



## Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy

As a youth-serving organization, the MusicLink Foundation considers the safety and well-being of the youth in our MusicLink program as top priority. The organization prohibits and has a zero tolerance for any sexual abuse.

The MusicLink Foundation has adopted the following Policy and Procedures in an effort to provide a safe environment for learning in MusicLink lessons and activities.

- *Screening:* Any teacher volunteering to be part of the MusicLink program is required to undergo a criminal background check through the LexisNexis National Criminal File Search.
  - Teachers provide written permission and the required information for the foundation to conduct these background checks.
  - Our parent information sheet includes the statement “All MusicLink teachers receive a full criminal background check.”
  - A copy of the MusicLink Sexual Prevention Policy is on our Parent Info page and Teacher Info page.
- *Training:* Teachers and coordinators will have access to the MusicLink Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy on the website as well as in their welcome packets. MusicLink coordinators will be provided with the list of behaviors and physical evidence that may indicate sexual abuse as they work with local MusicLink teachers. MusicLink teachers will also be advised to notify their local or state Child Abuse Agency or the national sexual abuse hotline if they observe any behaviors in students that may indicate possible sexual abuse.

Physical and behavioral evidence or signs that someone is possibly being sexually abused include, but are not limited to:

- Difficulty walking
  - Torn, stained or bloody clothing
  - Pain, bruising or bleeding in the genitalia
  - Reluctance to be left alone with a particular person
  - Wearing lots of clothing
  - Nightmares or fear of night
  - Fear of touch
- *Prevention:* Coordinators will receive recommendations in how to advise teachers in constructing lesson policy statements that instill careful attention to creating a safe lesson environment for students and open availability for observation by parents.

## Recommendations:

- Encouraging the presence of parents in the room or on the premises during lessons.
- Ongoing communication between the parent and teacher.
- Videotaping lessons, with parental permission.
- Teaching in an open space or having the door open in the lesson room.
- Providing closed circuit monitoring in the lesson room if parents are in an adjoining room.
- Teacher websites and email: Any student photos or performances on the teacher's website or YouTube will require a parent permission form.
- Teachers will include a password to secure and limit the website and performance videos for family viewing.

The MusicLink Foundation also includes the following to provide protection for its MusicLink teachers:

- The foundation encourages teachers to seek out individual private practice liability insurance.
- Parents sign the following Consent to Participate form prior to the start of MusicLink lessons.

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

As parents/guardians, we give permission for our child to participate in the MusicLink program. I recognize that the MusicLink Foundation's function is to assist in linking our child with a music teacher working independently or through a community music school, college, university, or music business. I understand that the MusicLink Foundation assumes no legal responsibility for claims arising from this instruction, and agree to hold harmless the MusicLink Foundation from all legal claims arising in connection with such instruction.

- *Reporting:* The MusicLink Foundation will take all allegations of sexual abuse seriously and will promptly and thoroughly investigate whether sexual abuse has taken place.
  - Coordinators or teachers will be advised to report the suspected abuse to their local or state Child Abuse Agency.
  - The organization will report the alleged sexual abuse incident to their insurance agent.
- *Investigation:* It is the foundation's objective to conduct a fair and impartial investigation of suspected sexual abuse.
- Every reasonable effort will be made to keep the matters involved in the allegation as confidential as possible, while still allowing for a prompt and thorough investigation.
  - The foundation will report the incident to the police as indicated.
  - The foundation will cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by law enforcement or other regulatory agencies.