



Musical Empowerment Child Protection Policies

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Musical Empowerment Child Protection Policies

I. Introduction

Musical Empowerment has a zero-tolerance policy for incidents of child abuse. We understand that protecting children is our most important responsibility, and that our programs serve no positive purpose if we do not ensure their safety. In EVERY case, the report of molestation and abuse, or suspected molestation or abuse, will be treated with absolute priority, and the organization will do everything in its power to ensure the successful prosecution of the perpetrator to the fullest extent of the law. This document provides guidelines and establishes procedures for employees, board members, volunteers, consultants, or anyone conducting or involved (defined as "Individuals") in youth programming on behalf of the Musical Empowerment organization. Note that such "Individuals" do not include outside vendors, contractors, or service providers, unless they are directly involved with Musical Empowerment youth programming.

II: Orientation and Training

All staff and volunteers will be provided with training before working directly with children.

Orientation/Training of Staff and Volunteers will cover:

- The Musical Empowerment Code of Conduct and require volunteers to sign the code of conduct.
 - Addresses responsibilities, appropriate and inappropriate behavior and consequences for misconduct.
- Training will be provided by Musical Empowerment National Staff on appropriate supervision for lessons and activities and appropriate interactions between adults and youth.
- Employee and volunteer obligations with regard to reporting incidents of child sexual molestation and abuse.
- The process on how to respond to allegations, child abuse warning signs and for reporting to the proper authorities and notification of Musical Empowerment National staff members.
- Understanding what signs to look for in a child who may have been abused
- Explanation of Musical Empowerment's child protection policies.

Information/Training of youth and parent/guardians:

- All parent/guardians and students will have access to the Musical Empowerment Code of Conduct so that they understand responsibilities, appropriate behavior and consequences for misconduct.
- Parents should have access to this child protection policy at the start of the program.
- Musical Empowerment National will provide parent/guardians with reporting options. Parents/guardians will have contact information for a Musical Empowerment National staff member that they may contact to make a report or call in case of questions or concerns related to breaches of these child safeguarding policies. All other concerns not related to child safeguarding should be addressed to the chapter email or phone number.
- Additionally, Musical Empowerment will provide all parent/guardians with an online reporting form that can be accessed from the Musical Empowerment website. This form allows the report to be anonymous if desired.



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- Children should be encouraged to discuss their experiences with their parents and to identify any behavior or activity that made them uncomfortable.

III: Screening and selecting employees and volunteers

Application and Interview

- All prospective Musical Empowerment volunteers and employees must submit an application.
- Applicants may be asked to submit personal references. Musical Empowerment can check phone or written references for the purposes of screening for any Musical Empowerment staff or volunteer.
- Each Musical Empowerment volunteer must participate in an in-person interview with at least two interviewers present with approved documentation of the interview.

Background Check

- Each Musical Empowerment staff and volunteer requires a background check.
- Until a time when national fingerprint-based criminal background check is available, at minimum all Musical Empowerment "Individuals" will be subject to an initial national name-based criminal background check. All background checks that violate the Musical Empowerment Background Check Policy will be banned from working or volunteering in the organization. Please see the Musical Empowerment [Background Check Policy](#) for further information on specific crimes which automatically disqualify candidates.
- Musical Empowerment "Individuals" are defined as follows:
 - All employees of the Musical Empowerment organization
 - Any volunteer working directly with children on behalf of the Musical Empowerment organization.
 - All board members of the Musical Empowerment organization.
 - All interns or others who may conduct youth programming on behalf of the Musical Empowerment organization.
 - Any Individual who may be affiliated with a Musical Empowerment sponsored activity in any capacity and who is in regular contact with young people involved in Musical Empowerment programming
- Background checks will be conducted by Intellicorp, an approved Background Check Provider. Checks will include, at a minimum: Validated Criminal Database, Validated Nationwide Sex Offender, Validated Department of Corrections, Single County Searches, SSN Verification, Government Sanctions.

III: Code of Conduct

This behavior code outlines the conduct we expect of all our staff and volunteers. The behavior code aims to help us protect children and young people from abuse and reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations being made.

The role of staff and volunteers

Musical Empowerment Child Protection Policies were written with the help from the [Ripken Foundation](#).



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When working with or for children and young people, you are acting in a position of trust. You are likely to be seen as a role model and must act appropriately at all times. All Musical Empowerment staff and volunteers are required to understand their responsibility to keep children safe and must abide by the following Code of Conduct and challenge all unacceptable behavior and report any breaches of the behavior code.

Upholding this code of behavior

All members of staff and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of this code to National Staff members at **919-891-4383** or using the **reporting form** on the ME website under Teacher/Parent Resources. Staff and volunteers who breach this code of behaviour may be subject to Musical Empowerment disciplinary procedures. Any breach of the code involving a volunteer or member of staff from another agency may result in them being asked to leave Musical Empowerment. Serious breaches may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency such as the police or the local authority children's social care department.

