



Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

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SAFEGUARDING POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT, PURPOSE & SCOPE

Musicians Without Borders uses music to bridge divides, connect communities, and heal the wounds of war.

We create safe environments where participants can explore and develop their creativity. We believe that all people have the right to be protected from harm and we commit to act in their best interests at all times.

This policy and the associated guidelines raise awareness of safeguarding issues, define expectations when working with participants and detail our approach to promoting participants' wellbeing – protecting them from violence, abuse and exploitation.

It applies to all those working on behalf of Musicians Without Borders including salaried staff, freelancers, volunteers, work placements and our supervisory board. Partner organizations are required to sign this policy or provide an alternative that is based on the underlying principles and legal frameworks laid out in this document.

DEFINITIONS AND LEGAL BASIS

Our policy has been drawn up on the basis of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (1989) and takes the cultures, religions and laws of the communities in which we work into account.

Child: a person under the age of 18¹

Vulnerable person: a child or adult who, by reason of disability, age, gender, illness, the context they are in or as a result of social and other inequalities, is or may be at risk of significant harm or exploitation.

¹ In some areas where we work, a child under the age of 18 may not have a parent or guardian or may be considered in their country to be of age of consent to participate in the program. In these cases, consent of the child will be obtained according to local laws.

APPROACH AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Musicians Without Borders has been working in, for and with communities dealing with recent or ongoing conflicts for 25 years. Our long-term commitment to peace-building in these communities – informed by *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, *Music's Power to Connect and Active Nonviolence*, has allowed us to develop ways of working that combine a deep understanding of best practice around safeguarding with an awareness and respect for the particular needs and complexities of the countries in which we work.

The wellbeing of our participants is of paramount importance. Safeguarding is embedded in our practice and can be best understood through the organization's working principles (which inform our training methodology and our approach to workshop facilitation):

- **SAFETY:** Everyone will experience a safe environment in our programs.
- **INCLUSION:** Our programs offer a neutral space where people from different backgrounds can meet, have a voice and not be defined by their differences.
- **EQUALITY:** Everyone is welcome, everyone is honored, everyone can make music, and everyone is treated equally.
- **CREATIVITY:** Everyone is able to explore their own creativity and experience the power of shared ownership in music.
- **QUALITY:** High quality learning experiences and music-making leads to a deeper sense of connection and empathy.

These principles apply to all, regardless of age, gender, identity, ethnicity, disability, language, sexuality, family makeup, or beliefs. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognize that individuals' cultural identity or disability may result in a need for different and/or additional support.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice guidelines annually.

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

Our safeguarding strategy provides protection to all people with whom we work and advises staff on safeguarding issues and protocol. These procedures are organized into 5 safeguarding areas: Prevent, Recognize, Respond, Record and Refer.

1. PREVENT

Recruitment and support of staff and volunteers:

Musicians Without Borders will:

- ensure that new staff and volunteers **provide a CV** or alternative record of their employment history,
- request a **criminal background check**² for all staff and international volunteers working with vulnerable people, unless it is not possible or safe to do so because of ongoing conflict or police corruption; a criminal background check will be considered valid for five years for persons continuously engaged by MWB, or for one year if not continuously engaged,
- gain **two references** with regards to the candidate's suitability for work with children and vulnerable adults,
- ensure all staff, partners and volunteers read and agree to our **code of conduct**,
- provide **safeguarding training** for all relevant personnel.

Please refer to MWB's Personnel Screening Guidelines (Annex 1).

Risk Assessments

Our commitment to work with those in most need results in our programs taking place in potentially risky environments. Key program staff working in these locales:

- create written risk assessments before the start of projects,
- will actively remain updated and well informed about current situational risks so that they can brief visitors to their program,
- take all reasonable steps to mitigate against these risks and review them on an ongoing basis in consultation with colleagues and partners.

Participant Voice and Consent

Our trainers honor all participants and are sensitive to the various factors that may influence their ability to participate. We value open communication, engage participants in an ongoing process of invitation and consent, provide space for

² MWB works in settings of conflict, political instability, violence and police corruption. In these settings, we recognize that the staff of partner organizations may be targeted because of their work and may have a record of offenses stemming from that targeting. Any such offenses will be reviewed together with the staff or volunteer candidate. Suitable staff, trainers, and volunteers will not be refused engagement with MWB because of offenses that do not pose a risk when working with children or vulnerable adults.

formal and informal feedback, and listen to what participants tell us both verbally and non-verbally.

