

Behavioural Guidelines for AMJ Events



The behavioural guidelines following below are meant to be the basis of our work with children and juveniles in the AMJ. By signing this code of behaviour, staff confirm their intention to keep to the agreements and behavioural rules that follow. The aim of this agreement is to ensure that our staff adhere to an attitude that protects children and juveniles, respects their needs and boundaries and is characterised by attention, appreciation and trust.

Creating proximity and distance

In our educational work with children and juveniles we deal with each another with respect, creating an appropriate relationship of proximity and distance. Shaping this relationship between participants and staff serves the musical education and the communal singing and music-making.

The following behavioural rules are the result:

- Choir rehearsals, rehearsals in small groups as well as sectionals take place only in designated, suitable rooms. These are accessible by others and must not be locked.
- Specific friendships, relationships or intimate contacts with those under age must not arise. There must be no secrets between staff and those under age.
- Exercises and games are created in such a way as not to arouse fear in children and juveniles. If an individual indicates concern in relation to boundaries, this is to be taken seriously and must not be commented upon in a derogatory way.
- Infringements of boundaries must not be ignored and must be discussed.
- Within a group individual children and juveniles must be neither favoured or disadvantaged. When there is an individual case that a child or a juvenile is particularly singled out for praise, this must happen solely within a pedagogical framework that is understandable by outsiders.

Language and choice of words

Interaction and communication in courses and events of the AMJ are characterised by mutual appreciation and match the needs and the ages of the children and juveniles entrusted to us.

This results in the following behavioural rules:

- Children and juveniles are routinely addressed by their given names unless they explicitly request being addressed differently, e g Kathy instead of Katharine.
- There will be no interaction and communication with children and juveniles in which staff employ sexualised language or innuendos, neither amongst each other or when speaking to the children and juveniles.
- Nor will we accept derogatory remarks or ridiculing, not amongst the children and juveniles either. If linguistic boundaries are crossed, action is taken and sides are taken.
- As children and juveniles often do not understand irony and innuendos, these are also to be avoided.
- Attention is given to the way the children and juveniles communicate amongst each other, and - within the limits of what is realistically possible - we try preventing the use of sexualised and derogatory language and of swearing.

Appropriate physical contact

Physical contact will sometimes occur during teaching. It is necessary for correcting poor posture or to demonstrate vocal and breathing techniques. However, approaches and physical contacts are only permitted if the child or juvenile has freely and explicitly agreed to this. The will (including the refusal) of the child or juvenile will be respected without exception.

This results in the following rules of behaviour:

- Unwanted touching and physical approach - particularly in connection with the promise of a reward or the threat of punishment - are not allowed.
- Physical contact is employed in a sensitive manner and permitted only for the duration, and the purpose, of the music-educational aims mentioned above, or for caring purposes like First Aid, consolation, encouragement (e g slaps on the shoulder).
- Physical proximity must always and at any given time match the needs and the well-being of the child or juvenile.

Presents

Presents are no substitute for attention that is serious in its intention and makes pedagogical sense. Rather, exclusive presents, particularly if they are only given to selected children, may encourage emotional dependency. Therefore - apart from presents which have been discussed in advance with all the team (e g ice cream for everybody) - no presents or rewards will be distributed to children and juveniles.

Disciplinary measures

The effect of punishments is very hard to predict and must therefore be thought through very carefully. Disciplinary measures taken by staff in relation to children and juveniles must never occur unless there is a good reason. They must be appropriate and must never denigrate, expose or intimidate the children and juveniles. They should stand in direct relationship to the wrong-doing and must make sense. Measures taken must be explained to the children and juveniles in an appropriate way. Any form of force, pressure, threat or infringement of liberty is forbidden. The law of the land has to be borne in mind.

Respecting the sphere of intimacy

The protection of physical intimacy is a matter of the highest value. In this context events involving overnight stays present a special challenge. Clear rules of behaviour are required in order to protect the individual sphere of intimacy of the children and juveniles as well as of the staff looking after them, be they paid or volunteers.

This results in the following rules of behaviour:

- The private sphere of the children and juveniles is to be respected at any time.
- Particularly in places where children and juveniles change their clothing, we make sure that a protected space is available. If appropriate an adult helper of the same gender should be present to assist.
- Overnight stays usually take place in separate rooms for each gender. Staff and participants have separate sleeping areas. Should there be modifications to these rules (e.g. joint accommodation in sports halls etc) this is made known in advance.
- Bathrooms and changing rooms will always be made available separately to the gender groups; if there is only one set of such rooms, this is achieved by taking turns. If possible there should be separation according to age.
- Nobody has the right to be present in a bedroom other than their own; bedrooms are the private sphere of all involved.
- Before entering a room you must knock and announce yourself by speaking.
- Except by agreement with parents or carers, children must not enter staff bedrooms, not even in cases of illness or homesickness.
- Children should always have the mobile phone number of a member of staff and, if they feel violated or uncomfortable or in any unclear situation, should ring these numbers; every team member must have a list with names, addresses and allocation of the host families readily available.
- In the exceptional case that a host family can only take one person, this should be an adult choir member.

- Any event involving overnight stays must include accompanying staff of both genders.

Media and social networks

In its work, as far as the media are concerned, the AMJ restricts itself to offering acoustical material for rehearsing pieces of music, producing and publishing photos and recordings and to communicating with the children, juveniles and their parents/carers via e-mail and message services.

This results in the following behavioural rules:

- Communication via message services has to be educationally necessary and age appropriate.
- When producing visual and audible material, legal requirements and recommendations are borne in mind.
- If photos or similar are published in the media, the written agreement of parents/carers (or the children and juveniles) must be acquired in advance.
- Personal information concerning the children and juveniles is treated according to the laws concerning data protection.
- Rules as to the use of smartphones will be decided upon during any event of the AMJ in discussion with the children, juveniles, their parents/carers and the staff.

Self-declaration

I declare herewith that I know of no pending investigation against me because of of the thirteenth paragraph (infringements against sexual self-determination) of the German criminal law (StGB) or their foreign equivalents) or of such an investigation having been terminated. Furthermore I promise - should such an investigation be started - to inform **the organisers** immediately and to withdraw from my activities.

If, during an AMJ event, I notice behaviour that crosses boundaries or is aggressive or any violation, for the purpose of predicting the degree of danger, I must take the following steps:

- I take my observation seriously, act calmly and do not confront the accused person with my suspicion! I keep an eye on the child/juvenile and encourage and, if appropriate, support the child in its wish to speak about the situation. I do this without exerting any pressure on the child/juvenile.
- I do not start any investigations of my own and do not question anybody. I do not promise the child/juvenile to keep silent on whatever is confided to me, as I may not be able to keep that promise.
- I make a written statement about the behaviour/the situation I observed and if appropriate seek advice from the public office for children and families in the area of Wolfenbüttel (053321 84 279).
- If I wish to request advice anonymously, I can find people to contact under the following telephone numbers:

Advice for parents, children and juveniles (05331 84 160)

Helpline for sexual assault (0800 22 55 530)

Police Wolfenbüttel (05331 93 30)

- I will also make a written note of the outcome of any such advisory conversations.

If I suspect there has been inappropriate behaviour or an assault by paid or volunteer members of staff, I commit myself to inform:

for the AMJ: Petra Penning (0178 8950998)

It is important that I include the participant concerned in my actions as is age-appropriate, and explain my actions in advance. The person mentioned above is independent, charged by the AMJ with the task of undertaking an initial investigation and - if appropriate - instigating the further steps in co-operation with other institutions.

place, date

signature

name in block capitals