff and volunteers:

- Understand their position of power and influence over school students and do not misuse it in any way.
- Work in an open and transparent way, avoiding any actions that would lead a reasonable person to question their motivation and / or intentions.
- Are mindful about the recording and storage of images of school students.
- Allow school students to change clothes with levels of privacy appropriate to their age, gender, culture and circumstances.

3. Commitment to respond to allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse

RSCG will:

- Ensure we have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
- Ensure the DSL is supported, where possible, by a Deputy DSL. The RSCG's principal (the 'Designated Safeguarding Trustee') will also be nominated to have oversight of safeguarding matters; he/she and the wider management team will work to support the DSL and Deputy DSL.
- Implement recognized and appropriate training that will enable RSCG staff to help safeguard our students.
- Ensure that all adult schools helpers (including temporary volunteers) know the name and contact details of the DSL.
- Ensure that all helpers and volunteers understand their responsibility to be alert to the signs of abuse and to refer any concerns to the DSL.
- Ensure that the school's policy on Child Protection is published on the RSCG website and shared with all parents.
- Co-operate as required with parents and schools with their enquiries regarding child protection matters, to include attendance at case conferences if required.
- Keep records of concerns about children (even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately) and make the DSL aware.
- Ensure all child protection records are kept securely.
- Ensure that there will be no toleration for any forms of bullying or prejudiced behavior towards or among RSCG's students on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, gender or race.

4. Staff and Volunteers

Wherever possible, RSCG will use only volunteer helpers who are either past members of RSCG themselves, parents/family member/guardians of school students, or parents/family members/guardians of former RSCG students. This allows us to have some personal knowledge of all volunteers and negates any need to recruit strangers.

If anyone outside the school is recruited for any role, whether paid or unpaid, temporary or permanent, necessary Disclosure and Barring Service checks will be completed before their role is confirmed.

5. Procedures for dealing with concerns and incidents of abuse

1. If an adult helper suspects abuse of any child, the adult helper must report this as soon as possible to the school director of the relevant department (Junior or Secondary) because he or she may already have some relevant knowledge from other sources. The school director must then make the DSL or Deputy DSL aware of the suspected abuse as soon as possible. If the school director is implicated in the suspected or alleged abuse, the adult helper should instead report the suspected abuse direct to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

2. If there is a suspicion or allegation of abuse against the DSL or Deputy DSL, or in the event that the DSL or Deputy DSL are unavailable, the school director should report the suspect.

3. When the DSL, Deputy DSL is alerted to a concern about abuse or suspected abuse, he or she will first make a decision based on the immediacy of the concern and the following two factors:

   - If a school pupil is in immediate danger or needs emergency medical attention, call the police and/or ambulance service.

   - If the person at the center of the allegation is working with school students at the current time, remove them, in a sensitive manner, from direct contact with school student and follow the procedures following.

4. If neither of these two situations apply, then the DSL, Deputy DSL will:

   - Make a note of the concerns reported to him/her;
   - Speak to the principal to decide how to handle the reported abuse, but excluding from the discussion any person involved in the incident or alleged abuse; and

- Escalate the report by either:
- Raising concerns with the police (for serious or possible criminal offences), in which case RSCG will cooperate with the police in dealing with the reported incident;
- Requesting an assessment by the local authority social care department to determine whether or not a school student is in need of protection, in which case RSCG will cooperate with the local authority in dealing with the reported incident; or
- Mounting an internal investigation (for less serious incidents where it is felt that internal mediation will be successful).

- Where an internal investigation takes place, the DSL/Deputy DSL will:

- Inform all parties involved of the reported abuse as soon as possible.
- Inform the family/guardians of the school student(s) reported to have been abused
- Arrange separate meetings with both parties within 10 days of the reported incident. A joint meeting may be arranged if appropriate.
- Both parties should be given the chance to bring a friend or representative to the meeting;
- Meetings will be attended by the DSL/Deputy DSL;
- All parties will be invited to submit a written statement in advance of the meeting.
- Once meetings have taken place, the DSL/Deputy DSL who attended the meetings will decide on the next steps and will communicate them to all parties in writing within 5 days. The next steps will be either:
- Escalate the incident to the relevant authority;
- Further investigation, with established procedures and timelines to work towards a resolution; or
- A decision or resolution.
- If abuse is found to have taken place, any final resolution or decision will be taken in the best interest of the person who has suffered the abuse, supported by RSCG.

6. DBS checks

- RSCG will carry out a DBS check on all teachers, accompanists and regular adult helpers, and that individual will not take up his/her role until DBS clearance is received. Enhanced DBS checks must be satisfactorily completed in respect of adults who are routinely alone with school students.

