

GIRLS ROCK LONDON

Safeguarding policy: COVID-19 Addendum

Reviewer responsible	Lowell Black
Authorised by	Safeguarding Committee
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1: Policy statement: our continued commitment to child protection

Girls Rock London has responsibility for the safety of children and young people. These responsibilities continue during social distancing measures introduced during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

GRL continues to recognise that good safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are of benefit to everyone involved with organisation's work.

The following principles underpin Girls' Rock London's approach to safeguarding and child protection:

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- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children regardless of age, disability, sex, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or gender identity have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- working in partnership with children, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting children's welfare

In addition, these elements of safeguarding practice continue to underpin our work:

- if anyone has a concern about a child they should act immediately following GRL safeguarding and child protection procedure (2021 GRL Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, part 8)
- if anyone has a concern about an adult's behaviour towards a child/children (including GRL staff and volunteers) they should act immediately following the GRL safeguarding and child protection procedure (2021 GRL Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, part 9)
- a nominated child protection lead and deputy is always available to deal with concerns:

Geraldine Smith (Designated Safeguarding Person) on phone - 07990877904

Roxanne Horton (Designated Safeguarding Trustee) on email - roxannehorton1@gmail.com

- referral procedures to local safeguarding and child protection agencies continue to be followed as per GRL safeguarding policy and procedure (no change to local procedures as of writing)
- all safer recruitment practices continue to be followed as per GRL safeguarding policy and procedure (2021 GRL Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, Appendix B)
- all GRL risk assessment processes should be followed

2: Understanding vulnerability and specific areas of concern during social distancing

The UK government has set out which children are classed as 'vulnerable' during the coronavirus pandemic (DfE, 2020b; Department of Education, 2020). These are children who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and it is determined, following risk assessment, that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in an educational environment
- have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services). This might include children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services, adopted children, those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in

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employment, education or training'), those living in temporary accommodation, those who are young carers and others at the provider and local authority's discretion.

However all children are now more vulnerable than before because there are fewer opportunities for the adults in their lives to spot, identify and respond to child protection concerns and issues.

GRL works in a London Borough with a high proportion of children living with vulnerabilities. In addition, a number of our young people have been referred to GRL programmes through partner agencies such as Hackney CAMHS, Akwaaba social centre for migrants and local Youth Centres because of vulnerabilities around mental health and wellbeing. Some of these children will have points of stress in their lives which could be increased with the economic, environmental and relational pressures of Lockdown.

Nationally, we are aware that there are four areas of concern for children and young people during lockdown;

Online Safety: Children and young people are likely to spend more time online due to social distancing. GRL recognises that an increase of online access for children presents opportunities for connection but also risk of online abuse.

GRL will address this by:

- Creating guidelines for safe digital engagement with children and young people (see section 5 of this document)
- Creating risk assessments for any online engagement activities using the GRL template
- highlighting this area of concern in all staff and volunteer briefings about youth engagement
- reminding staff of the indicators for this concern (see Appendix A)
- reminding staff of the GRL safeguarding and child protection policy and procedure if they have a concern about a young person experiencing unsafe behaviour, abuse or grooming online (2021 GRL Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, part 8)
- checking that all staff are able to contact our nominated child protection lead and trustee if they have any concerns about a child. This may be because:
 - a staff member sees or hears something worrying during an online session
 - a child discloses abuse during an online session, phone call or via email
- informing participants regularly about the benefits and risks of the online world, providing space to ask questions and talk about anything that worries them
- using consent forms to make sure parents, carers and children understand the benefits and risks of online engagement and get written consent for children to be involved.
- using best practice digital security guidelines for online platforms such as Zoom

Domestic Abuse: For some children, home may not always be a safe place. The intensity of social distancing where families are spending more time together, may have made the situation worse.

GRL will address this by:

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- highlighting this area of concern in all staff and volunteer briefings about youth engagement
- reminding staff of the indicators for this concern (see Appendix A)
- reminding staff of the GRL safeguarding and child protection policy and procedure if they have a concern about a young person experiencing domestic violence (2021 GRL Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, part 8)
- reminding staff that people are not expected to stay at home during coronavirus if their home is unsafe
- checking that all staff are able to contact our nominated child protection lead and trustee if they have any concerns about a child. This may be because:
 - a staff member sees or hears something worrying during an online session
 - a child discloses abuse during an online session, phone call or via email

Mental Health: Children and young people may be worried about the impact of coronavirus, social distancing or self-isolation. Those who already have mental health difficulties such as anxiety might be finding things particularly difficult to manage. Parents' and carer's mental health will also be affected during the pandemic, and many families may be experiencing the grief of losing a family member.

