**ONLINE AND DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY VERSION 1.1**

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Created by:

**This policy established the expectations for Online/Distance Learning between a Bedford Music Cooperative student and teacher from a private home.**

Learning applies to lessons/courses where:

* Students are not able to meet with teachers or other students.
* Students are engaged in the meaningful study through structured activities defined by the Bedford Music Cooperative teacher.

The purpose of this policy is:

* To ensure a high quality learning experience for Online/Distance Learning students
* To make clear the responsibilities of all parties involved and the delivery of the lessons
* To safeguard all parties involved (this is in addition to the Coop’s Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults policy).

**Ensuring the Quality of the Lessons**

The BMC is committed to providing a high quality experience to our students in the online/distance learning environment. BMC’s approach is to design the online learning provision that focuses on the following key areas:

* Adhering to our GDPR policy
* Structure and content – a guide for teachers
* A guide for parents
* Monitoring or progress
* Continuous assessment in line with BMC working practice

**Reporting of Concerns by a Child**

A parent/carer or responsible adult should be within earshot of the child during the online lesson. Students will be told that if they have any concerns before, during or after a lesson they should ask the parent/carer for help. This could include for example:

* Technical issues with the computer or internet connection.
* Practical issues, such as arranging the appropriate space to play their instrument.
* Other issues, such as not being comfortable with what is happening in a lesson.
* Tuning of or problems with the instrument.
* Allowing additional time to set up the technology.

The parent/carer should be aware that the reporting of any safeguarding concerns is the same as under general BMC policy.

**Mechanisms to Identify, Intervene and Escalate any Incident Where Appropriate**

BMC’s online tuition safeguarding follows the same reporting process as with face-to-face lessons. Any concerns can be addressed to BMC’s Designated Safeguarding Leads (names and cotact information are as per BMC’s Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults policy).

**Professional Behaviour and Dress**

As lessons will happen in an informal home environment. It is important that both teachers and students follow the same behaviour as they would in a school environment. This will help minimise any safeguarding risks and thus advice to staff, parents and students includes:

* Having a parent or carer within earshot of the student taking part in the online lesson.
* Appropriate dress (e.g. not wearing pyjamas). Both staff and students should wear clothing that would normally be worn in public.
* Following the teacher’s instructions.
* Asking the teacher before leaving the session (e.g. to go to the loo).
* Not taking phone calls, messaging others or using devices that aren’t requested by the teacher for learning.
* Not having other browsers or apps open during the online lesson to reduce the risk of inappropriate content being displayed with in the “Present” mode (sharing the screen with other participants.

**Location of Online Lessons**

The location in which both students and teachers take part in the online lesson should be in an appropriate room (not in a bedroom for example), and within earshot of a parent or carer. This will ensure the student can raise any concerns, whether practical or related to safeguarding.

Whilst space in houses may be limited, and may be shared with others, the BMC teacher will work with the parents to make sure that whatever space is available to use is neutral, safe, conductive to learning, doesn’t reveal any personal information and doesn’t present a safeguarding risk.

In order to prevent inappropriate content being shown to others via the webcam, the background shown should ideally be neutral and not create a risk of offensive or age-inappropriate content being displayed. For example there shouldn’t be a TV or screen switched on, or posters that may cause offence.

Teachers in particular should receive sufficient training to be able to lead by example and be aware of making the background visible in their online teaching professional and neutral. Teaching space should not reveal any details about the teacher’s personal life. Care should be taken to remove anything that would not be appropriate in a face-to-face lesson either, for example, personal items, laundry drying or anything that may distract students.

Teachers should check with the student at the start of the lesson if they feel comfortable in the environment and that they can stop at any time.

**Parental Involvement and Expectations**

Having the support of a parent/carer in setting up the lesson is often needed and being within earshot is important for safety as well as for practical help. Parents are expected to be present at the start and finish of lessons wherever possible.

The level of involvement of the adult during the lesson will depend on the age of the student. Younger children may need a person in the room to help keep them focused and safe, particularly if it’s a new activity, but too much parental involvement can also be distracting or cause shyness with older students. In general it is recommended that after the first few lessons, the parent/carer is within earshot but not “in the lesson”, particularly with older students wherever possible.

**Screen Sharing and File Sharing**

Google Hangouts allows teachers to show their full screen or a chosen window, including teaching resources or websites. Teachers need to make sure they don’t inadvertently display:

* Personal information – e.g. having a social media website open which may reveal personal information.
* Inappropriate content – e.g. photos, text, apps or websites that may display content unsuitable for children.

For this reason, teachers should have a “clean” screen and desktop and turn off any apps that may interrupt the session (such as alarms, alerts or incoming Skype calls)

File sharing by students is not available in Google Hangouts, but teachers can share attachments in sessions. In order to keep track of this content in case there are any queries, teachers should only share files from their BMC drive to avoid accidentally sharing unsuitable content from their own PC/device.

**Taking Screenshots and Recording Video of Sessions**

Teachers will not make any video recordings or screenshots of sessions. Students will also be instructed not to do this and this will be noted in the guidance for parents.

Although teachers don’t have control of the student’s devices, and so relies on trust, this will minimise the risk of images of children being made or distributed without parental consent.

Although having recordings of sessions available is useful if there are any safeguarding queries, the situation in normal face-to-face lessons is that video recordings of lessons are rarely available, and as parents/carers are asked to be within earshot of the online lessons, the risks associated with online lessons are no different than they would be in a school room with glass door or windows.

**Chat or Instant Messaging**

Chat is available in Google Hangouts. This can be useful as part of the teaching interaction or for sharing teaching resources (e.g. links to music websites or video tutorials). But there are also risks of students:

* Becoming distracted by chat
* Sharing personal information such as phone numbers or social media accounts.
* Using inappropriate language (such as swearing) or bullying.

Students will be reminded to only use chat when directed to by the teacher and that the same standards of behaviour are expected during online lessons as would be expected in school. If any behaviour becomes a distraction for other students and isn’t stopped then the teacher will remove the student from the session and contact the parent/carer to explain.

**Use of Personal Data**

**Data and Access to Data Using Google Hangouts**

Google Hangouts is a secure online platform managed by BMC. As with Google Schools and other online learning platforms used by schools, nobody external to BMC will have access to video streams or any data related to online lessons.

Students are instructed not to take screenshots or make video recordings of online sessions. Any training materials used for lessons can be shared by the teacher via the Google Hangout. Students are not able to send files in the Hangout.

Google Hangouts doesn’t keep a history of text from “chats” during video hangouts, so no data is kept by BMC, however video recordings of teaching sessions will show chat content should any issues arise that need to be addressed.

**GDPR = Children’s Personal Information**

BMC will not collect any information about students’ personal IDs or logons. Unlike other systems (such as Skype, Facetime or Messenger) Google Hangouts works by sending an invitation link to the parent or carer’s email address.

Students are asked not to share any personal contact information with teachers or other students (such as social media names or phone numbers). If there are any issues with students doing this, the teacher will remove the student from the online session and contact the parent/carer to discuss how to stay safe online.

**Parental Consent for Online Tuition**

BMC uses an online signup form. The consent to having online tuition will be a part of the parental agreement, and by ticking to confirm they agree to the terms and conditions, parents/carers are agreeing their consent to online tuition.

For parents/carers who have previously signed up, they will be notified of a change to the terms and conditions of tuition and invited to accept and agree to this.