

Wokingham Philharmonic Orchestra (WPO)

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

Adopted: 1st September 2025

Review date: 31st August 2026

1. Statement of commitment

Wokingham Philharmonic Orchestra (WPO) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We believe that children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind and that their welfare is paramount.

WPO is an adult amateur orchestra. We do not actively recruit children or run youth activities. We recognize however that older teenagers (under 18) may occasionally join the orchestra or participate in rehearsals, concerts, or related events. Where this is appropriate, we are keen to be able to offer this opportunity. This policy sets out how WPO will safeguard any child or young person who participates in WPO rehearsals, performances, or related activities.

In line with national safeguarding guidance (NSPCC, DfE) and sector (Making Music) advice, WPO adopts a proportionate, risk-based approach appropriate to an adult amateur orchestra with low-level involvement of under-18s.

2. Scope of this policy

This policy applies to:

- All WPO members
- Committee members
- Conductors, leaders, tutors, and guest artists
- Volunteers and helpers
- Anyone working on behalf of WPO

It applies to all WPO activities, including rehearsals, concerts, rehearsals at external venues, social activities linked to orchestra business, and online communications.

WPO maintains a formal written risk assessment for activities involving children and young people; this is available on request.

3. Definitions

Child / young person: Anyone under the age of 18.

Safeguarding: The action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Child protection: Action taken when there is a concern that a child is suffering or is at risk of significant harm.

4. Nature of WPO's contact with children

WPO's involvement with children and young people is considered **low level**. This may include:

- An individual aged < 18 years joining the orchestra as a playing member
- A young person performing as a soloist with the orchestra
- WPO does **not** provide pastoral care, transport, or supervision for children outside rehearsal and performance contexts.

5. Named Safeguarding Lead

WPO has a named Safeguarding Lead responsible for safeguarding matters:

Safeguarding Lead:

- Name: Dr Joanne Spinks
- Role: Committee Secretary, Player, Consultant Paediatrician
- External enquiries should be made via the Contact Us form on the WPO website.

In the absence of the Safeguarding Lead, concerns should be raised with the Chair of WPO.

6. Roles and responsibilities

All members and volunteers

- Have a responsibility to be alert to safeguarding concerns
- Must follow this policy and WPO's Code of Conduct
- Must report any concerns promptly to the Safeguarding Lead

Safeguarding Lead

- Acts as the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns
- Decides on appropriate action, including referral to external agencies
- Keeps confidential records of concerns and actions taken

7. Code of conduct

All adults involved with WPO must:

- Treat children and young people with respect and dignity
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times
- Avoid situations where they are alone with a child or young person wherever possible

- Avoid unnecessary physical contact
- Communicate with under-18s via parents/carers where appropriate
- Never engage in behaviour that could be misinterpreted or cause harm

Adults must **not**:

- Arrange to meet a child alone outside WPO activities
- Give lifts to children unless explicitly agreed with parents/carers and the Safeguarding Lead
- Use inappropriate language or behaviour
- Form personal or social relationships with children outside orchestra activity

8. Parental consent, communication and photography

For any child or young person under 18 participating in WPO activities:

- Written consent will be obtained from a parent or carer
- Emergency contact details will be held securely
- Communication will normally be via the parent or carer

WPO activities take place in group settings with multiple adults present. WPO does not provide formal supervision or chaperoning, and parents or carers remain responsible for their child.

Photography and recording:

Photographs, video or audio recordings of under-18s will not be used publicly (including websites and social media) without explicit parental consent.

Audience members will be discouraged from photography and videos where under 18 performers are present.

9. Reporting safeguarding concerns

If a child is in immediate danger

- Call **999** immediately
- Inform the Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible
- Non-emergency concerns
- Report concerns promptly to the Safeguarding Lead
- Do not investigate or promise confidentiality
- Record concerns factually and accurately

The Safeguarding Lead will decide whether to:

- Monitor the situation

- Seek advice
- Refer to Children's Social Care or the Police

10. Confidentiality and record keeping

Safeguarding information will be shared only on a need-to-know basis

Records will be stored securely and confidentially

Information may be shared without consent where necessary to protect a child

11. Allegations against adults

Any allegation against a member or volunteer will:

- Be taken seriously
- Be reported to the Safeguarding Lead immediately
- Be managed in line with local authority guidance, including referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate

12. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- There is a significant change in WPO's activities
- Legislation or best practice changes
- A safeguarding incident highlights the need for review

Approved by: WPO Committee