GRL will address this by:

- highlighting this area of concern in all staff and volunteer briefings about youth engagement
- reminding staff of the indicators for this concern (see Appendix A)
- reminding staff of the GRL safeguarding and child protection policy and procedure if they have a concern about the mental health and wellbeing of a young person or their parent/carer (2021 GRL Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, part 8)
- checking that all staff are able to contact our nominated child protection lead and trustee if they have any concerns about a child or their parent/carer. This may be because:
 - a staff member sees or hears something worrying during an online session
 - a child or parent/carer discloses concerns during an online session, phone call or via email
- offering space and resources to talk about how young people are feeling during engagement activities
- signposting to agencies that can offer support and help when they need it (Childline, Calm Zone The Mix etc.)

Families needing support: Changes to ways of working, such as contacting children and families on the phone and by video calling, may bring new information to light about their home situation. Families may also experience new challenges during the pandemic, for example income loss, mental health problems, family conflict and difficulty getting food.

GRL will address this by:

- highlighting this area of concern in all staff and volunteer briefings about youth engagement

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- reminding staff of the indicators for this concern (see Appendix A)
- reminding staff of the GRL safeguarding and child protection policy and procedure if they are concerned that a child, young person or their family are struggling to cope (2021 GRL Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, part 8)
- checking that all staff are able to contact our nominated child protection lead and trustee if they have any concerns about a child or their family. This may be because:
 - a staff member sees or hears something worrying during an online session
 - a child or parent/carer discloses concerns during an online session, phone call or via email
- liaising with partner agencies that have existing relationships with a child or their family
- signposting to and contacting partner agencies that could offer further support to a child and their family such as:
 - Hackney CAMHS
 - Hackney AMHS
 - Hackney Children & Families Service
 - Hackney Early Help Services/MASH Team
 - Young Hackney
 - Akwaaba
 - Safer London
 - Citizens Advice
 - Hackney Food Bank (Trussell Trust)

3: Ways of working during social distancing measures

GRL recognises that any engagement it delivers must:

- comply with all relevant health & safety legislations and requirements as detailed by the Health & Safety Executive
- observe social distancing guidelines when face to face contact is required
- observe Health and Safety risk assessment processes and have a specific risk assessment in place (see Appendix D for GRL risk assessment template)
- provide trained staff (and volunteers) to supervise and safely support any engagement activities
- recognise and raise concerns about children's welfare
- provide opportunities for children to have someone safe to talk to if they're worried
- reference best practice examples of safe working documents from partner agencies such as Hackney & Newham Music Hubs and Company Three (see section 5 for remote working with children & young people guidelines)
- Reference best practice guidance from sector leaders such as the [National Youth Agency's Managing youth sector activities and spaces during COVID-19 document](#)

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4: GRL's contribution to multi-agency child protection

During this period, GRL will continue its commitment to contribute to multi-agency child protection meetings and plans for any children and young people it comes into contact with.

5: Remote working with Children & Young People (Adapted from Company Three & Hackney Music Service policies April 2020).

During this period of social-distancing and partial school closures, GRL is keen to maintain a level of connectedness to our community of campers and volunteers. To that end, we may create opportunities for engagement to continue in the form of online sessions using Zoom communication software. GRL staff (incl. volunteers) may work from home and with our young people digitally.

The safeguarding of children and young people is the highest priority during any online session.

These guidelines are for all GRL staff to keep themselves and the young people they work with safe.

These guidelines operate alongside the 2021 GRL Safeguarding Policy and Procedure and risk assessment processes.

Working From Home

If working from home, staff will have their own accounts to access emails and a log-in to access files. All files are saved on the GRL Google Drive which is password protected, and there are tight restrictions on which folders have shared access.

- No young people's details or images will be downloaded or saved on staff computers (unless it is a computer provided for work use only).
- If young people's images need to be downloaded for photo or video editing then they will be deleted once the edit has taken place and the edited film is uploaded to the GRL Google Drive.
- Staff will always lock computers or close documents with sensitive information when they are away from their laptops / computers.

Communication via telephone

An organisation mobile phone is provided for all staff to make contact with young people. Staff will not use their personal mobile phone for this purpose.

