

West City Music – Child Protection Policy

Approved 14 June 2026

Purpose

West City Music is a volunteer-run community music organisation with members of all ages, including young people under 18. While not legally required to have a Child Protection Policy, West City Music is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for all participants. This policy outlines the principles and procedures that guide our approach to preventing, identifying, and responding to harm, abuse, or neglect involving minors.

1. Guiding Principles

- **Safety first:** The wellbeing of young people is our highest priority.
- **Collective responsibility:** All members, volunteers, tutors and musical directors share responsibility for maintaining safe environments.
- **Transparency:** Interactions with young people must be open, observable, and appropriate.
- **Respect:** Young people are treated with dignity, listened to, and taken seriously.
- **Proactive prevention:** We minimise situations where harm could occur by using safe working practices.

2. Safe Working Practices

- **No 1:1 private situations:** Adults should avoid being alone with a young person in a private or isolated space.
- **Group-based engagement:** Instruction, rehearsals, and conversations with young people should occur in group settings or in open, visible areas.
- **Open-door environments:** Where possible, doors remain open or activities occur in spaces with visibility (e.g., windows, shared rooms).
- **Transport:** Volunteers should not transport young people alone unless unavoidable and with prior caregiver consent.
- **Digital communication:** Wherever possible, communication with young people is initiated through parents/caregivers or group channels, not private 1:1 messaging.
- **Physical contact:** Any physical contact must be appropriate, necessary for musical instruction, and explained beforehand.

3. Identifying and Responding to Concerns

All members, volunteers, tutors and musical directors should be alert to signs of potential harm, including physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, or concerning behaviour by adults or other young people.

If a concern arises:

1. **Ensure immediate safety** of the young person if they are at risk.
2. **Record what you observed or were told**—use the young person’s own words where possible.

3. **Report promptly** to the **West City Music Executive Committee**, who will determine next steps.
4. The Executive Committee may seek advice from **Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children** or the **New Zealand Police** if the concern involves potential abuse or serious harm.
5. **Do not investigate** the concern yourself or promise confidentiality to the young person.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- **All members and volunteers:** Follow safe practices, report concerns, and model respectful behaviour.
- **Musical directors and ensemble managers:** Maintain safe rehearsal environments and support volunteers to follow this policy.
- **Executive Committee:** Receive and document concerns, decide on escalation, maintain records securely, and review this policy bi-annually.

5. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if legislation, best practice, or organisational needs change.