We ensure that:

- participants know they have a right to feel safe and are aware that they can discuss any concerns with our trainers and other personnel with whom they feel comfortable,
- we seek participants' consent if we intend to capture their image in any way. Consent is sought in a number of ways: in writing and through information forms, conversation, participatory activities, or in closed groups on social media.

Parental Consent

- Where it is possible to contact parents, we will obtain consent from the child's parent or guardian through appropriate channels (e.g., through school authorities)³.
- Where it is not possible to contact parents/guardians, or permission for photographs or videos is denied, we will ensure that individual participants are not identifiable in any images we capture.

Supervision of participants

- All staff and volunteers will avoid spending time alone with vulnerable people. If it is necessary for any reason for staff to be alone with a vulnerable person, however, efforts will be taken to ensure they can be seen by others.
- Staff and volunteers shall under no circumstances give guests or visitors unsupervised access to one or more vulnerable persons.
- Staff will have emergency contact details for all participants, unless they are working in partnership with a school/community group where the teacher/group leader will hold these details.

Monitoring Practice

Safeguarding activities and records are monitored by the Integrity Officer in conversation with program managers. A log of incident reports is maintained in a secure database and will be summarized on an as-needed basis for the Supervisory Board. The Safeguarding Policy and Procedures will be reviewed on an annual basis and revised, as necessary.

³ We work in countries where signing documents arouses suspicion. In these cases, we will get and document verbal consent.

2. RECOGNIZE

What is Abuse?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment that can involve inflicting harm, or failing to act to prevent harm. The categories of abuse are listed as follows and are to be used as a guide for monitoring and reporting suspected abuse, alongside an understanding of the complex contexts in which Musicians Without Borders operates.

- **Neglect:** persistently failing to meet a vulnerable person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, resulting in impairment of their health or development. Failure to take all reasonable measures to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter; protect individuals from harm; supervise them properly; make sure they receive appropriate medical care.
- **Sexual harassment or abuse:** forcing a vulnerable person to take part in sexual activity, or to be subjected to sexual advances or remarks. This does not have to involve violence and the individual may not be aware of what is happening. It includes, for example, penetrative and non-penetrative sex; sexually exploiting a vulnerable person in exchange for gifts, money or affection, making, looking at and/or distributing indecent images.
- **Physical abuse:** threatening or inflicting actual physical injury on a person, or a failure to prevent physical injury or suffering of a person.
- **Emotional abuse:** persistent emotional ill-treatment or rejection – deliberately scaring, humiliating or verbally abusing a vulnerable person or denying love, care and encouragement; or controlling and limiting individuals' opportunities to realize their rights to social and cultural life.
- **Exploitation:** requiring a child (or adult) to perform any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.
- **Substance abuse:** the use, manufacturing or distribution of illicit substances.

Signs and Symptoms

Children and adults who have suffered abuse or exploitation may be afraid to tell anybody about what they have experienced. They may struggle with feelings of guilt, shame or confusion, particularly if the abuser is a parent, carer or friend.

Here are some common signs that someone may be being abused. **Please note that this is not a checklist.** It is very hard, even for experts, to determine whether abuse is taking place and many of these signs may be exhibited by people dealing with other conditions or traumatic experiences.

- Sudden changes in personality and/or eating habits,

- Outbursts of anger and/or violent behavior,
- Lack of confidence,
- Fear, anxiety,
- Repeated negative statements about themselves,
- Lack of basic needs, e.g., poor hygiene, persistent hunger,
- Reluctance to go home after activities/school,
- Showing an inexplicable fear (or making excuses to avoid) particular places/people,
- Reluctance to change clothes (e.g., undressing) for certain activities and/or spending long periods of time in the bathroom,
- Self-harming (includes head banging, scratching, cutting),
- Not receiving adequate medical attention after injuries/illnesses,
- Flinching in response to sudden but harmless actions, e.g. someone raising their hand,
- Inappropriate behavior for age, including knowledge of adult issues (sex, drugs, alcohol), regularly engaging in sexual play, or older children regressing to the behavior of younger children.

Local Perspective

It is important to note that abuse is not universally understood. Behavior that is viewed as abusive in some parts of Europe may be viewed differently in the regions where we work.

