



## **Keeping children safe online via Zoom**

*This Policy was developed with support from Désirée Abrahams of Day Associates, a business and human rights consultancy specialising in business and children's right.*

### **Why we have created this policy**

Since COVID-19 took over our normal lives, families have been forced to a certain extent to access a range of activities for children via the internet.

As an Ofsted-registered childcare provider, we want to remain as focussed as ever on the safeguarding and protection of children in our care. This policy outlines our approach to keeping your child safe whilst with us on an online session. We don't want to stop there though. We also want to empower both children, parents and families alike to feel in control of their own safety whilst online.

It is important to state that we do not declare ourselves to be experts in the field of online safeguarding and child protection. However we feel that especially at this time where more than ever we are putting ourselves into virtual classroom environments which still feel a little unfamiliar, it is vital that we demonstrate what clear and effective measures we have put into place to ensure the safety of children in our care.

At The Strings Club, the majority of our online sessions take place on Zoom. We do have a range of pre-recorded activities on YouTube however due to the interactive nature of learning an instrument and music-making, we have chosen Zoom to ensure children get the most out of our sessions.

### **What is Zoom?**

Founded in 2011, Zoom is one the world's leading video conferencing software providers. It has a number of features, including video and audio conferencing, real-time messaging, screen-sharing and the ability to upload, share and search for content.

Users can start their own meetings or they can join meetings set up by others. The app is available to use across PCs, laptops, tablets and mobiles phones and is free to download on both the app store and on Android.

### **Using Zoom**

We have chosen Zoom (over other platforms such as Skype) mainly because its efficiency for parents to set up, access and log in.

We also chose to use Zoom for two main reasons:



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1. It focuses on the safety of children by offering a number of features and settings that companies such as The Strings Club can utilise. In brief, these include:
  - A waiting room - a virtual room that children wait in before gaining access to the main teaching room. The Course Leaders check all names before giving access. Course Leaders have the ability to decline any attendees and not allow them entry.
  - The ability to "lock" the classroom - once all attendees are in the classroom, this feature enables the Course Leader to essentially lock the room to ensure no one else can enter.
  - Strictly no screen sharing amongst "attendees" - this means that no children can share any information via independent screens.
  - Cameras off from the beginning - we know that some children don't want to be seen and that's understandable. That's why all cameras are off from the beginning and if your child wants to be seen, you click "Start Video".
  - Password Requirements - all sessions can only be accessed via a password. We change this from time to time and if so, will email or text all customers with the updated version.
  - Strictly no messaging - we do not allow any chat room style messaging on an online session. If a child has a question for the Course Leader, they can ask verbally.
  - Strictly no file transfers - no one can share any files between one another.
  - Our online sessions are not recorded. We do not allow any recording of sessions.
  
2. Gives The Strings Club Course Leader in charge of the session (the "host"), the capacity to control certain situations if needs be.

For example, if someone gained access to the session who should not be there (eg Zoombombing), the Course Leader has instant access to shut down the session immediately or stop a video simply at a click of a button. Additionally, due to our waiting room functionality, a person cannot rejoin a session unless permitted.

### **Team Member Training**

All team members working for The Strings Club online sessions complete comprehensive training on the usage of Zoom. This is now a vital part of our Safer Recruitment policy and training.



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Any updates that Zoom make, we communicate with our Course Leaders too via further training.

### **Making the Most Out of Our Sessions**

To ensure your child gets the most out of our 30 mins sessions, our Course Leaders start every lesson with a hello, register and a re-cap of our Golden Rules. These rules can be anything from making sure the session takes place in a quiet room (to avoid other children in the group being distracted) to listening and watching to the use of non-verbal language.

### **Empowering your child**

We don't want only parents and carers to be aware of how we are keeping their child safe. More importantly maybe, we want children themselves to feel empowered and to know exactly how to keep themselves safe online.

### **We aim to do this in two ways:**

#### **1. A special guide dedicated to your child**

We have created a special guide, aimed at children aged 4-11 in explaining what Zoom is and what they can do and not to. We aim for this to empower them and would appreciate if you could show them this before their first lesson begins. Feel free to print this too to keep as a reminder.

#### **2. "The Strings Club Online Session In Progress" colouring in poster**

A poster that your child can colour in and stick somewhere whilst their online session is going ahead to remind family. *Coming early May!*

### **How Zoom and our online sessions work**

1. On your Registration Email upon booking with us you will receive your Zoom link and password. We highly advise you keep this handy by book-marking the email for ease.
2. 5-10 mins before the session, copy and paste the link into your web browser and click return.
3. This will take you to Zoom and ask you for a password.



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4. Type in the password
5. Zoom will then ask you for a name. Please enter your child's first name only. **Do not enter their full name.**
6. You will then be taken to a waiting room to wait until the session begins.
7. Your child can choose to be seen or not. As safeguarding is paramount to us, all cameras are off from the offset and your child can choose if they want to visually interact with others by clicking "Start Video".
8. Your child will then take part in the online session
9. At the end, it is vital that you click "End Meeting" to ensure you are logged out.

### New to Zoom?

We recommend you test your Zoom link beforehand and also the device that you will be using. This includes the sound and ensuring volume is accessible to use.

### What device to use

We highly recommend you use a:

- Laptop
- Tablet
- Television

A phone device is fine however the screen is quite small for an online session and more importantly, the sound may not be efficient enough.

### Top Tips in Keeping Your Child Safe on Zoom

#### **1. We ask that everyone in your home is wearing clothes during our online sessions**

This may seem like a silly request but it's really important. If anyone at home has forgotten to cover up (even your baby sibling!), it would be a good idea to nicely remind them that an online session is taking place, and they may want to put something on.

#### **2. We ask that everyone in your home minds their language during our online sessions**

Sometimes during our online sessions, we may want children to for example, perform a piece together or interact with one another - of which we will unmute the session. During this time, we do ask that the room is quiet as possible and no swearing or negative language is taking place. This is because everyone in the group will hear.



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**3. Make sure you are in a clear space with no information around regarding family/names of photos.** This is for safeguarding purposes.

**4. Camera usage** - please make sure your camera is facing straight forward and not upwards or downwards. This is to ensure the Course Leader can see your child's face in order to interact and also to see how they are playing their instrument (if in an instrument-based session of course).

This policy was created on:	Wednesday 22nd April 2020
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<i>This policy will be reviewed on a monthly basis</i>	