All organisation mobile phones are to be PIN locked so that data is not accessible by others.

Use of company phones outside of working hours

Staff members should turn their work phones off when they are not working.

Status messages on WhatsApp and other instant messaging services and Voicemail messages should state that the phone will only be turned on during working hours.

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Communication via email

Once consent is granted from parents, staff will be able to email young peoples' personal email addresses. In such cases staff should use clear language to avoid any misunderstanding on the part of the recipient. It may be appropriate to copy in another staff member for transparency.

Staff members who have concerns regarding the content of an email that they send or receive from a young person should consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Deputy for guidance.

Communication via social media

GRL will use social media during this time to communicate with young people. Current social media applications staff will use include whatsapp, twitter, facebook and instagram. Contact with young people through such forums should only take place through organisational accounts. GRL will not follow young people's accounts and only invite members to follow GRL accounts.

If a staff member receives content from a young person which they believe is inappropriate they will not forward the content or delete it but immediately contact the DSL to report the content and the DSL will follow the safeguarding incident procedure (see 2021 GRL Safeguarding Policy and Procedure).

Current organisational accounts are as follows:

Twitter: @girlsrocklondon

Facebook: Girls Rock London page

Instagram: @girlsrocklondon

GRL keeps a live document to record who has access to moderate these platforms and changes passwords regularly so that access is protected.

Communication via digital platforms

When communicating with young people via digital platforms staff will use official accounts and phones and ensure that the personal numbers of young people and staff are not shared.

Staff will be the only adults present in digital platform sessions.

All parents will be informed of the platforms to be used and the dates and times of sessions and the adults who will be in these platforms.

Staff will set clear rules of engagement for working on digital platforms. These rules will be in line with the rules of GRL when working in person (see Appendix B).

Staff will also remind young people that this is not a private space and whatever they share online will be seen by the group.

Any young person who breaks the above rules will be removed from the platform by staff and parents/carers will be informed.

Online engagement

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All engagement sessions must be timetabled during normal working hours and kept to the timetabled length of the session.

GRL staff must only use a GRL email address to communicate with parents and young people and must use an appropriate Zoom communications username.

GRL staff should initially contact campers via their parent/carers email address to invite them to take part. Permission may then be obtained to email young people directly.

A member of the GRL wellbeing team must also be invited to attend any live sessions to offer support and safe space.

GRL staff must not accept any private offers to do workshops over webcam / video chats. This leaves them extremely vulnerable from a safeguarding perspective.

GRL staff must not pass their personal mobile number on to campers, only parents/carers.

GRL staff must not share any content from online sessions over their personal social media accounts and should not friend or follow pupils on their personal social media accounts.

GRL staff must report any safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

Session Environment, Presentation and Professionalism

GRL staff must not lead a remote session unless they are healthy and well enough to do so.

GRL staff must deliver remote sessions from a suitable and safe space, ideally, against a neutral background.

GRL staff should check that the campers are accessing the live streamed session in an appropriate space in the home. Ideally this would not be from the camper's bedroom if possible, but we also understand that some of our campers will have pressures on private space in their household. We will risk assess accordingly.

GRL staff and campers must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.

GRL staff language and behaviour will always be professional and appropriate, just as it would be in a face-to-face session.

Computers or tablet devices used for live sessions should be in appropriate areas, and where possible be against a neutral background.

Technical matters

Live sessions must be recorded and uploaded to the GRL Google Drive designated folder, so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed. A transcript of any 'chat' / instructions between the staff and campers should also be saved and emailed to girlsrocklondon@gmail.com by the session leader.

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At the end of each session, the GRL staff lead, as the host, should end (close down) the online session for all participants. If this is not possible, they must ensure that they are the last person to leave the online space, so that no interaction between young people is possible after the session has finished.

GRL staff must make sure their device / laptop is plugged in, so a power supply is not cut mid-way through a recording.

Check the sound quality is clear, with no interfering background noises. To support this, GRL staff should disable 'Persistent Background Noise' and 'Intermittent Background Noise' in the advanced sound settings.

GRL staff must take care to accurately describe and discuss techniques that would usually be demonstrated and have resources available and ready to use that will support and enhance the session.

Further information on the security settings within Zoom are in Appendix C.

Receiving a disclosure online or via mobile phone

We recognise that at times, young people might disclose information to staff members via texts, calls or digitally.

