



## St Albans City Band

### Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

Note: This policy has been drawn in line with guidance from Brass Bands England's Bandsafe programme.

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## **St Albans City Band**

### **Whistleblowing policy**

This policy applies to all members, volunteers or anyone working on behalf of (“members”) all constituent organisations which make up the St Albans City Band family (“the band”).

### **The purpose of this policy**

- to provide a clear and transparent way for all members of the band to raise genuine concerns about acts of wrongdoing or malpractice within the organisation.
- to ensure that any concerns are dealt with effectively and in a timely fashion.
- to provide the Band’s Trustees and its Safeguarding Officer, with steps to deal with allegations, ensuring that members are not penalised for raising genuine concerns, even if those concerns prove to be unfounded.
- to provide the means for taking disciplinary action against anyone who is found to have raised false concerns with malicious intent.

### **Related policy**

St Albans City Band Safeguarding Policy

### **What to do if you wish to raise a concern about malpractice**

- Speak to the Safeguarding Officer or Chair of Trustees. If your concern relates to one of these officers, then it may be necessary for another committee member to also be involved to support the officer you have spoken to.
- The officer you have approached will arrange to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. This meeting can take place away from the band room if necessary.
- You will be told at the meeting, or as soon as possible afterwards, what action will be taken to address your concern. It may not be possible to tell you the full details of the outcome, as this could relate to confidential third-party information.
- If no action is to be taken in relation to your concern, you will also be informed of this fact and given the reasons why.
- If you do not want the person you have concerns about to know your identity, you should make this clear to the officer dealing with your concern at the earliest opportunity. Every effort will be made to respect your wishes, but it cannot be guaranteed that your identity will not be disclosed. If this is the case, you will be informed and any issues you may have about this will be discussed with you.

- If you need support in raising your concern, you may bring another member with you, however consideration should be taken to respect the confidentiality of the concern.

### **What to do if someone raises a concern with you about malpractice**

- If someone tells you they are concerned about the actions of another member, arrange to meet them as soon as possible. If you are not the person responsible for dealing with these matters, you should establish why they have chosen to discuss the concern with you.
- You should then suggest that the person speaks to that officer and offer to support them to do this. You should not, however, refuse to hear what the person has to say.
- You should approach the situation sensitively, recognising the discomfort that the person may feel. Offer to meet them away from the band room if they wish, but ensure you are protected and not alone if this person is under 18.
- Remind the person with the concern about other sources of support available to them. Some are listed at the end of this document.
- If the person reporting the concern wants their identity to be kept confidential, explain that this will be done if possible, but that it may not be achievable. Make notes of your discussions with the individual and check the accuracy of your notes with them.

### **Deciding what action to take**

- Once you have established the nature of the concern, it may be of a relatively minor nature and you may decide to resolve it informally.
- If the concern appears more serious, consider first whether any immediate action is needed to protect children or a vulnerable adult. If so, you should check the Safeguarding Policy to consider what action to take.
- You should also consider whether there is a need to involve the police and/or other statutory services e.g. health. If so, you should contact the Safeguarding Officer (if this is not you) to discuss the matter further.
- If you are not the person responsible for dealing with concerns i.e. Chair, Safeguarding Officer or other appointed member, you should refer the matter to the appropriate officer, who will decide what action to take.

### **Conducting an investigation**

- Unless the matter is relatively minor and can be dealt with informally, the responsible officer will arrange for a thorough and impartial investigation to be completed as swiftly

as possible. The scope of the investigation will be determined by the nature of the concern.

- Witnesses may need to be consulted and records may need to be scrutinised.
- Advice may be needed from someone with specialist knowledge in the area of concern.
- Once the investigation is completed, a report will be produced summarising the nature of the concern, the investigation process and the outcome, including specific recommendations.
- Take measures to preserve the anonymity of the person who raised the concern, if this has been their wish.
- If the concerns are not upheld, this should be made clear.
- If the concern is upheld and the person at the centre of it is found to have been culpable or remiss in some way, the report's recommendations should be carried out using a clear plan of action. The plan may include the use of disciplinary action, training, coaching, counselling, the implementation of new policies or procedures, or a referral to the Independent Safeguarding Authority.
- If it becomes apparent during the course of the investigation that a criminal offence may have been committed, the police should be informed. Your own investigation may have to be suspended on police advice, if they decide that they need to become involved.
- The person who raised the concern should be informed of the outcome, but not the details of any disciplinary action.
- It may be appropriate for the person who raised the concern to be offered support or counselling.
- If the concern is unfounded and the person who raised it is found, through the process of investigation, to have acted maliciously or out of a desire for personal gain, it may be appropriate to consider disciplinary action against them.

### **Recording the concerns**

- The responsible officer will make accurate notes of each stage of the process, including the discussions during meetings, regardless of whether the concern is dealt with formally or informally.
- Copies of these notes should be given to the person who is the subject of the concern. The person who raised the concern should also be given copies of notes from his/her discussion.

- Notes made during the investigation and the report of the investigation, together with any notes relating to the outcome, should be kept securely and compliant with data protection.
- If it was requested, these notes should not reveal the identity of the person who reported the concerns.

### Information and Support

Dealing with an issue such as this may require external support. This could be gained through Brass Band England, the NSPCC, a Local Authority Designated Officer for safeguarding, or Citizens Advice.

### Useful contact details

Band Safeguarding Officer: Jenny Hill [safeguarding@stalbandsband.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@stalbandsband.co.uk)

Band Chair of Trustees: Chris Hughes [chris@stalbandsband.co.uk](mailto:chris@stalbandsband.co.uk)

Local police:

- Hertfordshire Constabulary
  - <https://www.herts.police.uk/contact/af/contact-us/>
  - Call 101 for non-emergency enquiries.
  - Police Station address, Civic Centre, St Peter's Street, St Albans AL1 3JE

Hertfordshire Local authority children's social care department and adult social care department, including out of hours contacts:

- If you are concerned that abuse could be taking place but there is no immediate danger, please call or visit:
  - Children - [0300 123 4043](tel:03001234043)
  - [Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/safeguarding-children-partnership)
  - Adults - [0300 123 4042](tel:03001234042)
  - [Safeguarding Adults at Risk](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/safeguarding-adults-at-risk)

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000 or [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

ChildLine: 0800 1111 (textphone 0800 400 222) or [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

The Samaritans: <https://www.samaritans.org/>

National Domestic Abuse Helpline: <https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/>

Brass Bands England Safeguarding Officer: 01226 771015