

Guernsey Concert Brass Child Protection Policy



1. Introduction

1.1

The introduction of this Child Protection policy should be seen as a clear signal by Guernsey Concert Brass (GCB) that it is determined to ensure all necessary steps are taken to protect from harm, those children and young people who participate in brass playing at all levels.

The policy establishes GCB position, role and responsibilities and, together with the Procedures' section, clarifies what is expected of the organisation and individuals involved.

It very clearly highlights the importance placed by GCB on the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It also safeguards and protects all personnel from the risk of false allegations of abuse or poor practice.

Everyone who participates in brass banding is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. To ensure this, GCB has developed principles that all its personnel and band members should follow.

These principles apply to all participants, but young people in particular are entitled to a higher duty of care and to be protected from poor practice or abuse. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the banding environment.

Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with children in order to harm them. The GCB is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone in the GCB accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means following procedures to protect children and to report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

Everyone working within GCB, either as a member, in a voluntary capacity, or who provides services, has a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of children and preventing their abuse. Anyone who may have regular contact with children will be a very important link in identifying cases where a child needs protection

All policies and procedures discussed below refer to vulnerable adults as well as to children.

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1.2 Policy statement

GCB is committed to the following:

- Making the welfare of young people paramount
- Ensuring that all young people, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in brass banding in a enjoyable and safe environment.
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect young people from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings.
- Taking action swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse.
- Ensuring that all GCB members and volunteers will similarly accept responsibility for the welfare of the young people in their care in accordance with the GCB policies and procedures, and has incorporated this within the GCB constitution.

1.3 Terms and abbreviations

The following terms and abbreviations are used in this document:

- Anyone under the age of 18 is considered to be a child/young person.
- “Member” an individual who has paid an annual subscription to the GCB.
- ‘Parent’ is used as a generic term to include parents, carers and guardians.
- ‘Personnel’ includes Members, volunteers, those who provide services as well as GCB as well as all other participants in the art of brass banding within GCB.
- ‘Welfare Officer’ is the individual within a band whose responsibilities are explained in section 3.4 below.

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2.1 Introduction

To provide young people with the best possible experience and opportunities in brass banding everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework and demonstrate exemplary behaviour. Not only will this allow brass banding within GCB to make a positive contribution to the development of young people and safeguards their welfare, but it also protects all personnel from the risk of false allegations of abuse or poor practice.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse, whether intentional or accidental. It is not therefore the responsibility of all personnel in brass bands to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is, however, their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and to act if they have concerns about the welfare of a child, as explained in section 4. This section (2) will help you identify what is meant by good practice, poor practice and abuse.

2.2 Good practice

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and actions:

- Before undertaking any activities involving young people, conduct a risk assessment to identify possible sources of danger and take appropriate action to minimise these risks
- Make the experience of brass playing fun and enjoyable; promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying and do not condone rule violations or the use of prohibited or illegal substances.
- Insist on adherence to Child Protection procedures
- Treat all young people equally; this means giving both the more and less talented members of a group similar attention, time, respect and preserving their dignity.
- Respect the developmental stage of each young person and do not risk sacrificing their welfare in a desire for personal achievements. This means ensuring that the practice intensity is appropriate to the physical, social and emotional stage of the development of the student.
- Concerts, band competitions, solo competitions etc. must be suited primarily to the needs and the interests of the child, not those of the parents, teacher or band
- Build relationships based on mutual trust and respect, in which young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their own development and decision-making.
- Avoid situations where the teacher, conductor or any other member of the band uses their position and power to decide what the student should or should not do without consideration of the young person's needs and capabilities
- Always be publicly open when working with children. Avoid teaching sessions or meetings where a teacher and an individual student are completely unobserved.
- Where children need to be supervised in the changing rooms, teachers and band helpers should work in pairs, and involve parents if possible.

