



Safeguarding guidance for online instrumental lessons

In light of school closures due to the current coronavirus pandemic, a growing number of instrumental teachers are considering online lessons as a way to maintain their income and support the children and young people that they work with to continue learning over the coming weeks and months. While unfamiliar to many of us, it's never been easier to provide online lessons and a huge variety of platforms are available to support this through video calling facilities, such as Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, Web-ex and Google Hangouts.

Whatever platform you choose, the single most important factor in offering online lessons is to ensure that good safeguarding practice is followed to ensure children and young people are protected and that the same professional standards that would be expected in a face to face lesson apply. The following safeguarding guidance is primarily aimed at self-employed instrumental teachers delivering live online lessons, to a student or students in their own home.

The guidance was written by Tom Deam, DMEH Music Associate, who is himself a practising self-employed instrumental teacher, in consultation with Lewis Gibbs, Head of DMEH and Babcock LDP Education Safeguarding Adviser, Jonathan Galling and reproduced for Torbay, with their kind permission.

If you have any questions or require further guidance please contact Annabelle Knowles, Designated Safeguarding Lead for TMEH by email annabelle.knowles@torbay.gov.uk

1. Arrangements for the date and time of the lesson should be made between the parent/carer and the instrumental teacher only, not the student themselves – it would be advisable to confirm the lesson time and date by email.*
2. The parent/carer must make or answer the video call at the start of the lesson.
3. There should be no direct communication of any kind between the teacher and the student outside of the lesson. Any necessary communication, aside from the lesson itself, should be made through the parent/carer.
4. The parent/carer should be in the same room as the student for at least some of the duration of the lesson and must be present in the home throughout.
5. The parent/carer may record the lesson, should the facility be available. As well as providing an additional safeguard for both student and teacher, this could also be useful for the student in reviewing the lesson.
6. Under no circumstances should the teacher take any recordings or still images of any part of the lesson.
7. The teacher should consider that, during the lesson, they have effectively turned the room from which they are conducting the lesson into an educational setting. The teacher should therefore dress and behave applicably and use appropriate language. The teacher should ensure that nothing inappropriate can be seen in the background by the student. Other people should not be

- in the room if it would not be appropriate for them to be in the same educational setting as the student e.g. it would not be appropriate for a non-DBS checked adult visitor to be in the room.
8. The teacher should stop the lesson if they feel that the setting/attire does not meet expectations. Similarly, parents/carers and students should feel confident and able to stop lessons if they feel the teacher is not meeting expectations or behaving appropriately i.e. suggesting lessons take place in a student's bedroom would be unacceptable.
 9. Where face to face lessons would normally take place in school, a list of online lessons delivered should be sent to the appropriate contact (probably the Music Subject Lead or Designated Safeguarding Lead) at the end of each week – good practice would be to include the student's name and the date, time and duration of each lesson.
 10. The teacher should be aware that any safeguarding concerns or disclosures should be responded to and reported in the same way as they would if they had occurred in the school.
 11. The parent/carer or any other person who has a safeguarding concern relating to the teacher, should report their concern to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) – see contact details below.

*Parents/carers of older students, such as those in Year 12 or 13, will often ask the students themselves to make the arrangements for their instrumental lessons. We strongly advise against this, but should it be unavoidable, the teacher should comply strictly with the following guidance:

- The teacher should ensure that they have explicit written consent from the parent/carer to make such arrangements directly with the student.
- Communications should be kept to an absolute minimum; must only be made via email; and use only written communication e.g. avoid the use of emoji or gifs as these can easily be misconstrued.
- The parent/carer must always be copied into the communication – it is the responsibility of the teacher (not the student) to ensure that the parent/carer is receiving such emails and aware of the arrangements.

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