If a staff member receives a worrying message that they think may indicate that the young person communicating with them is at immediate risk during or outside of work hours, they should immediately refer it for action to the DSL, ideally by speaking to them by phone. The DSL will follow the procedure below. If the staff member cannot get hold of the DSL or the Deputy, they should also follow this procedure.

- Check with the young person – What is happening? Where are you? The staff member should not attempt to solve the problem.
- Contact the young person's parent/guardian, or – if applicable – the social worker/key worker associated with that young person. If there is no response: Alert the emergency services (in most cases this will be the police) by calling 999 and giving as much information as possible.
- Write up an incident report on the situation within 24hrs to be sent to the DSL.

Sharing work online

When sharing work created by young people online we will take the following steps;

- Share the final edits with the young people and their parents/carers before sharing
- No use of the child's surname in photography or video content.
- Gain parental/guardian consent for their child to be photographed and videoed.
- Only use images of children in suitable clothing to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.
- Only share content through official accounts.

If, for whatever reason, a parent/carer or young person is not happy with the use of content, then GRL will not share the content.

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This Policy Addendum will be reviewed should there be an extension to the COVID 19 Lockdown beyond September 2020

APPENDIX A

Specific areas of concern during coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and indicators to be aware of

(taken from NSPCC online)

Online abuse

Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that's connected to the web, like computers, tablets and mobile phones. And it can happen anywhere online, including:

- social media
- text messages and messaging apps
- emails
- online chats
- online gaming
- live-streaming sites

Children can be at risk of online abuse from people they know or from strangers. It might be part of other abuse which is taking place offline, like bullying or grooming. Or the abuse might only happen online.

Children and young people might experience different types of online abuse, such as:

Cyberbullying or online bullying which is any type of bullying that happens online. Unlike bullying that takes place offline, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go and it can sometimes feel like there's no escape or safe space.

Emotional abuse is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child and this can happen both on and offline.

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship with a child so they can sexually abuse, exploit or traffic them. Children and young people can be groomed online or face-to-face by a stranger or by someone they know. If you're worried a child is being groomed online you should report it online to CEOP.

Sexting is when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others, or sends sexual messages. It's online abuse if a child or young person is pressured or coerced into creating or sending these types of images.

Sexual abuse is when a child or young person is forced or tricked into sexual activities. Sexual abuse can happen online - for example, a child could be forced to make, view or share child abuse images or videos or take part in sexual activities on conversations online.

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Child sexual exploitation is a type of sexual abuse. When a child is sexually exploited online they may be persuaded or forced to create sexually explicit photos or videos or have sexual conversations.

sexual exploitation

A child or young person experiencing abuse online might:

- spend a lot more or a lot less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media
- seem distant, upset or angry after using the internet or texting
- be secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone
- have lots of new phone numbers, texts or email addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet

Some of the signs of online abuse are similar to other abuse types:

- cyberbullying
- grooming
- sexual abuse
- child sexual exploitation

Domestic Abuse/Violence

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. It can seriously harm children and young people and witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse. It's important to remember domestic abuse:

- can happen inside and outside the home
- can happen over the phone, on the internet and on social networking sites
- can happen in any relationship and can continue even after the relationship has ended
- both men and women can be abused or abusers

Domestic abuse can be emotional, physical, sexual, financial or psychological, such as:

- kicking, hitting, punching or cutting
- rape (including in a relationship)
- controlling someone's finances by withholding money or stopping someone earning
- controlling behaviour, like telling someone where they can go and what they can wear
- not letting someone leave the house
- reading emails, text messages or letters
- threatening to kill someone or harm them
- threatening to another family member or pet

It can be difficult to tell if domestic abuse is happening and those carrying out the abuse can act very different when other people are around. Children and young people might also feel frightened and confused, keeping the abuse to themselves.

Signs that a child has witnessed domestic abuse can include:

- aggression or bullying

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- anti-social behaviour, like vandalism
- anxiety, depression or suicidal thoughts
- attention seeking
- bed-wetting, nightmares or insomnia
- constant or regular sickness, like colds, headaches and mouth ulcers
- drug or alcohol use
- eating disorders
- problems in school or trouble learning
- tantrums
- withdrawal.

Living in a home where domestic abuse happens can have a serious impact on a child or young person's mental and physical wellbeing, as well as their behaviour. And this can last into adulthood.

What's important is to make sure the abuse stops and that children have a safe and stable environment to grow up in.

