



Safeguarding Policy (Children, Young People and Adults at Risk)

Applies to: All SS trustees, staff, contractors, volunteers and musicians

1. Statement of intent

Southern Sinfonia (SS) believes that all children, young people and adults at risk have the right to be safe and to participate in our activities free from harm, abuse or neglect. We have a duty of care when working in schools, venues and community settings and will act promptly on any concerns.

2. Scope & definitions

This policy covers all SS activities where under-18s or adults at risk are present, including rehearsals, workshops, performances and digital activity. “Adults at risk” are adults with care and support needs who may be unable to protect themselves from harm.

3. Legal & guidance framework

Children Act 1989/2004; Working Together to Safeguard Children; Care Act 2014; Charity Commission guidance; DBS eligibility; UK GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018.

4. Roles & responsibilities

- **Trustees** hold ultimate responsibility for safeguarding.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):**
Vanessa Garside (Chair) — garsidevanessa23@gmail.com

All personnel must follow this policy and attend induction/briefings.

5. Safer recruitment & vetting

- Leaders of activities involving children will be DBS-checked where roles meet eligibility; all others supervised.
- Two references taken for staff/regular contractors working directly with children.
- All personnel sign the SS Code of Conduct.
- External partners must confirm their own safeguarding arrangements in writing.

6. Code of conduct (summary)

- Be professional, patient and respectful; no one-to-one situations out of sight; avoid unnecessary physical contact.

- No direct private contact with children via personal phones/social media.
- Do not photograph or film children without prior written consent (schools manage consents; SS honours opt-outs).
- Never transport a child alone; never accept gifts beyond small tokens; never engage in humiliating, aggressive or sexualised behaviour.

Full code issued at induction.

7. Planning, risk & ratios

- Written risk assessment for each project; align with venue/school policies.
- Ensure suitable adult-to-child ratios (schools retain responsibility for pupil supervision).
- Brief all personnel on arrivals/departures, toilets, first aid and emergency procedures.
- Provide accessible formats and reasonable adjustments for SEND participants.

8. Working with schools, venues and partners

- Schools retain *loco parentis* for pupils; SS staff do not assume this role.
- Venue responsibilities (H&S, evacuation, accessibility) are agreed in advance.
- A simple Memorandum of Understanding sets roles, contacts, reporting and photo/film permissions.

9. Recognising and reporting concerns

- If a child or adult is at **immediate risk**, call 999.
- Otherwise, record concerns factually and **report to the DSL** at once.
- The DSL will consult the school/venue DSL, and where appropriate contact Somerset Council Children's Services (MASH) or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Keep records secure and confidential; do not investigate yourself.

10. Allegations against SS personnel

- Report immediately to the DSL (or Chair of Trustees if the allegation concerns the DSL).
- SS will follow LADO advice; temporary suspension/withdrawal from activity may be necessary pending outcome.

11. Data protection

- Keep safeguarding records securely for 7 years; share only on a strict need-to-know basis.

12. Training & induction

- Induction briefing for all involved; core team refresher training at least every 3 years; event-specific briefings before delivery.

13. Whistleblowing

- Concerns about poor practice or cover-up can be raised with the DSL, Chair of Trustees or directly with the local authority/Charity Commission.

14. Review

- Reviewed annually or after any incident/legislative change.