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- Maintain an appropriate and open environment, with no secrets.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of physical guidance is required in teaching technique, this should be provided openly and with the consent of the student.
- It is important to educate parents of what is and is not acceptable in the context of brass playing.
- Physical contact (touching) can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the student's permission has been given.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate relationship with students.
- It is inappropriate for teachers and others in positions of authority to have an intimate relationship with a young person, even if they are over 16, the normal age of legal consent. (This could also be a criminal offence 'abuse of trust' in certain circumstances under The Children (Guernsey and Alderney) Law 2008)
- Maintain appropriate standards of behaviour at social events that young people attend
- Be an excellent role model, for example by not smoking or drinking alcohol while working with young people
- Communicate regularly with parents and involve them in decision-making. Gain their consent in writing to act in loco parentis to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises
- Be aware of any medical conditions, existing injuries and medicines being taken.
- Keep a written record of any injury or accident that occurs, together with details of any treatment given.
- Arrange that someone with knowledge of first aid is readily available
- Gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements, especially if an overnight stay is involved

2.3 Poor practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel:

- Unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- Taking children alone in a car on journeys, however short
- Taking children to your home where they will be alone with you
- Sharing a room with a child
- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching of any form
- Allowing children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control
- Letting allegations a child makes go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon
- Doing things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves
- Having children stay at your home with you unsupervised

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Should cases arise where it is impractical to avoid any of the situations mentioned in this section, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the organisation and the children's parents.

If during your care of a child you accidentally hurt them, the child seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, or misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to another colleague and make a brief written note of it. Parents should also be informed of the incident.

2.4 Abuse

Abuse in all its forms can affect a child at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated, they may follow an individual into adulthood.

Children with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation, and a powerlessness to protect themselves, or adequately to communicate that abuse has occurred. Children from ethnic minorities, who may also be experiencing racial discrimination, may be, or feel, doubly powerless in these respects.

Abuse may take a number of forms, and may be classified under the following headings:

Neglect

This is where adults fail to meet a child's basic needs like food, shelter, warm clothing or medical care, or to protect them from physical harm. Children might also be constantly left alone or unsupervised.

Neglect in a banding situation could include a conductor or band manager not keeping children safe, or exposing them to unnecessary risk of injury.

Physical Abuse - this is where someone physically hurts or injures children, for example by hitting, shaking, throwing, squeezing, burning, suffocating and biting or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Giving children alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute physical abuse.

Sexual Abuse

Girls and boys can be abused by adults or other children, both male and female, who use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, or fondling. Showing children pornographic material is also a form of sexual abuse.

Banding activities, which might involve physical contact with children, could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Also the power of the teacher over young students if misused, may lead to abusive situations developing.

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Emotional Abuse

Persistent lack of love and affection, where children may be led to believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve the child being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the child very nervous and withdrawn. It may also feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. Emotional abuse also occurs when there is constant overprotection, which prevents children from socialising.

Emotional abuse in banding might include situations where children are subjected by a parent or teacher to constant criticism, name-calling, sarcasm, bullying, racism or unrealistic pressure in order to perform to high expectations.

Bullying

This may be bullying of a child by an adult or another child. Bullying is defined as deliberate, hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name-calling, graffiti, abusive text messages transmitted by phone or on the internet), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

In banding, bullying may arise when a parent pushes a child too hard to succeed, a teacher adopts a win-at-all-costs philosophy, or an official at a contest/ festival uses bullying behaviour.

2.5 Indicators of abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. GCB acknowledges that most people involved in brass banding are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- An injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her
- Someone else – a child or adult, expresses concern about the welfare of a child
- Unexplained changes in a child's behaviour – e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn, or displaying sudden outbursts of temper - or behaviour changing over time
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour in games
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- Difficulty in making friends

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- Being prevented from socialising with other children
- Displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite
- Losing weight for no apparent reason
- Becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place. It is not the responsibility of those working in banding to decide that child abuse is occurring, but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns.

Signs of bullying may include:

- Behavioural changes such as reduced concentration or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctant to go to band rehearsals or to competitions.
- An unexplained drop-off in standard of performance.