Musicians Without Borders will not tolerate any form of abuse within our projects. Additionally, we will:

- model our nonviolent approach to local organizations through our work and provide training where necessary to ensure safeguarding standards are met in our programs,
- always act when a vulnerable person asks for help or discloses abuse that is happening within or outside of our projects, or when we notice abuse taking place that would be recognized as such by local law, e.g. sexual abuse, female genital mutilation.

3. RESPOND

Responding to disclosures

If a child or vulnerable adult tells you they are being harmed, it is important to respond appropriately:

DO:

- Be accessible and receptive,
- Listen carefully,
- Stay calm,
- Take it seriously,
- Reassure the vulnerable person that they are right to tell someone,
- Let them know what will happen next, including your responsibility to share the information with relevant authorities (e.g. I need to tell someone what you told me),
- Seek advice from an appropriate person,
- Make a careful record of what was said,
- As far as possible, protect the person from further harm (e.g., refer children to relevant child protection authorities to ensure their safety).

DON'T

- React strongly (e.g. saying “how disgusting”),
- Jump to conclusions, especially about the abuser,
- Speculate or accuse anybody,
- Say that you will keep their secret,
- Ask leading questions,
- Make promises,
- Stop someone who is speaking freely,
- Tell others their story who do not need to know in order to keep the person safe, or reveal to the abuser what they have said,
- Act alone in responding to the disclosure of abuse, but rather contact relevant authorities.

To avoid leading questions, remember TED:

- **T**ell me what happened,
- **E**xplain to me as best as you can,
- **D**escribe it to me.

These guidelines apply to all disclosures of abuse, whether an accusation is directed towards a parent, teacher, or Musicians Without Borders staff.

Responding to observations

If you have noticed something that concerns you...

- Volunteers: refer your concern to the designated staff members as soon as possible.
- Staff: talk to the vulnerable person **if you feel equipped to do so**.
- Program Managers: talk to the vulnerable person's parent or caregiver **if you feel equipped to do so and this would not put the vulnerable person at further risk**.

Everyone should follow the same do/don't guidelines above, then proceed to our referral procedures.

4. RECORD

The person receiving or filing the report should make clear, written records of any concerns or allegations of abuse **as soon as possible** after the event/concern is raised.

Records should contain as much detail of the concern/allegation as possible, including:

- the date, time and place,
- physical appearance/behavior of the vulnerable person,
- anything that was said (verbatim if possible),
- names of others present,
- any actions taken.

Please use [this form](#) to make a written record:

When writing, keep in mind that your account may be viewed by the vulnerable person's family members, social services and/or the police. It is important to try to write objectively; distinguishing between opinion and fact and avoiding judgmental language.

Make sure you sign and date the record before submitting to your program manager or MWB head office (refer to procedure above under 4. Refer).

Musicians Without Borders will:

- Keep clear, written records of all concerns or allegations of abuse,
- Ensure records are updated with all actions taken at each stage of inquiry,
- Ensure records are stored safely and securely (in compliance with privacy regulations).

Template: Report a Concern, Incident, or Violation

Musicians Without Borders strives to uphold the highest standards of integrity and safety in its work. We take concerns brought to our attention seriously.

Would you like to report a concern, incident or violation of Musicians Without Borders' policies or Code of Conduct? Please fill out this reporting form.

Date of report:

When did the concern arise or the incident or violation take place?

How did the information reported reach you (e.g., witnessed or observed, informed by the survivor, informed by a third party)?

Please describe the concern, incident or violation and any individual/s involved.

Was any immediate action taken to ensure safety or treatment of those affected and/or prevent further violations? If so, please describe.

Next steps requested or suggested:

Completed by:

Name:

Email address:

Signature:

Telephone Number:

Date:

5. REFER

All concerns or allegations relating to a violation of Musicians Without Borders integrity policy must be handled quickly and with sensitivity.

For the present purposes, "Musicians Without Borders integrity policy" will include the following policy documents and codes:

- MWB Code of Conduct,
- MWB Safeguarding Policy and Procedures,
- MWB Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedures,
- MWB Anti-Corruption Policy,
- Any integrity policy documents to be formally adopted by Musicians Without Borders in the future.

Musicians Without Borders offers the following channels below through which you can speak up. You are encouraged to speak up as soon as you can, even if you might not have all the facts related to your concern. There is no need to further investigate the matter yourself - you are not required to gather evidence to build a case. Please note that MWB representatives are obliged to speak up as soon as reasonably possible.

