



POINT BLANK
MUSIC SCHOOL

POLICY 065

UNDER 18s

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 Point Blank Music School may occasionally admit students who are under the age of 18. In most cases this will be a temporary situation as the student will be approaching their eighteenth birthday. However, there are some instances where a student may be admitted and may remain under 18 for 12 months or longer.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the approach Point Blank will take when processing applications from any individual who will be under 18 years of age at the start of their first academic year. It outlines to prospective students, parent(s) / guardian(s) and staff the additional conditions and safeguards that must have formal agreement prior to admission. Any specific arrangements to support and safeguard the welfare of such students cease to apply at the age of 18.
- 1.3 Point Blank recognises that the Equality Act 2010 requires it to ensure that it does not unlawfully discriminate against individuals on the basis of age and therefore we admit students on merit and in line with relevant entry qualifications and other requirements of a particular programme, including individuals who are under 18. However, under UK law, anyone under the age of 18 is considered a child and thus Point Blank has an enhanced duty of care until such students reach the age of 18, even if this period is relatively brief.

2. POLICY DETAILS

Context

- 2.1 Applicants and parent(s)/guardian(s) should consider that the School is an adult environment; students are expected to act as adults and to assume an adult level of responsibility. Students are expected to have the necessary skills to study and live independently alongside people from a wide variety of ages and backgrounds.
- 2.2 All applications will initially be considered on the basis of academic merit. If the applicant is not acceptable on academic grounds they will be notified through the appropriate procedure that the application has been unsuccessful.
 - i. Applicants under the age of 18 at the start of their course will be: offered the same terms, conditions and pricing as those over 18;
 - ii. subject to the academic regulations of the validating body; no special or additional academic support is offered on the grounds of age;
 - iii. required to provide consent from a parent/guardian prior to an offer being issued. This will consent to their enrolment and participation in student activities and to emergency medical treatment, amongst other things.
- 2.3 A copy of this policy and an “Under 18 Consent Form” (Appendix A) will be sent to the applicant and parent(s)/guardian(s) to outline their obligations with the offer. A place on the programme will not be confirmed without a returned, signed “Under 18 Consent Form”.
- 2.4 Point Blank is not able to take on the rights, responsibilities and authority that parents have in relation to a child, and it will not act in loco parentis in relation to students who are under the age of 18 years. It is a condition of admission to Point Blank that the parent(s)/guardian(s) of any student who is under the age of 18 years at the start of their course confirms, prior to admission, their acceptance of the arrangements set out in this policy by signing and returning an “Under 18 Consent Form”.

Contractual Agreements

- 2.5 As a general rule, those under the age of 18 are unable to enter into binding legal contracts. Where contracts are required relating to tuition fees, or equipment loans, Point Blank will require a parent(s)/ guardian(s) to act as a guarantor and to honour all obligations under any contracts with Point Blank that the student enters into prior to their 18th birthday. By signing the “Under 18 Consent Form”, the parent(s)/guardian(s) agree to this. Failure to pay debts due to Point Blank could result in withdrawal from studies.
- 2.6 It may be a condition of a minor’s offer that their parents/guardians act as guarantors for any contracts they enter into with respect to tuition fees.
- 2.7 Once the applicant reaches 18, they will become personally liable.
- 2.8 Point Blank is not a provider of student accommodation. Students and parents/ guardians should be mindful that students under the age of 18 moving to London to study at Point Blank who require accommodation, will need to find private sector accommodation and will be subject to any contracts and obligations therein.

Data Protection/ Parental Involvement

- 2.9 It is Point Blank’s policy to communicate directly with students in all aspects of their studies and not with parents or guardians; this approach will also apply to students who are under the age of 18 years. Although those under 18 are regarded as children under UK law, they have the legal right under the Data Protection Act (1998) for information about them not to be disclosed without their explicit consent. This means that Point Blank is not able to give information to parent(s)/guardian(s) regarding the student’s progress, results or any other personal circumstance unless the student has given specific consent. This is with the exception of an emergency. However, if the student fails to pay any sums agreed on contract then it might be necessary to disclose this to any guarantor and possibly to a debt collection agency.
- 2.10 Should a serious level of concern arise about the safety of a student under the age of 18 the Registrar, Designated Safeguarding Lead or other senior members of Point Blank, taking into account Point Blank’s moral and safeguarding responsibilities to a student who is under the age of 18, may decide to contact their parent/guardian and/or emergency contact or other relevant authorities.
- 2.11 Students under 18 will not be able to enrol on their course unless next of kin and emergency contact information is provided on the “Under 18 Consent Form”. For students whose parent(s)/guardian(s) are not in the UK, they must have a UK based Guardian. Emergency contact details will be reconfirmed at enrolment. It is the responsibility of the student and / or the parent(s)/guardian(s) to inform Point Blank immediately if there are changes to any of the emergency contact information provided within the consent form.
- 2.12 Regardless of age, all students are expected to observe Point Blank’s rules about acceptable use of the internet.