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Recruiting and selecting people to work with children

3.1 Introduction.

Anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and it is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. This applies equally to Members and volunteers as well as service providers. The procedures set out below are expressed in terms that apply to Service providers, but equivalent procedures should be used in respect of Members and volunteers. The particular circumstances of individual cases need to be taken into account, but the fundamental principle is that those in charge of activities involving young people must take all reasonable steps to satisfy themselves as to the suitability of those who are given access to the children in their care.

3.2 Controlling access to children

Applicants for Designated Positions that involve significant access to young people (as set out in Appendix 5) (for example junior band conductor.) should first complete procedures designed to elicit information about their past career (including any gaps), and to disclose any criminal record or other matter that has a bearing on their suitability to work with children e.g. previous investigations with police or social services or disciplinary investigations in relation to work with children. It should be made clear that failure to disclose relevant information will result in disciplinary action and possible dismissal or exclusion.

Consent should be obtained from applicants for checks to be conducted to determine whether the Criminal Records Bureau holds any relevant information on them.

3.3 Vetting

All individuals filling the positions set out in Appendix 5 will have significant access to young people must first be vetted to establish whether they have any criminal convictions or other past behaviour that suggests they are unsuitable to work with children. This applies equally to Service providers, Members and volunteers. This is done by obtaining a Disclosure about the individual from in the case of GCB, from the Guernsey Police.

It is important to emphasise that the absence of any relevant disclosure emerging from this vetting process does not guarantee that the individual is safe to work with children, so it should not be relied on excessively. It is only one of a number of factors in the initial assessment of the person's suitability for such responsibilities.

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3.4 The Welfare Officer within the band

Every brass band with any junior members should appoint a Welfare Officer to advise the band committee on compliance with all the procedures described in this protection policy and to act as a focal point for reporting any concerns. This person will have the primary responsibility to check that everyone who has significant access to young people within the band is suitable for that role and has been vetted as described above. The person appointed should be identifiable to the junior members of the band and their parents, but should have a degree of independence from their activities – for example he or she should not be the junior co-ordinator or actively teach or conduct the junior band. The Welfare Officer should undergo the vetting procedure described in 3.3 above.

The Welfare Officer must also keep a record of all persons checked and ensure GCB Band Committee (Via the band Secretary) is regularly supplied with an up to date copy of this record

3.5 Awareness

The effectiveness of the policies described will depend on everyone who is involved with banding being aware of what is good practice. This applies particularly to those working directly with young people, such as junior conductors and Welfare Officers, but an awareness of child protection issues is also needed by others who may be involved more indirectly, such as committee members or occasional parent helpers.

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Responding to suspicions and allegations

4.1 Introduction

Many cases of child abuse in fact take place within the family setting. However, abuse can and does occur in other situations as well, which may include brass banding or other social activities, and is rarely a one-off event when it occurs within such a setting. It is crucial that those involved in banding are aware of this possibility and that all allegations are taken seriously and appropriate action taken.

It is not the responsibility of anyone in a brass band whether in a paid or a voluntary capacity, to decide whether or not child abuse is taking place. However, there is a responsibility to inform appropriate agencies of possible abuse so that they can then make inquiries and take any necessary action to protect the child. This applies both to suspicions of abuse occurring within the context of banding activities and to allegations that abuse is taking place elsewhere. This section explains how you should respond to such concerns.

4.2 Receiving evidence of possible abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening ourselves; we may suspect that it is occurring because of signs such as those listed in 2.5 above; it may be reported to us by someone else, or directly by the child affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a child says or indicates that he or she is being abused, or information is obtained which gives you concern that a child is being abused, you should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child
- Tell the child they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- Take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child who has a speech disability and/or differences in language
- Keep questions to the absolute minimum necessary so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said, and be careful not to ask leading questions
- Reassure the child, but do not promise to keep the matter secret – explain that to resolve the problem it will be necessary to inform other people as appropriate.