Musicians Without Borders will take all referrals and concerns seriously. We will listen to and support the victim and/or the person reporting the abuse or violation.

If a person is in immediate danger, call the local emergency services (e.g., police).

Note: Any decisions made must consider the culture we are working in when deciding what safeguarding actions to take, as there may be no legal mechanism in place to handle certain referrals and inappropriate actions could potentially further endanger the victim. We will act appropriately, with the fullest consideration of the best interests of the person and on the basis of expert advice in all cases, regardless who an allegation involves.

Integrity reporting system

Musicians Without Borders has the following reporting channels:

1. Management (not anonymous),
2. Integrity Officer (possible to stay anonymous),
3. External Safeguarding and Integrity Advisor (possible to stay anonymous).

MWB's Safeguarding and Integrity Page can be accessed via the following link: mwb.to/safeguarding.

1. Management

To report a violation or concern to Musicians Without Borders management, you can contact your line manager, the finance manager, the director, or if the violation or concern pertains to an MWB program, the program manager.

Report the violation or the concern as soon as possible, and do not discuss the details with anyone who does not need to know.

Contact details - Office		
Director	Laura Hassler	Email: laura@mwb.ngo
Program Development Manager	Chris Nicholson	Email: chris@mwb.ngo
Strategic Development Manager	Wendy Hassler-Forest	Email: wendy@mwb.ngo
Operations Coordinator and Policy Officer	Eleonora Ungaro	Email: eleonora@mwb.ngo
Contact details - Programs		
Middle East	Fabienne van Eck, Program Manager	Email: fabienne@mwb.ngo
Rwanda / Democratic Republic of Congo	Chris Nicholson, Program Manager	Email: chris@mwb.ngo
Music Connects (Kosovo, North Macedonia, and EU-based partners)	Wendy Hassler-Forest, Program Manager	Email: wendy@mwb.ngo
Welcome Notes and Central America	Miguel Ortega, Program Manager	Email: miguel@mwb.ngo
Welcome Notes / Training Programs	Chris Nicholson (ad interim), Training Coordinator	Email: chris@mwb.ngo

Any incidents that the line manager or program manager believes require further inquiry will be reported to MWB's Integrity Officer (below) or MWB's Director, and where relevant to the safeguarding lead at the partner organization.

Once a concern, incident or violation has been reported, the reporting person or where appropriate the person receiving the report should follow up by completing [this form](#).

2. Integrity Officer

To report a violation or concern to Musicians Without Borders' Integrity Officer, please file a report using [this reporting form](#), or contact:

Eleonora Ungaro

Email: eleonora@mwb.ngo

Out-of-hours:

Laura Hassler, MWB Director

Email: laura@mwb.ngo

Reports will be handled as quickly as possible. The Integrity Officer will record the details of your report, make a first assessment and decide with you on the appropriate response and referral.

If you use the reporting form, reports can be filed anonymously. Reports can be written in your own language and can be filed 365 days a year. Please note that, when filing an anonymous report, options for following up on your report and keeping you informed may be limited.