If a child talks to you about domestic abuse it's important to:

- listen carefully to what they're saying
- let them know they've done the right thing by telling you
- tell them it's not their fault
- say you'll take them seriously
- don't confront the alleged abuser
- explain what you'll do next
- report what the child has told you as soon as possible.

Guidelines for Young People engaging digitally (adapted from Company Three template April 2020)

During this period of lockdown we want to work digitally to connect, create work and support each other. In order to do this we are going to use digital platforms. When using these platforms it is important to protect you and your families and follow these guidelines.

LIVE VIDEO CHAT

- o Be kind
- o Never use your full name, first names will do
- o Make sure people you are living with know you are on a live video chat. Don't include them in the chat
- o Wear appropriate clothing, even on parts of you that you think won't be seen
- o Remember it's easy to misinterpret things online
- o Refer to a group leader directly if you feel worried about anything
- o Do not record or take photos of anything without the others consent
- o If you are worried about anything, message the session leader

SUBMITTING VIDEOS

- o Don't use your full name
- o Don't film things that might reveal your exact address, school or somewhere you go regularly (e.g. a sports club or activity).
- o Don't film anyone else under the age of 18
- o Wear appropriate clothing
- o Keep yourself safe - don't share something that feels too personal, complicated or sad.

If you are worried or concerned about anything online or personal during this period please contact Gez at GRL they will listen and find you the right support.

Named Support: Gez Smith

Contact Details: 0799087794 or girlsrocklondon@gmail.com

Phones are only turned on during sessions and weekday office hours.

Additional information on Zoom security & settings (Adapted from Hackney Music Service Online Music Tuition Safeguarding Guidance April 2020)

Security settings/functions for online teaching with Zoom

Zoom has improved security functions, which have been pre-configured as default settings for added protection. The software must be kept up to date with the latest version in order to maintain the highest levels of stability and security. Tutors must check all settings, and configure as necessary, before any online session begins.

ID and invitations to lessons

- Removal of ID from title bar to prevent Host/Staff Members information being copied.
- System should be set to issue a randomly generated Meeting ID and Unique Password for each lesson rather than using the Personal ID of the Host/Staff Member – this mitigates anyone trying to join future meetings as ID/password won't be the same.
- Host/Staff Member receives a notification should any participant share the link with anyone else who is not invited to join the lesson.
- Invitation settings should be set to allow give participants the option to join the lesson using their web browser or Zoom software on their computer or tablet.

Mitigating Zoombombing

- All participants joining the session are placed in a 'waiting room' with sound muted and with video switched off, until admitted to the session by the Host/Staff Member. Whilst in the 'waiting room' participants cannot see, hear, be seen or heard by anyone else in the session.
- The Host/Staff Member has full control and the ability to remove anyone from the waiting room who was not invited to the lesson.
- Once the session begins, the room can be 'locked' by the Host/Staff Member to prevent anyone else from joining.
- The 'Share Screen' and 'Chat' functions should be switched off in Settings and is managed by the Host/Staff Member.

Other management functions

- The Security button on the Host/Staff Member's screen is easily accessible for use by the Host/Tutor during the lesson.
- The Host should have their video 'Pinned' to the screen.
- The Host/Staff Member has the ability to remove anyone from the session for safety reasons or if the group agreement is not being respected. Once removed they are unable to re-join that session.

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- The Host/Staff Member has the ability to place participants back into the waiting room (akin to being placed on hold on a telephone, or waiting outside the workshop space, but with no sound or image) should this be necessary.

GRL Standard Risk Assessment Template

This risk assessment applies to specific hazards related directly to the activity that are *additional* to the GRL General Risk Assessment.

Risk	Impact (1-5)	Likelihood (1-5)	Total	Strategy for managing risk (mitigations)
Add additional risks as needed				

Impact Key	Likelihood Key	Total
5 Catastrophic	5 Almost certain	8 – 10: Significant
4 Major	4 Likely	7: High
3 Moderate	3 Possible	6: Moderate
2 Minor	2 Unlikely	2 – 5: Low
1 Insignificant	1 Rare	1: Very Low

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Table of substantive changes since May 2020

Where	What
Throughout the document	Update references to GRL Safeguarding Policy and Procedure to 2021 version
Section 3: Ways of working during social distancing measures (Page 5)	Added in reference to National Youth Agency guidance to face-to-face working with young people with hyperlink Added in compliance to HSE reference
Appendix D	Updated risk assessment template