**Safeguarding Policy – Eynsham Choral Society – overview**

**Commitment to safeguarding:** Eynsham Choral Society believes that a child, young person or adult at risk should never experience abuse of any kind. We recognise that we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk. We are committed to safeguarding the well-being of all children, young people and adults at risk with whom we come into contact, and to protecting them from harm

Whilst we have no statutory responsibility, as responsible citizens we should play our part in alerting those who do have full responsibilities to any concerns we might have witnessed and support their appropriate action.

* **Purpose of the policy:**
* To provide protection for children, young people or vulnerable adults who attend activities and events organised by the group.
* To provide members and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.
* This policy applies to; all members, staff (whether employees or freelances), volunteers and anyone working on behalf of Eynsham Choral Society or taking part in Eynsham Choral Society activities.
* This policy recognises vulnerable people as:
* Children up to the age of 16 and young people aged 16-18.
* Adults aged over 18 at risk as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. This might include adults with a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs, or reduced physical or mental capacity. This policy also recognises risk is determined by the activity an adult is taking part in and not solely on the personal characteristics or circumstances of the adult, as such any adult can be at risk, and the risk can be temporary.
* Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board uses the following definitions which are available on Oxfordshire County Council website:
* An adult at risk is someone who has care and support needs
* is at risk of being abused or neglected
* is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect because of those needs.

**How Eynsham Choral Society** **(ECS)** **might work with vulnerable people:**

ECS has traditionally been a choir made up of adults but has no specific age range. We would want to encourage music making in any young people who may wish to join the choir.

We run regular rehearsals for members and put on concerts for the general public. As such our involvement with vulnerable people might include, but is not limited to:

* Members of the group who attend rehearsals and concerts
* Relatives and friends of members who attend rehearsals and concerts in a volunteering capacity
* Audience members at public concerts
* **Working with parents/guardians:** If a child or young person wishes to take part as a volunteer in ECS activities written permission (email is fine) should be obtained from parents/guardians where appropriate, and before the activity takes place. Written permission should include: date /time of event, names of young person and their parent /carer, emergency contact details of any relevant pick-up arrangements – including permission for another adult to pick up the vulnerable person after the activity has finished

All children and young people remain the responsibility of their parents/carers/family or the organisation that brings them.

* **(see appendix 2 for further details)**

**ECS Committee and choir members will seek to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults by:**

* Providing a safe enough physical environment
* Always keeping safety and welfare at the centre of what we do
* Listening to participants, taking account of their views and promoting inclusion
* Recruiting and training volunteers in safeguarding where appropriate
* Requesting a DBS check when indicated
* Identifying the abuse of children and young people and vulnerable adults where it is occurring and responding effectively to any concerns, formal or informal complaints or expressions of anxiety
* Liaising with appropriate services and agencies in the event of a safeguarding issue
* Work with parents/carers, schools, colleges and other organisations to ensure permission for under 18s and adequate supervision is provided
* Managing confidentiality and data protection issues appropriately
* Risk assessing activities
* Following, monitoring and updating this Safeguarding policy at regular intervals or as needed in line with updates to appropriate legislation, so our policy is in line with the law

**Policy review:** This policy will be reviewed and amended (if necessary) on an annual basis by the ECS committee. It will also be reviewed in response to changes in relevant legislation, good practice, or in response to an identified failing in its effectiveness.

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**Ground rules, ways of working and procedures**

1. Although usually a choir of adults, it is possible that young people (aged between 16 and 18) and/ or children (under 16) may join for any of the choir’s activities -regular / one-off / members and helpers
2. Committee will undertake risk assessment for all activities. RA to cover all possible risks
3. The Named Safeguarding person will be appointed/ confirmed each year at the AGM. The Named Person will usually be in place for 2 years at a time.
4. Emergency contact numbers /websites for safeguarding concerns are kept by the Named Safeguarding person, and committee via the safeguarding policy
5. The Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed by the committee at least annually
6. The Safeguarding Policy will be placed on the choir’s website, and choir members notified of this
7. Safeguarding will be a standing item on the committee and AGM agendas
8. Consideration will be given to the Named Person having access to training and support as needed

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**Named safeguarding person:** The Named Safeguarding personhas responsibility for safeguarding issues, as a point of reference and source of information and advice. All queries and concerns relating to safeguarding should be discussed with the Named Safeguarding person in the first instance.

**Procedures for raising safeguarding concerns and incidents of abuse**

* If any member, staff or volunteer in ECS witnesses, suspects or is informed of a witnessed or suspected case of abuse they should immediately discuss it with the named safeguarding officer;
* If the named person is not available, or is involved in or connected to, the abuse, it should be reported to the group chair or a committee member, DBS checked where possible
* If an individual wishes to report an incident of abuse against themselves they should report it to the named safeguarding person or an individual they trust.

The Named person (or person contacted in their absence) will first make a decision based on the immediacy of the concern and the following two factors:

1. If the vulnerable person is in immediate danger or needs emergency medical attention – call the police and/or ambulance service.
2. If the person at the centre of the allegation is working with vulnerable persons at the current time – remove them, in a sensitive manner, from direct contact with vulnerable people and follow the procedures below.