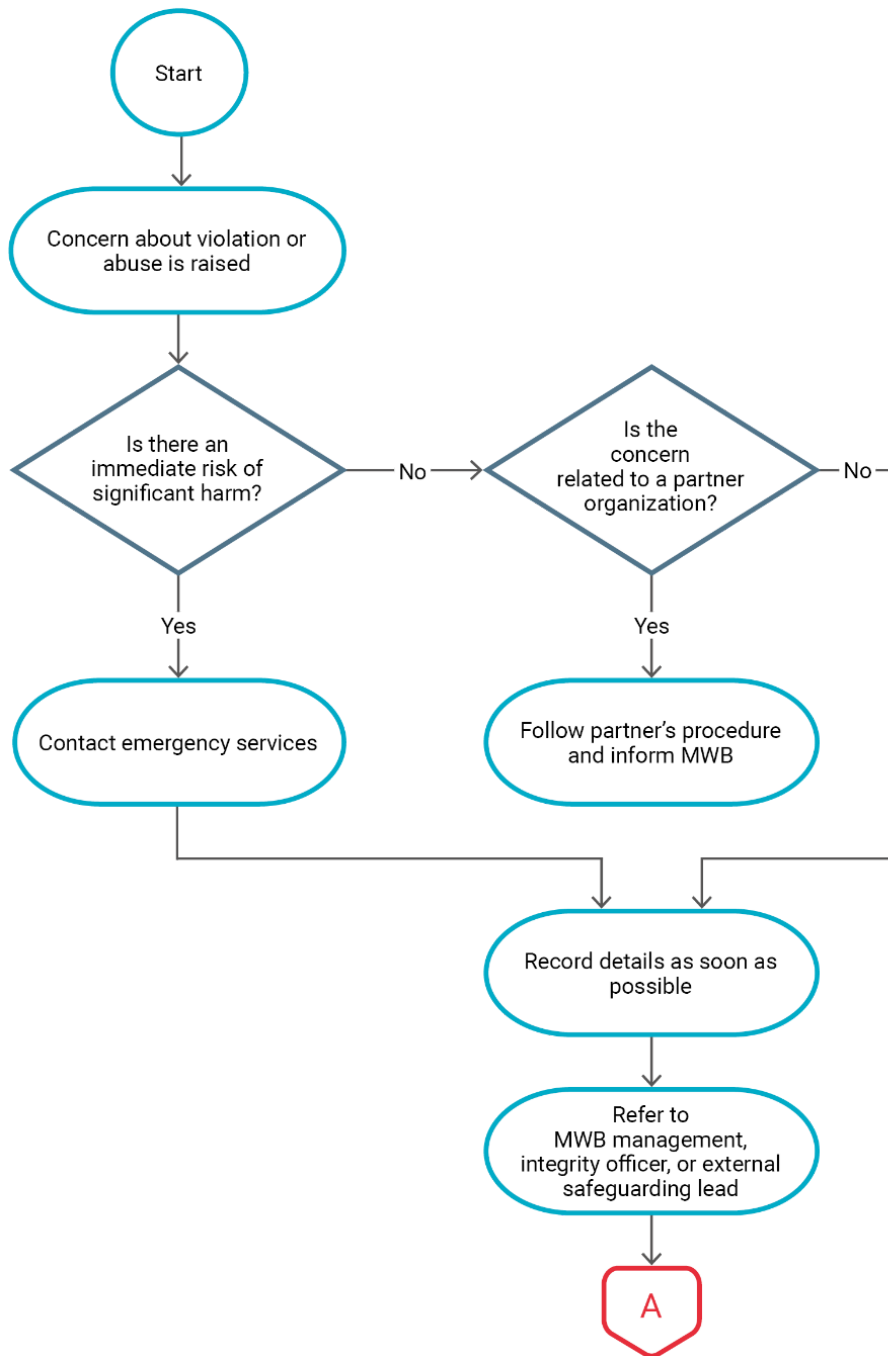
3. External Safeguarding and Integrity Advisor

