

SUFFOLK COUNTY MUSIC SERVICE (SCMS)

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Signature of Chair of Governors:	N/A
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As a minimum, this policy is reviewed and approved annually by the SLT. However, minor amendments may be made in the interim in response to developments in legislation, guidance, national policy or best practice. In such circumstances, SCMS staff will be informed and advised by the Head of Service.	

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Ethos and values of the Suffolk County Music Service community

“Children have the right to protection from all forms of violence (physical or mental). They must be kept safe from harm, and they must be given proper care by those looking after them.” [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19]

Suffolk County Music Service actively promotes positive interpersonal relations; it is completely opposed to bullying and seeks to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the prevention of all forms of bullying among all Suffolk Youth Music and County Music Group members. We will not tolerate behaviour entirely contrary to our values and principles; all members of our Society have a right to play, experience and share music and to socialise in a secure and caring environment and they also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

Together we will stop bullying (Suffolk County Music Service commitment)

The purpose of this Policy is:

- To prevent bullying from happening within Suffolk County Music Service activities, as much as is possible.
- When bullying does happen, to make sure it is stopped as soon as possible and that those involved receive the support they need.
- To provide information to all staff, volunteers, children, and their families about what we should all do to prevent and deal with bullying.

Definition of terms

Bullying. The DfE definition of bullying is, “Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences”. The DfE definition also recognises the imbalance of power between the victim and perpetrator.

Harassment is a similar phenomenon. Should an individual or group be the victim of constant verbal or physical abuse, then this is harassment. It can also take a sexual form, when the victim is being targeted by the perpetrator due to his/her gender or gender reassignment.

Discrimination is the deliberate targeting of individuals or groups due to their religious beliefs, disability (including SEN), gender, appearance or race. It can be verbal and physical in nature.

The above terms often overlap and could all be applicable in certain cases.

Bullying and Keeping Children Safe

Educational settings are duty –bound to safeguard children and young people (see SCMS Policy on website [Safeguarding](#))

Under the Children Act 1989, a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is ‘reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm’. Where this is the case, SCMS staff should report their concerns to their local authority children’s social care. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

Bullying and Equality

The **Equality Act** states that it is unlawful [for a school] to discriminate against a student or prospective student by treating them less favourably because of their:

- Sex
- Race
- Disability (including special educational needs)
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity

Bullying and Harassment/Threatening Behaviour

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from **Harassment Act 1997**, the **Malicious Communications Act 1988**, the **Communications Act 2003**, and the **Public Order Act 1986**. If SCMS staff feel that an offence may have been committed, they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the **Malicious Communications Act 1988**, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety.

Understanding bullying behaviour

SCMS recognises that:

- not all hurtful behaviour is bullying; it is important to understand when that term might apply.
- bullying is “behaviour, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, physically or emotionally”. (*Safe from bullying in youth activities, DCSF 2009*)
- one person or a group can bully others.
- bullying can occur either face to face between individuals or groups or online, using information technology, such as computers or mobile phones.
- bullying can include:
 - o verbal teasing or making fun of someone.
 - o excluding children from games and conversations.
 - o pressurising other children not to be friends with the person who is being bullied.
 - o spreading hurtful rumours or passing round inappropriate photographs/ images/drawings.
 - o shouting at or verbally abusing someone.
 - o stealing or damaging someone’s belongings.
 - o making threats.
 - o forcing someone to do something embarrassing, harmful, or dangerous.
 - o harassment on the basis of race, gender, sexuality or disability.
 - o physical or sexual assault (although all sexual incidents and all but very minor physical incidents constitute abuse and must be dealt with in accordance with child protection procedures).
- bullying causes real distress. It can affect a person’s health and development and, at the extreme, can cause significant harm.
- people are often targeted by bullies because they appear different from others.
- we all have a role to play in preventing bullying and putting a stop to bullying.