Safeguarding

- 2.13 As a matter of law, a person under the age of 18 years is a child. Point Blank has a responsibility to protect those under the age of 18 years from abuse and is obliged to report any suspicions or allegations of abuse to the relevant Children’s Social Services department. Any such suspicions or allegations will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Point Blank’s Safeguarding Policy outlines that the DSL has specific expertise in order to be able to respond to incidents and advise other members of staff. One of the contacts should be approached in the first instance. The DSL should also be notified if a child protection referral is to be made to the appropriate authorities.

The Safeguarding Policy is available on the Point Blank website and on the Student Dashboard.

- 2.14 Point Blank is registered with the Disclosure and Barring Service (“DBS”) and screens members of staff working in specific roles for relevant criminal convictions in line with Government eligibility guidance.
- 2.15 Point Blank has a wealth of support that fosters the wellbeing of all students including both pre-emptive and reactive support. We encourage all students to be pro-active about their positive wellbeing and to take up opportunities to build their resilience.
- 2.16 Students under the age of 18 at the point of entry will be provided with a key contact who they must meet with at least once per month. This key contact will provide pastoral support and guidance to the student. Failure to attend these sessions may result in an enforced temporary interruption until the student turns 18. Once the student turns 18, they will no longer be required to have a key contact or meet with them on a regular basis.

Under 16s

- 2.17 On the very rare occasion a student applies who will be under the age of 16 at the point of entry and where a Student visa is not required for the programme of study Point Blank will consider entry on an individual basis via the Safeguarding Panel.
- 2.18 The safeguarding panel will include representation from the relevant Programme Team, Admissions, Registry, Student Support and Wellbeing, and will be chaired by the Registrar or other nominated senior member of staff. The panel will consider safeguarding requirements and Point Blank’s ability to fulfil them in relation to the requested programme of study.
- 2.19 Under the terms of the Student Sponsor License, Point Blank can only act as immigration sponsor for students who are 16 or over at the start of their programme of study. Due to this requirement Point Blank cannot admit any student requiring a Student visa unless they will be 16 years of age on the start of their programme.

International Students aged 16 and 17

- 2.20 A student aged 16 or 17 has the legal right to live independently in the UK and may make their own accommodation arrangements. However, when a 16-or 17-year-old applies for a visa under the Student route, they must have their parents’/guardians’ permission to both travel to the UK and to live independently. As part of the Student visa application process students aged 16 or 17 must provide written permission from their parents/guardians and alongside this evidence of their relationship with their parent(s) or legal guardian(s).
- 2.21 Acceptable evidence includes one of the following original documents (or notarised copy): birth certificate showing the names of the applicants’ parent(s); certificate of adoption showing the name(s) of the applicants’ parent(s) or legal guardian(s); a court document naming the applicants’ legal guardian(s).
- 2.22 Point Blank recommends that a UK-based guardian is identified who Point Blank can contact in the case of emergency and can act in loco parentis. A UK-based guardian may be a responsible adult who is relative or friend of the family living in the UK.
- 2.23 Prospective international students aged 16 or 17 will only be admitted in line with section 3.35 of the Student Sponsor Guidance.

3. POLICY SCOPE

3.1 This policy applies to prospects applying to study a Point Blank Higher Education programmes at the London campus, who will be under the age of 18 upon the start date of the course.

3.2 This Policy does not apply to students wishing to study on Point Blank professional courses, including Summer School programmes, which have their own guidance.

4. RELATED POLICIES

- Admissions Policy
- General Regulations for Admission
- Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy.

5. POLICY OWNER

This policy is under the responsibility of the Student Engagement and Experience Committee. The responsible committee will ensure the cyclical review of this policy is carried out in line with Point Blank's Quality Assurance Framework.

The Student Engagement and Experience Committee delegates the operational responsibility of this policy to the following staff:

- Registrar
- Head of Marketing and Communications
- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Student Experience Manager.

6. PROCEDURES

There are no related procedures to this policy.

7. EXHIBITS, APPENDICES AND FORMS

- Under 18s parental consent form

8. REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

8.1 Internal

- n/a

8.2 External

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Equality Act 2010
- Prevent Duty
- UK General Data Protection Regulations

9. DOCUMENT HISTORY AND NEXT REVIEW

Version: 1

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Approved by: Academic Board

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