The Named person will then:

* Make a note of the concerns reported to them.
* Speak with up to 2 other committee members to decide how to handle the reported abuse. Excluding any committee member who is involved in the incident.
* Escalate the report by either:
  + Raising concerns with the police – for serious or possible criminal offences.
  + Requesting an assessment by Children’s Services or Adult Social Care about whether a vulnerable person is in need of protection
* Where cases are escalated the committee will cooperate with the police or local authority in dealing with the reported incident

**Local referral pathways:**

What to do if you think a child is at risk of abuse or neglect- Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board:

[https://www.oscb.org.uk/concerned-about-a-child](about:blank)

* If the concern is about a vulnerable adult there is Oxfordshire County Council’s online referral form and further information here:
* [https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/social-and-health-care/keeping-safe/raising-concern](about:blank)

**See Appendix 1 for further details of actions to take**

**June 2021**

**APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1 : In cases of a concern or allegation; detailed procedures**

**What to do:**

* **Recognising concerns or evidence of abuse**

Concerns about or evidence of abuse might be raised through:

* A direct disclosure by the child, young person or vulnerable adult
* A complaint or expression of concern by a choir member or volunteer, carer/parent/guardian or a member of the public
* An observation of the behaviour of the child, young person or vulnerable adult by the choir member or volunteer.
* **Dealing with abuse discovered, disclosed or alleged:**

Action must be taken immediately in ALL cases. Do not assume someone else will act. It is the responsibility of the volunteer becoming aware of a situation to:

**Respond and make safe:**

* Deal with the immediate needs of the child, young person or vulnerable adult. This may mean taking reasonable steps to ensure the person is in no immediate danger and seek medical treatment if required.
* Do not discuss the allegation of abuse with other volunteers, group members, parents/guardians or the alleged perpetrator.
* If a choir member or volunteer is involved in the allegation or concern, or they have been witnessed behaving in a way that caused or could cause harm to children then they must be removed from the activity immediately and suspended from volunteering (including attending choir rehearsals) whilst an investigation takes place. The member of staff or volunteer should be treated fairly and honestly with reassurance that this removal does not imply any guilt, but is to protect them as much as the person making the allegation. The relevant agencies will take responsibility for investigations.
* Do not disturb or destroy articles that could be used in evidence. Where an assault of some kind is suspected do not wash the person unless this is associated with first aid treatment necessary to prevent further harm and in this case only wash the area that needs immediate treatment.
* Respond to the person who made the disclosure by:
* Reassuring them that they have done the right thing
* Giving them time to talk without probing, pushing or asking leading questions. Investigation is the responsibility of the relevant agencies
* Avoiding making promises you will be unable to keep, including that discussions are confidential
* Explaining to the person that you will share this information with the relevant agencies only.

**Record:**

* Record what was said before it is forgotten and keep it somewhere secure. The record should include:
* The date, time and location the disclosure was made
* The allegation or concerns, including the date and time of the incident and what the person said in their own words about the abuse
* The appearance and behaviour of the victim including any injuries observed
* The actions taken

**Inform:**

* If there is a safeguarding concern or disclosure that is demanding of urgent attention, contact the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) team in the first instance immediately on: 0845 0507666. (0800 833 408 out of hours number) The duty worker will advise on the next steps and the volunteer may be asked to fill in a referral form. An example of an urgent situation might be:
* A child, young person or vulnerable adult discloses physical or sexual abuse
* If there are signs of physical abuse e.g. injury
* A child, young person or vulnerable adult presents as very different/scared to go home/anxious and you are aware home could be risky

If the disclosure is regarding child sexual exploitation or if you think a child may be at risk of sexual exploitation you can also contact the Kingfisher Team on: 01865 309196. Out of hours calls to this number will be diverted to the Thames Valley Police Referral Centre.

* Only contact the police if it is thought a crime has just been committed, the child, young person or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger of abuse or an assault is taking place.
* Providing the volunteer who has handled the disclosure has followed the procedures above to ensure the safety of the child, young person or vulnerable adult they should keep all information about the disclosure confidential or on a “need to know” basis with other members of the group in order to protect the child, young person or vulnerable adult.

Members or Volunteers who have handled the disclosure may find this distressing and should have access to support. The NSPCC Child Protection Helpline is available 24 hours a day and provides counselling, information and advice for anyone concerned about/accused of child abuse. NSPCC Helpline number 0808 800 5000.

**Appendix 2 : Working with Children/ Young People/ Vulnerable People**

**When** ECS organises an activity or event where they will be inviting children or young people they will ensure:

* Planning is carried out in line with this policy and procedures.
* The event is attended by an appropriate number of DBS checked adults – this will be a minimum of one but more when practically possible.
* Where practically possible the total number of adults in attendance (not necessarily DBS checked) compared with the total number of children will be in line with the ratio table below - as per Ofsted recommendations.
* There is a main contact for safeguarding on the day - this will be an individual who has been DBS checked.
* The main contact has access to emergency contact details and other relevant details (e.g. information about picking up arrangements for vulnerable people).
* That if young people of different gender will be taking part in the activity, adults of different gender will be in attendance too.
* A young person should not be left alone with an adult.
* Two adults (one DBS checked) should be the last to leave a venue once the activity has finished and will check the young people are leaving in accordance with the prearranged details.

Child to adult ratio table

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Childs age | Number of adults | Number of children |
| 0-2 | 1 | 3 |
| 2-3 | 1 | 4 |
| 4-8 | 1 | 6 |
| 9-12 | 1 | 8 |
| 12-18 | 1 | 10 |