When working with children and young people in Musical Empowerment, it is important to:

- Listen to and respect children at all times.
- Treat children and young people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination and respect differences and treat all individuals equitably regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.
- Follow Musical Empowerment principles, policies and procedures
- Stay within the law at all times.
- Model good behavior for children and young people to follow.
- Always use positive and encouraging language with Musical Empowerment students.
- Report all allegations/suspicions of abuse following our reporting procedures.
- Promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect.
- Only release children to their authorized parent or guardian or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian (with written authorization on file) under any circumstances.
- Avoid being alone with a student. The lesson room should always have open doors, and open blinds and light when possible.
- Always have two adults in the lesson room or at any Musical Empowerment activity; either the parent and the background checked Musical Empowerment teacher or two background checked Musical Empowerment teachers.
- Know that Musical Empowerment lessons and all activities will be subject to unannounced student leadership, board member, or staff visits to the program.

Unacceptable Behavior when working with children and young people in Musical Empowerment:

- Physical contact such as tickling, wrestling, pinching, back rubs, asking a child to sit on an adult's lap, fondle, kiss, cuddle or touching children in inappropriate ways.
- Acting abusively in any way (verbally or physically) or knowingly placing a child at risk of abuse.
- Acting in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive or participate in physical discipline.
- Making inappropriate promises to children and young people, particularly in relation to confidentiality.



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- Making abusive, harsh, threatening, derogatory, indecent, inappropriate, demeaning, insensitive or sexually suggestive comments, or actions to a child, even as a joke.
- Participating in sexually oriented conversations with minors.
- Conducting a romantic, or sexual relationship with a child, young person or their family members or engaging in any form of sexual contact with a child, young person or their family members or develop relationships which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive. Any such behavior between an adult member of staff or volunteer and a child or young person using the services of Musical Empowerment represents a serious breach of trust on the part of the staff member or volunteer and is not acceptable under any circumstances.
- Spending time alone with a child behind closed doors or in a secluded area.
- Condoning or participating in behavior with children that is illegal or unsafe.
- Smoking or consuming alcohol or use of illegal substances.
- Taking a child alone in a vehicle.
- Allowing allegations made by a child or concerns about their welfare go unrecorded or not acted upon.

IV: Monitoring behavior

- Supervision Policy:
 - Teachers will not begin teaching their student unless the student's designated parent/guardian or another designated background-checked Musical Empowerment teacher is in the room.
 - Teachers must never be in a room alone with a Musical Empowerment student (includes lessons, recitals or any Musical Empowerment activity).
 - Teachers that do not have the student's designated parent/guardian in the room must meet or have a phone call with their student's parent/guardian twice a semester to discuss their student's progress, share instructional plans and address any concerns from their student or the parent/guardian.
- Musical Empowerment lessons and all activities will be subject to unannounced staff visits to the program.
- All Musical Empowerment volunteers are encouraged to report any suspicious they have of any other volunteer, staff, or board behavior.
- Musical Empowerment volunteers and staff can be subject to performance reviews.
- Students, teachers and parents should each be given surveys each semester at each Musical Empowerment chapter.

V: Ensuring safe environments

- Musical Empowerment spaces should strive to have a volunteer presence. Musical Empowerment volunteers, board members, staff, or chaperones from the partner organization hosting ME programs can also "float" in the area if the facility is difficult to supervise.
- The lesson room should always have open doors, and open blinds and light in order to allow informal monitoring by passersby.



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- **“No closed door” policy:** ME teachers or staff should never spend time alone with a child behind closed doors or in a secluded area.

VI: Responding to breaches in policy

- Musical Empowerment National will provide parent/guardians, volunteers, and board members with reporting options. These individuals will have contact information for a Musical Empowerment National staff member that they may contact to make a report or call in case of questions or concerns related to breaches of these child safeguarding policies. All other concerns not related to child safeguarding should be addressed to the chapter email or phone number.
- Additionally, Musical Empowerment will provide an online reporting form that can be accessed from the Musical Empowerment website. This form allows a report to be anonymous if desired.
- Parents/guardians, volunteers, and board members should first promptly report inappropriate contact and other questionable interactions/behaviors by program participant to local Child Protective Services, or 911 and ask for the on-call social worker if needed. Next, National Musical Empowerment Staff should be notified via phone or through the online form.
- Musical Empowerment will investigate all reports of suspected abused, abuse, inappropriate behaviors, policy violations and concerns with minors seriously and carefully.
- All staff, board members, volunteers, and parents/guardians must report any evidence of potential child abuse or observation of inappropriate contact by a parent/guardian, staff member, volunteer, or board member to the appropriate agency. Additionally, staff, board members, and volunteers should report any Code of Conduct violations.
- Please use the [Suspected Violation of Child Protection Policies Reporting Form](#) that can be anonymous and available in English and Spanish to document incidents