

Abuse Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures

Purpose

Sequim Community Orchestra is committed to providing a safe environment for all individuals, particularly vulnerable populations. This policy establishes the standards and procedures for preventing and addressing all forms of abuse, including but not limited to sexual, physical, emotional, neglect, exploitation, and grooming behaviors. We maintain a strict zero-tolerance policy regarding any type of abuse.

Sequim Community Orchestra adheres to all applicable Washington State laws regarding abuse prevention and response. Key statutes include:

- RCW 26.44 Abuse of Children: Establishes mandatory reporting duties for child abuse and neglect.
- RCW 73.34 Abuse of Vulnerable Adults: Provides protections and reporting obligations related to vulnerable adult abuse.

Definitions

Abuse includes:

- Physical Abuse: Non-accidental infliction of physical injury or mistreatment, such as hitting, burning, or shaking.
- Sexual Abuse: Any sexual activity between an adult and a minor, between an employee/volunteer and a service user, or between any individual in a position of power or trust and another person.
- Emotional Abuse: Actions or behaviors that harm an individual's self-esteem or emotional well-being, including verbal abuse, threats, or humiliation.
- Neglect: Failure to provide necessary care, assistance, guidance, or attention, resulting in harm or risk of harm.
- Exploitation: Taking advantage of an individual for personal gain, including financial exploitation or coercion.
- Grooming Behaviors: A process by which an individual builds a relationship, trust, and emotional connection with a child or vulnerable adult to manipulate, exploit, and abuse them. Characteristics include:
 - Targeting the Victim: Identifying and selecting a vulnerable individual.
 - Gaining Trust: Building a relationship with the victim and their family.
 - Filling a Need: Offering gifts, attention, or support to the victim.
 - Isolating the Victim: Creating opportunities to be alone with the victim.
 - Sexualizing the Relationship: Introducing sexual content or behavior gradually.
 - Maintaining Control: Manipulating or threatening the victim to maintain secrecy.
- Private music lessons with parent permission are explicitly excluded from being considered a “grooming” behavior as private lessons are extremely valuable to music students.

Mandated Reporting Responsibilities: All Sequim Community Orchestra staff and volunteers are mandatory reporters under Washington State law. They are legally required to report any suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children or vulnerable adults directly to the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) or Adult Protective Services (APS).

Failure to report can result in legal penalties, including potential misdemeanor charges. Reports should be made immediately upon suspicion or disclosure.

Reporting Procedure

All staff and volunteers

1. Report Immediately: Any suspicion or observation of abuse or grooming behavior must be reported immediately to the Program Manager or Executive Director.
2. Document Details: Record the incident, including names, dates, times, locations, descriptions, and any witnesses.
3. Contact Authorities: The Board President or Program Director will immediately contact law enforcement or emergency services (911 or local authorities). They will also contact Department of Child and Youth Services/Child Protective Services (CPS) and make an intake on DCYF/CPS operational intake line.
4. Maintain Confidentiality: All reports will be handled confidentially to protect the privacy of those involved.

Quick Reference-Abuse Reporting Contacts

- DCYF/CPS Intake: 1-866-ENDHARM (1-866-363-4276)
- Adult Protective Services Intake 1-877-734-6277
- Local Law Enforcement 360-452-4545
- Emergency Situations: Call 911

Interaction Guidelines

- No Physical Contact: Physical contact should be avoided unless necessary for safety or medical reasons, or for the purpose of teaching correct instrument posture and technique. Prohibited behaviors include but are not limited to:
 - Hugging without explicit consent
 - cuddling
 - Romantically caressing or touching without consent
 - Hitting, slapping, spitting, strangling, tripping, biting, pushing
 - Punching walls or other aggressive actions
 - Bullying, verbal abuse, sexual innuendo, lewd gestures, sexualized talk
 - Any behavior that makes someone feel uncomfortable
- Note that some touch is required for our teachers to instruct in correct posture and ensure that the student learns to play the instrument in a manner that is not going to injure them long-term. This touching is explicitly allowed.
- Boundaries: Maintain clear and appropriate boundaries in all relationships.
- Technology and Communication Boundaries: To protect clients and maintain professional standards.
 - No private communication with minors via social media
 - Do not share or forward inappropriate content under any circumstances
 - Use only approved platforms for any work-related communication.
 - All digital communications must be transparent and accessible to supervisors.

Response to Victims

Upon notification of suspected abuse:

1. Ensure Safety: Remove the alleged perpetrator from their duties if applicable.
2. Notify Authorities: Report the incident to appropriate authorities, including law enforcement and Child Protective Services (CPS).
3. Provide Support: Offer necessary support services, including counseling and safety measures.
4. Medical Assistance: Refer victims to medical professionals if needed.

Confidentiality and Recordkeeping

- All reports and related documentation are stored securely.
- Access is restricted to designated leadership (Program Manager, Executive Director), unless the report involves a member of leadership.
- In cases involving leadership, access and oversight are provided by the Board of Directors.
- Records are retained for a minimum of seven years, or longer if required by funder requirements.

Enforcement and Consequences

Violations of this policy will result in:

- Immediate Suspension: While investigation of report is conducted.
- Immediate Disciplinary Action: Including potential termination.
- Legal Consequences: Reporting to law enforcement and appropriate authorities.
- Permanent Removal: From any interaction with the organization.

Training Requirements

In addition to the ongoing training regarding domestic violence, sexual assault, and crime victims, staff and volunteers are required to carefully review annually:

- <https://dcyf.wa.gov/safety/what-is-abuse>
- <https://ospi.k12.wa.us/student-success/health-safety/sexual-violence-prevention>

Screening Procedures

All staff and volunteers working with minors must undergo:

- Application and Interviews: All potential employees and volunteers must submit a formal application and participate in an interview.
- Background Checks: through the Washington State Patrol
- Reference Checks: To assess suitability for working with vulnerable populations.

Governance and Oversight

The Sequim Community Orchestra Board of Directors is responsible for:

- Reviewing this policy annually to update and ensure compliance
- Reviewing any allegations involving leadership.

I have read and reviewed Sequim Community Orchestra's Abuse Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures. I have asked any questions I may have had, and I understand the material presented. I agree to comply with all policy requirements.

Staff Signature_____ Date _____

Management Signature_____ Date _____