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4.3 Recording information

As with other forms of information arising in relation to child protection, information of this kind is highly sensitive and confidential. Accordingly, it should be held under secure conditions and only made available to those who have a definite need for it. You should make a note as soon as possible of whatever information you obtain, both for your own future reference and possibly for passing on to others, appropriate agencies such as the social services department or the police. In writing such a note, you should confine yourself to the facts, and distinguish between what is your own personal knowledge and what you have been told by other people. You should not include your own opinions on the matter, to avoid the possibility of libel. Information should include the following:

- The nature of the allegation, in as much detail as possible, including times, dates, locations and other relevant information
- Details of the child involved, including name, age, address and other contact details, and identifying who has parental responsibility for the child
- Details of the person against whom the allegation is made, including name, relationship with the child, age and contact details (if known)
- The identity and contact details of any informants or other witnesses
- The child's account, if he or she can give one, of what has happened
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries
- Details of who else has been informed of the alleged incident
- Any other relevant information
- An example of an incident report for recording such information is set out in Appendix 3.

4.4 Reporting the concern

GCB expects its members and volunteers to discuss any concern they may have about the welfare of a child immediately with the person in charge, and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken. The particular route you might follow in various circumstances is suggested below.

Working within a band

If you are working within a junior brass band, you should inform the Welfare Officer or the person in charge of the band.

Parents or carers

There is always a commitment to work in partnership with parents or carers where there are concerns about their children. Therefore, in most situations, it would be important to talk to parents or carers to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, they may have experienced bereavement in the family. However, there are circumstances in which a child might be placed at even greater risk were such concerns to be shared, e.g. where a parent or carer may be responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately. In these situations, or where concerns still exist, any suspicion, allegation, or incident of abuse must be reported to appropriate agencies as soon as possible.

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The NSPCC or other agencies

The first consideration at this point is to minimise the danger of further abuse to the child or to other children. The person in charge should seek advice from the local police or social services department or the NSPCC. (You can obtain advice by telephoning the NSPCC Freephone helpline – the number is 0808 800 5000 and is a 24 hour service. You do not have to give your name but it is helpful if you can.) The allegation should be referred to the police and social services department in any case involving physical or sexual abuse or where the child's safety is otherwise at risk. If the person in charge is not available, or the concern is about the person in charge, the person in receipt of the information or with the concern should contact these agencies direct. Reporting the matter to the police or social services department should not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information.

Social Services

The social services department has a statutory duty under The Children (Guernsey and Alderney) Law 2008 for the welfare of a child. When a child protection referral is made its staff have a legal responsibility to investigate. This may involve talking to the child and family and gathering information from other people who know the child. The telephone number is in the local phone book. Wherever possible, referrals telephoned to the social services department should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. A record should also be made of the name and designation of the social services member of staff to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call, in case any follow-up is needed.

Police

Where the apparent abuse is of a criminal nature; it will be appropriate to inform the police. A record should be made of the crime reference number provided by the police, together with the time and date of the call, in case any follow-up is needed. The police and social services department may also carry out a joint enquiry.

The person in charge may be unsure about whether the allegation constitutes abuse or not, and unclear about what action to take. There may be circumstances where allegations are about poor practice (which need not be referred to the social services or police) rather than abuse, but those responsible should consult with the bands Child Welfare Officer who will obtain further advice where there is any doubt. Notifying the Welfare Officer is also important because this matter may be just one of a series of other instances which together cause concern.

Relevant Contact details for the appropriate agencies pertaining to Guernsey, are included in this document as Appendix 2.

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4.5 Disciplinary procedures.

The discovery that a Service provider, Member or volunteer may be abusing a child will raise feelings and concerns among other personnel, and it can be inherently difficult to report such matters. However, it is important that any concerns for the welfare of the child arising from abuse or harassment by a member of staff or volunteer should be reported immediately. As indicated above, an allegation of abuse may give rise to a child protection investigation by the social services department and/or a criminal investigation involving the police. In addition, if the abuse is alleged to have been committed in the course of a person's involvement with GCB, he or she will be subject to whatever disciplinary procedures and sanctions are provided for within GCB Constitution.

Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality for all concerned, and consideration will be given to what support may be appropriate to children, parents, and Personnel.

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5. Conclusion

Guernsey Concert Brass, by accepting this policy document, has indicated its determination to ensure that children and young people can participate in all forms of brass banding activity, and do so, with their safety being of paramount importance. It is essential that this document is representative of a process of continual improvement in the area of child protection within brass banding. It is for all adults engaged in brass banding activities to promote good practice and procedures, whilst being ever vigilant and aware of their responsibilities towards the children and young people in their care.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Volunteer reference form

Appendix 2 – Contact details for relevant Guernsey Agencies

Appendix 3 - Incident report form

Appendix 4 - Child Protection audit checklist

Appendix 5 – Designated Positions

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Appendix 1

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_____ has expressed an interest in becoming a volunteer with GCB and has given your name as a referee. If you are happy to provide this reference all the information contained on the form will remain absolutely confidential and will only be shared with the applicant's immediate supervisor should they be offered a volunteer position.

We would appreciate you being candid in your evaluation of this person. If you would prefer to respond by telephone, please do so – contact details are set out below.

How long have you known this person?

In what capacity?
.....

In your opinion would this person be suitable to work with children and vulnerable adults?

Yes/No

How would you describe their personality?

.....
.....

Your name (please print).....

Signed

Position.....

Address.....
.....

Telephone.....

Date.....

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Appendix 2

Contact details for Relevant Agencies within Guernsey

Chairman - Guernsey Concert Brass

Mr. Colin Solway
Figtree Farm,
Landes du Marche,
Vale.
GY6 8DG

Child Protection Welfare Officer for Guernsey Concert Brass

Mr John Le Vasseur
La Nouvelle Maison
Avenue Germain
Ville au Roi, St Peter Port, GY1 1PF
Tel: 01481 700240 or Mob: 07781 104484

Guernsey Police 01481 725111

Police Headquarters,
Hospital Lane, St Peter Port, GY1 2QN
Tel: 01481 725111

Services for children and young people

Assessment and intervention team (Social Workers)
Swissville
Rohais, St Peter Port, GY1 1FB
Tel: 01481 723182

Duty Officer outside Office hours 01481 725481

Child Protection Health Visitor --- Debbie Pitman 01481 725241 ext 5285

Relevant Law relating to this document is primarily:

The Children (Guernsey and Alderney) Law 2008

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Appendix 3 Incident Report Form

Name of child Age/date of birth

Parent/Carer's name

Address

Telephone number

Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of someone else?
(Give details of witnesses)

Brief description of what has prompted concerns: include date, time, location etc of any specific incidents

Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?

Have you spoken to the child? If so, what was said?

Have you spoken to the parent(s)? If so, what was said?

Has anybody been alleged to the abuser? If so, give details, including relationship with the child?

Have you consulted anyone else? Give details?

Your name

Position

To whom reported and date reported? Give contact information for further reference

Signature

Date

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Appendix 4

Child Protection audit checklist

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Welfare Officer

Name

Address

.....

Home Phone number

E mail address

Is the identity of the Welfare Officer --

1. Made known to junior member	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Made known to Parents?	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. On display in the band room	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is the Welfare Officer independent of any direct role involving activities with young people such as conductor or band 'manager'?

Is parental consent for possible emergency medical attention obtained for all junior members ?

Has the Guernsey Concert Brass formally adopted Child Protection procedures in its constitution?

Is the code of conduct on display ?

Have all adults with access to young people —

1. Satisfied the Welfare Officer of their suitability for the role	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Been made conversant with GCB Child Protection procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signed
(Welfare Officer)

Date...../...../.....

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Appendix 5

Designated Persons

Musical Director
Deputy Musical Director
Musical Director of the Youth Band
Welfare Officer

(End of Document)