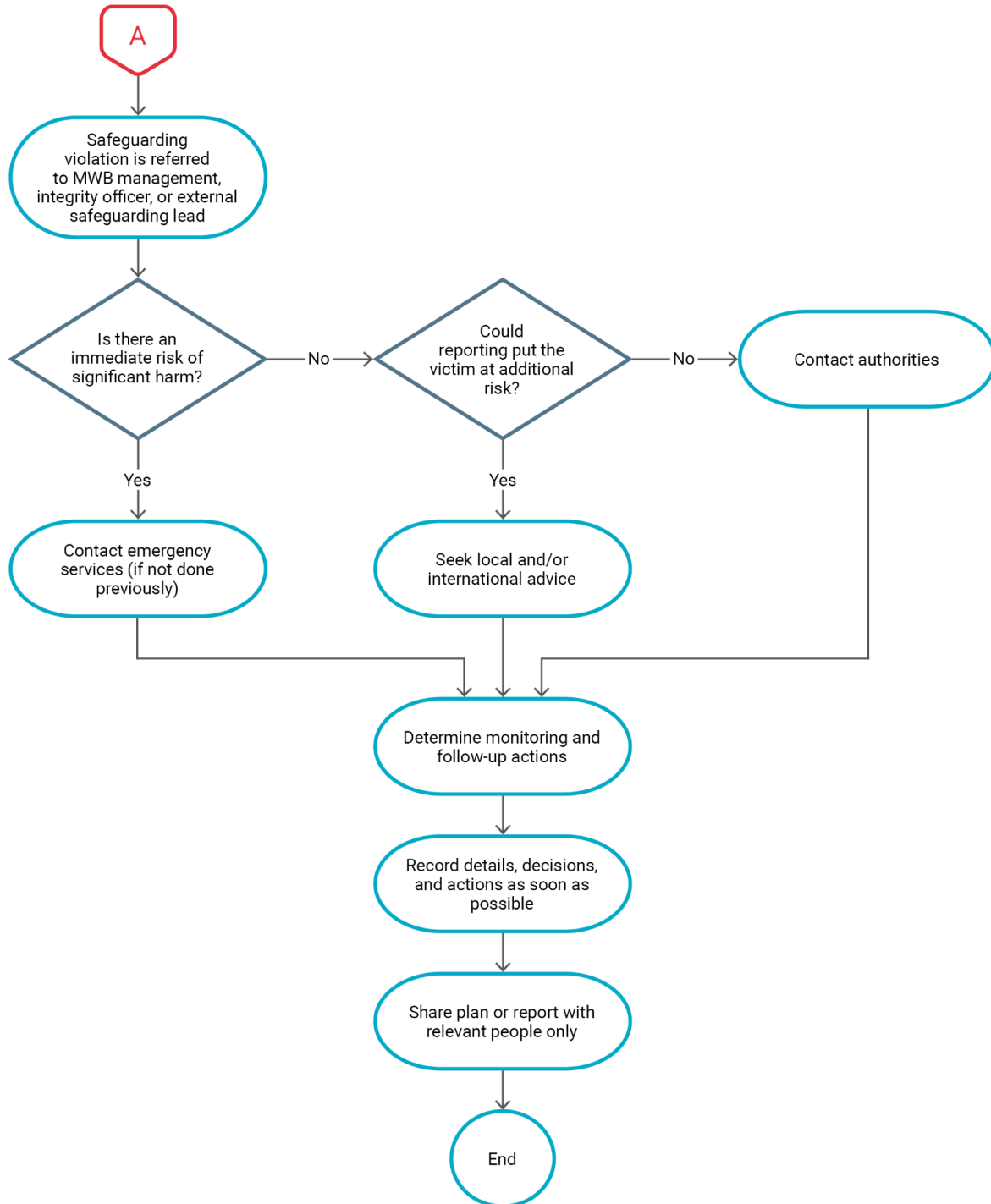
If you would rather raise a concern or file a report through a **confidential external channel**, you can file a report with independent service provider Sarah Helander, External Safeguarding and Integrity Advisor, using [this reporting form](#).

Reports will be handled as quickly as possible. Where possible and appropriate, the External Safeguarding and Integrity Advisor will inform the reporter of actions taken in response to the report.

Reports can be filed here anonymously, and can be written in your own language and filed 365 days a year. Please note that, when filing an anonymous report, options for following up on your report and keeping you informed may be limited.

REPORTING FLOWCHART





SUMMARY AND STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Musicians Without Borders uses music to bridge divides, connect communities and heal the wounds of war. We create safe environments where participants can explore and develop their creativity. We believe that all people have the right to be protected from harm and act in their best interests at all times.

There are six main types of abuse: physical, sexual, exploitation, emotional, neglect, and substance. We will not accept any form of abuse in our projects. We will also act when a participant discloses abuse that is happening outside of our projects, or when we notice external abuse that would be recognized by local law.

All staff and volunteers will:

- treat all participants with respect, dignity, and care,
- encourage and maintain open communication between staff, volunteers, and participants,
- ensure that any form of physical contact is open and with participants' consent,
- avoid spending time alone with participants. If it is necessary, ensure they can be seen by others.
- report all accidents, injuries, allegations, and suspicions of abuse to the designated people as soon as possible,
- not engage in abusive behavior or allow abuse to go unchallenged.

SUMMARY OF SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

Prevent

Have you seen a risk assessment? Do you know whom to contact in an emergency? Have you informed participants with whom they can talk if they have a problem?

Recognize

Not all forms of abuse are recognized in all countries. If you see signs of abuse in our projects, respond, record and refer. If you have other concerns or are unsure how to proceed, talk to the program manager.

Respond

Respond to disclosures of abuse by listening carefully, taking it seriously, and staying calm, open, encouraging and reassuring. Don't judge, don't promise to keep secrets.

Record

As soon as possible, record where, when, what, how, and who. Be objective, sign and date all records, and only show those who need to know.

Refer

Refer to Musicians Without Borders management, the Integrity Officer, or the External Safeguarding and Integrity Advisor. See mwb.to/safeguarding for online reporting forms.