Examples of bullying within SCMS settings might include (but not be limited to):

- * *Physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting at another player.*
- * *Interfering with another player’s property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it.*
- * *Using offensive names when addressing another player.*
- * *Teasing or spreading rumours about another player or his/her family.*
- * *Belittling another player’s abilities and achievements.*
- * *Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another player.*
- * *Excluding another player from a group activity.*
- * *Ridiculing another player’s appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms.*
- * *Misusing technology (internet or mobiles) to hurt or humiliate another player.*

Preventing Bullying:

We will seek to prevent bullying, wherever it takes place by:

1. Providing inspirational, happy and comfortable environments, which positively encourage students to want to come, learn and play music together.
2. Developing a culture of mutual respect within our activities. Each one of us must acknowledge, understand and respect every other individual. SCMS staff are expected to model respect in all their interactions and general demeanour.
3. Encouraging our students to inform a trusted adult as soon as they suspect they or anyone else is being bullied
4. Requiring our staff to agree in writing to the SCMS Code of Conduct, on induction and thereafter annually, that sets out the terms of how everyone involved in Suffolk County Music Service is expected to behave, both in face-to-face contact and online.
5. Publishing and sharing to our students and members a new code of behaviour that sets out the terms of how everyone involved in Suffolk County Music Service is expected to behave, both in face-to-face contact and online; (SCMS Student Code of Conduct –published September 2023)
6. Welcoming new members and helping them to settle in; this includes tutor awareness of new members at all rehearsals and buddying them up at breaktimes to make sure that they have friends to talk to; monitoring friendship groups and making sure that that no-one, who does not want to be by themselves, has to do so; provision of dedicated pastoral staff attached to the County Music Groups who monitor rehearsals, breaktimes and non-rehearsal times during rehearsals days, residential and overseas tours.
7. Making sure that all staff, volunteers, children, and young people who use Suffolk County Music Service have read, understood, and agree to abide by our anti-bullying policy on induction (e.g., when signing up for programmes at the beginning of the year or for new programmes during the year).
8. Providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of bullying, including racial, sexist, homophobic and sexual bullying; allowing SCMS staff to determine whether an incident meets the criteria for child-on-child abuse, is a racist, transphobic or homophobic incident., or can be dealt with following SCMS internal procedures; promoting a culture of vigilance ('It could happen here') for staff within our ensembles
9. Evaluating the Anti-Bullying Policy regularly to check that the anti-bullying measures are working well.
10. Ensuring that direct communication channels are clearly identified to address any concerns.

How bullying incidents are dealt with:

We ask and expect that incidents of bullying are reported by any individual(s) immediately, whether directly or indirectly involved. The student(s) should:

- Report any instances of bullying to a trusted member of staff (their ensemble leader or tutor will likely be the first option) or directly to the Music Service DSL (Ben Chadwick) or ADSLs (Tracey Rayner, Mark Sewell, Lewis Blythe, Helen Simms)
- Students should feel confident that they will be believed & protected once a disclosure has been made. All bullying cases reported will be taken seriously and acted upon immediately.
- If a student(s) suspect that bullying is taking place to another member of our ensemble programme, this should be reported as above.

If an incident of bullying is observed by a staff member, the staff member will:

- intervene to remove the target of the bullying (victim) from the situation (if experiencing it in real time)
- listen to the victim's account of the event and record all relevant information accurately incl. potential witnesses, date, time, location etc.
- listen to the person accused of bullying's account of the event and follow the above point
- speak to any witnesses mentioned by either party and record all relevant information accurately
- call the parents of both parties to share that an incident has taken place and share details
- SLT, led by the Head of Service, will meet to decide on appropriate measures to take to resolve the conflict. SCMS reserves the right to use a range of sanctions in dealing with allegations of bullying. If a student is found guilty of bullying, and depending on severity, a written warning will be issued in the first instance and sent to the parents/carers of the student involved. If a student is found to be bullying on a second occasion, the expectation is that they will be excluded from further involvement in the programme. Should a student be excluded from the programme for reasons of bullying no refund will be available for fees already paid.
- SLT will communicate the ratified course of action with all parties
- If there is any dispute over the outcomes, the Head of Service will enlist the SCC Safeguarding Liaison Officer to act as mediator
- A record of the incident and outcomes will be created and stored within the 'Safeguarding Incident Record' for the County Music Service

Cyberbullying

Students and parents/carers are encouraged to report cases of cyberbullying just as they would any other perceived examples of bullying. The collection of screenshots or messages can provide invaluable evidence in dealing with these cases and cyberbullying will be treated as robustly as any other bullying scenario.