- Regular adult helpers will be those who are often involved in supporting school lessons and choir rehearsals and events. These will include the schools liaisons, chaperones and those who often assist with uniform, first aid, general supervision etc.

- Where a DBS check has been done for an individual by another organization within the past three years, and the original check document can be produced for examination, this check will generally be deemed sufficient and be confirmed by RSCG.

- All DBS checks will be renewed every three years.

- There will be helpers who do so on a much more infrequent basis. The regular helpers (often Committee members) will need to be aware of these people and will have a duty to be mindful of how they are tasked, if DBS checks have not been done on them by RSCG. If an infrequent helper has no current DBS check, he/she must not be asked to carry out a role that involves or might involve being alone with school student.

7. GDPR

- RSCG has a comprehensive GDPR Policy, covering the usage and storage of all members', parents and volunteers details.

- Parents are invited to give their consent in writing at the beginning of every academic year to allow RSCG to take photos and record videos of the school for promotional and social media purposes.

- Social media content is managed by the principal and by the management board.

- The use of mobile phones/cameras is not permitted in the school ground and rehearsal area unless permission is granted by the principal or relevant school and choir liaison.

- The use of cameras or mobile phones with camera or filming capability in dressing rooms and other inappropriate environments is forbidden at all times.

8. RSCG Chaperone Code

The welfare and security of students is paramount at RSCG. The role of an RSCG chaperone is to use common sense in applying the required regulations so that RSCG functions as usual and that members' enjoyment and experience of lessons, events, rehearsals and concerts is not compromised.
Any issues arising should be handled sensitively and appropriately to the circumstances and directed through the nominated Lead Chaperone to the Principal. All RSCG registered chaperones are required to adhere to the RSCG Chaperone Policy.

9. Child Performance Licenses

When planning any event that may be considered a performance involving children under school leaving age (who will not reach age of 16 before the end of the summer holidays), RSCG will always consider at the earliest possible stage whether the child will require licensing. Child performance license regulations and guidance set out the requirements for an application to ensure children are properly safeguarded. Where possible RSCG may seek a “body of persons” approval by the relevant local authority.

10. Online Safety

For some high school students, online lessons are provided. RSCG has been maintaining lessons through online platforms. Currently using a secure Microsoft Teams account, the continued suitability of this will be monitored by the board of trustees and the principal.

- To set up an online lesson, RSCG will only make initial contact by phone with parents and students over 16 y.o.
- RSCG communicates with parents by circulating an annual online newsletter, using school emails only. Parents of older members of the school can request that the newsletter is also e-mailed to their child.
- Cyber-bullying by children, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying.
- The online learning portals featured in ‘Useful External Contacts’ (below) will be highlighted to parents, students and staff of RSCG to increase awareness.
- The link to every RSCG online meeting is shared with parents, with clear

instructions not to pass it to anyone other than RSCG students.

- Each schools student's computer, tablet or phone should be used in a communal space in the home (kitchen, lounge, dining room, not a bedroom).
- Appropriate clothing must be worn by anyone in the video (staff, pupil and parents) and appropriate language used by pupils and anyone in the background.
- A parent, adult family member or guardian must be present in the room (or close by) for all under 16s.
- Parents/guardians should activate the meeting for junior school, only show your first name on the screen and please set this up prior to logging into the meeting
- The exchange of information between parents, the publication of homework for students is carried out in the WhatsApp chat of each class.

RSCG will be following Government advice following any resumption of face-to-face lessons and will prioritize the protection and safeguarding of school students, volunteers and staff.

11. Useful external contacts

Name	Description	Contact
Surrey Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA)	Multi-Agency point of reporting of any concerns for the safety of children or vulnerable adults.	0300 470 9100 Out of Hours 01483 517898 Email: cspa@surreycc.gov.uk Urgent cases call police on 999 or 101
Surrey Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	The LADO Service manages allegations against individuals who work or volunteer with children in Surrey.	0300 123 1650 (option 3 LADO) Email: LADO@surreycc.gov.uk

Disclosure and Barring Service	Government agency who carry out checks on the suitability of people to work with children and vulnerable adults	PO Box 181, Darlington, DL1 9FA 01325 953795
Counter-Extremism service	Helpline for advice re safeguarding children from Extremist ideologies	020 7340 7264 email counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk

NSPCC	Support for children who may be at risk	http://www.nspcc.org.uk
Childline	Information support and advice for children	http://www.childline.org.uk/pages/home.aspx
CEOP Thinkuknow	Online Safety Training from UK National Crime Agency	https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/
Anti-Bullying Alliance	Help, tools and advice for people relating to bullying	http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/
Childnet International	Resources to make internet safer for children	http://www.childnet.com/
Saferinternet Centre	UK Safer Internet Advice	http://www.saferinternet.org.uk