

Safeguarding Policy

TUNBRIDGE WELLS ARTS FESTIVAL

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

This Policy was last updated on 29th August 2025.

Chair: Celia Barstow

Vice Chairman: Debbie Mumford

Hon. Secretary: Fiona Ross

Hon. Treasurer: Yanina Dunton

Safeguarding Officer: Celia Barstow 5 Milestone Court, Chantlers Hill,
Paddock Wood, Tonbridge TN12 6QT

Venue for the 2026 Festival: Kent College Pembury.

Dates: 7th & 8th March 2026

Gems Concert and Prize Giving: 15th March 2026, Trinity Theatre, Tunbridge Wells.

3.00pm

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT: The safety of children and members of other vulnerable groups is paramount and all, without exception, have the right to protection from abuse. All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately and all the charity's trustees and volunteers have a responsibility to report concerns.

1. Purpose and Function of the Festival

The object of the Festival is to advance the education of the public in the arts of Music and Speech & Drama. These aims are achieved by providing a platform for performance supported by feedback from professional adjudicators.

2. The Festival Environment

The Festival is run by a voluntary committee, and during the Festival itself by further voluntary helpers. The Festival will take place in five rooms at Kent College, Pembury in 2025. Participants may need to move around the site from room to room. Kent College Pembury plays no part in the running of the Festival.

The Festival aims to provide a safe environment for all who participate, and to inform parents, guardians, carers and teachers of this Policy. The Festival will work in partnership with them to ensure, so far as is reasonably possible, that the Policy is carried out and a safe environment is provided.

We do this by ensuring that parents, guardians, carers and teachers have their attention drawn to a copy of this Policy on the TWAF website at the point of entry and again at the time when they are making arrangements to attend the Festival.

At Kent College Pembury, school personnel, children attending that school and members of the general public will have access to the venue, and all participants, parents, guardians, carers and teachers should be aware of this and take appropriate steps to safeguard children under the age of 18 years and vulnerable adults from any potential problems.

3. Applicability of Policy

This policy relates to children under the age of 18 years and members of vulnerable groups of any age, hereafter referred to as 'applicable entrants'. Any applicable entrants to whom this policy relates, who require additional support for their needs, should be identified to the Festival Committee by parents, guardians, carers or teachers prior to their arrival at the Festival, and the GEMS Concert and Prize Giving. This should be done by contacting the named Safeguarding Officer. The Festival actively seeks, wherever possible, to meet additional needs, but must know beforehand in order to prepare support, or let you know we are unable to help.

4. Festival Personnel

All Festival helpers are volunteers and most of the existing helpers have been helping for many years and are well known to the Festival Committee. New recruits tend to be parents of entrants and are usually well known to the Festival Committee already or are recommended by one of the members of the committee. All Helpers must complete an Application Form which includes a self-certification regarding convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings relating to working with vulnerable groups, including children.

All helpers are provided with a description of the job to be undertaken by them. All jobs are reviewed annually to ascertain if it is necessary to ask the job holder to obtain an Enhanced Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau.

A record of all helpers is held on a central database either by the Helpers Co-ordinator or by a member of the Festival Committee and the names are reviewed at least once a year.

All helpers and Committee members wear lanyards identifying their role in the Organisation. In case of a problem, anyone wearing a lanyard can be approached and will be able to direct you to someone who will know how to help.

The Chairman of the Festival, or in their absence the Vice Chairman or Secretary, or someone nominated by the Chairman to stand in their stead, is the Festival Supervisor and is available at all times during the Festival to answer queries and deal with any problems that arise. Any problems should be immediately notified to them, whereupon appropriate action will be taken.

The Festival Supervisor will keep a central register of any problems notified, the date and details of the problem and the action taken. The Festival treats all such matters with the utmost concern. The Adjudicators' Dining Room is available during the Festival for private discussion if required.

The contents of this Policy will be drawn to the attention of all helpers at the Festival each year by pointing out its availability on the TWAF website.

5. Attendance at the Festival

It is the Policy of the Festival to ensure that all parents, guardians, teachers and carers of applicable entrants are notified that a copy of this Policy is available to read on the TWAF website in time to make arrangements to attend the Festival. Individual entrants are notified on the Entry Form, while entrants who have been entered by their teacher are notified by them, as in that event it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that all parents, guardians and carers are notified of the Policy.

At all times while on any premises being used by the Festival, applicable entrants should be accompanied by at least one responsible adult. It is a condition of entry that all applicable entrants should be fit and well to participate in their classes. By submitting an online Entry Form, parents, guardians, teachers and carers commit to this requirement.

Under no circumstances will the Festival act "in loco parentis." It is the responsibility of every parent, guardian or carer who is not personally attending with their child to satisfy themselves that their child is accompanied to the Festival and adequately supervised by a responsible adult acting on their behalf.

In particular, please note, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians/carers to ensure children do not play on the swings at any time during the festival.

6. Performance Areas and Practice Rooms

There are no changing facilities at the venue. Practice rooms are available in the Music Block but they are not supervised by anyone on behalf of the Festival and it is the responsibility of a teacher in respect of their entrants and of the adult responsible for any applicable entrants to ensure safe use of these facilities.

A Session President and/or Adjudicators Clerk at all times will supervise each performance venue.

Entrances to the Festival performance venues are also manned at all times and the Festival Supervisor or someone on his or her behalf will check at regular intervals that helpers are in place.

7. GEMS Concert and Prize Giving

Registered Chaperones will be provided for appropriate children under 17 years of age. Otherwise it will be the responsibility of a teacher in respect of their entrants and of the adult responsible for applicable entrants to ensure the safe use of these facilities.

The GEMS Co-ordinator or their nominated deputy will at all times supervise the GEMS Concert.

8. Photographs, Visual Recording and Press Photography

The use of recording equipment, cameras or video cameras of any kind during the course of any Class is strictly forbidden. The Press, or an official photographer, may be in attendance at the Festival. Their photographs may be published in local papers or on the Festival website. If parents do NOT wish their children to be photographed, they must indicate accordingly upon making their entry. Where entries are input by a teacher, it is the teacher's responsibility to obtain consent or otherwise from the parents. The Festival does not take any responsibility for verifying entry information input by teachers.

School Groups: if individual members of a school group are named at point of entry, and therefore parental permission will have been sought, they are covered by the rule above. If members of school groups have not been individually named at point of entry, they will not be photographed by the Press or by any official Festival photographer for the purpose of publishing in local press or on the Festival website. If a school does not wish photographs to be taken of individual pupils representing the school, they must inform the Safeguarding Officer in writing prior to the Festival.

The GEMS concert may be recorded in part or in its entirety. Permission to film will be

deemed to be covered by the permission granted or otherwise at the point of entry.

9. The Legislation and Guidance that supports this Policy

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974; The Children Act 1989; The Police Act 1997; The Data Protection Act 1998; The Human Rights Act 1998; The Protection of Children Act 1999; The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000; The Children Act 2004; The Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

10. Policy Review

The Festival Committee will review this Policy on a regular basis, and at least once a year, improving and enhancing it as necessary. In doing so they will look to The British & International Federation of Festivals for support and that body in turn will look to other agencies for good practice, in particular the NSPCC and Arts Council of England policy guidelines.

A copy of this Policy will be accessible to all participants throughout the Festival.