Child-on-child abuse

Any bullying in the form of child-on-child abuse will be dealt with in accordance with procedures laid down in the SCMS Child Safety and Safeguarding Policy [Safeguarding](#)

Racist, transphobic or homophobic incidents

If the bullying is racist, transphobic or homophobic in nature it should also be reported to SCMS SLT who will if appropriate contact the relevant external agencies.

Measuring Progress:

We will maintain a pastoral log of bullying incidents, located with the Safeguarding Incident Recording Log, identify and evaluate the number and type of events and review the policy annually in the light of its effectiveness in helping reduce such incidents.

Communicating the Policy:

We will share the policy:

- With SCMS staff on induction and thereafter annually
- With parents/carers and students on the Safeguarding page of our website [Safeguarding](#)
- With our students through our interactions with them, through the role models which are our staff and through their/parental agreement (via the SCMS website as they sign up for an activity) to fulfilling the expectations for conduct of all parties in our SYM/CMG activities.

Related documents:

SCMS Safeguarding Policy (2025-26 v6.0) [Safeguarding](#)

SCMS staff code of conduct (internal to SCMS staff, agreed on induction and thereafter annually)

SYM/CMG Student code of conduct (all members to sign)

SCMS EDI Strategy [EDI-Strategy-for-website.pdf \(suffolkcountymusicservice.co.uk\)](#)

Related advice:

[Preventing bullying including cyberbullying](#) - DfE advice

[Anti-Bullying Policies \(anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk\)](#)

[Mental health and behaviour in schools guidance.](#)

Appendix 1 : SCMS Anti-Bullying Statement, Roles and Resonsibilities

Suffolk County Music Service supports the following principles:

- * Members have a right to play music in an environment free from intimidation and fear.
- * The needs of the victim are paramount, but the needs of the bully are also considered.
- * We will not tolerate bullying behaviour.
- * Bullied (and all) individuals will be listened to.
- * Reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.
- * Action will be taken if anyone is found to be behaving in this way during Suffolk County Music Service time, although disciplinary action will take account of special educational needs or disabilities that the player involved may have.
- * The prevention of bullying is everyone's responsibility (see below)

Roles and Responsibilities

The Responsibilities of SCMS Staff.

We expect our staff to:

- * Foster in our players self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others.
- * Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our players.
- * Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
- * Listen to players who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- * Report suspected cases of bullying to the SCMS Senior Leadership Team (Safeguarding Leads).
- * Assist SCMS SLT to follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and to report back promptly and fully on the action that has been taken.
- * Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.

The Responsibilities of SCMS SYM and CMG players:

We expect our players to:

- * Read, follow and uphold the student code of conduct
- * Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- * Do all that is reasonable to protect the player who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- * Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:

- * Talk to any member of SCMS staff connected to the ensemble or to the Senior Leadership team, or contact us in confidence by email to Benjamin.Chadwick@suffolk.gov.uk Tracey.Rayner@suffolk.gov.uk Helen.Simms@suffolk.gov.uk Mark.Sewell@suffolk.gov.uk Lewis.Blythe@suffolk.gov.uk

The Responsibilities of SCMS Parents and Guardians:

We ask our parents and guardians to support their children and SCMS by:

- * Reading through and discussing with their children the student code of conduct, together with the Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy located on the signup page for SYM and CMG activities and supporting them to fulfil their obligations under the agreement.
- * Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying.
- * Advising their children to report any bullying to SCMS SLT and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other players.
- * Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying.
- * Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- * Keep a written record of any reported instances of bullying and share these with SCMS SLT
- * Informing SCMS of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved;
- * Co-operating with SCMS, if their children are accused of bullying, in trying to ascertain the truth; and pointing out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.

Together we will stop bullying.