

Safeguarding Policy – Eynsham Choral Society

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A The context

Commitment to safeguarding

Eynsham Choral Society is committed to safeguarding the well-being of all children, young people and adults at risk with whom we come into contact.

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

Context of the policy

This policy is based on the following sources:

- Government safeguarding advice: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015, updated December 2023
- Making Music (the national amateur music performance organisation): Safeguarding; what are your responsibilities? 2015
- NSPCC Guide to safeguarding and child protection for the voluntary and community sector 2019

Purpose of the policy

- To provide a safe environment for children, young people or adults at risk 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 adult at risk may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

- This policy applies to all members, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of Eynsham Choral Society or taking part in Eynsham Choral Society activities

Who are vulnerable people

In the context of this policy vulnerable people are:

- Children up to the age of 16 and young people aged 16 and 17
- Adults who are at risk. This means anyone aged 18 or over who has care and support needs, and is unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation because of those needs.

How Eynsham Choral Society operates

The choir is a registered charity, composed of choir members. Officers and other committee members are elected as Trustees to serve on the committee, and others may be co-opted on to the committee from time to time. Rehearsals are run by our self-employed Musical Director, or a substitute on occasion, with a professional accompanist. From time to time the choir organises other events such as choral workshops and social events. There are no employed staff or volunteers who are charged with the care of others.

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. Similarly, we do not place an upper age limit on membership.

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 support rehearsals and concerts in a volunteering capacity
- Audience members at public concerts

Choir rehearsals and performances are group activities and there is no need or intention for a member of the choir to be alone with another member of any age at any of the choir activities.

B Eynsham Choral Society Safeguarding Policy

General principles

The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect children, young people and adults at risk, with whom the choir has any involvement, from abuse or exploitation
- To provide an outline of the principles that guide our approach to safeguarding

1. Working with parents/guardians

Although usually a choir of adults, it is possible that young people (aged between 16 and 17) and/ or children (under 16) may join for any of the choir's activities; regularly / one-off / members or helpers

If a child or young person wishes to take part in any ECS activities written permission should be obtained from parents/guardians before the activity takes place. Written permission should include: date /time of event, names of young person and their parent /carer, emergency contact, and details of any relevant pick-up arrangements. The parent or guardian retains full responsibility for the child's transport arrangements to and from the venue.

Permission will also include parental consent in writing for the Choir to act in loco parentis if the need arises to apply emergency first aid and/or other emergency medical treatment if the parent cannot be contacted at short notice.

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

Any children in audiences remain the responsibility of the parent/ guardian/carers to supervise them, or to be satisfied that they will be accompanied and supervised by a responsible adult acting on their behalf.

The choir will make appropriate joint working arrangements to ensure that school/youth groups will always be in the care of their teachers and helpers and/or parents who bear responsibility for their welfare at all times. This does not detract from the choir's general responsibility to provide a safe environment and the principles of this safeguarding policy still apply.

2. Privacy arrangements

Rehearsals and other activities will be conducted in an open environment to avoid private or unobserved situations. Adult members and workers (other than parent or guardian) should ensure they are not alone with a young person.

In the event of it not being possible to arrive at a venue in concert dress the choir will endeavour to ensure an individual's privacy is respected if required to change at a venue.

In common with its policy for adult members, the committee will not disclose contact details for any child member without first obtaining both the child's and their parent/guardian's permission. The purpose for the request and the identity of the person making it will be provided.

Parents and guardians should be aware that photography, audio and video recording may be undertaken from time to time at concerts and rehearsals. The images and recordings may be stored digitally including on the internet. These provide valuable tools to promote the choir and form part of our historical record. Choir members will be informed before any planned photography or recording takes place.

3. Named safeguarding lead – appointment and role

The choir has appointed a Named Safeguarding lead who has responsibility for leading on safeguarding issues, as a point of reference and source of information and advice.

The named safeguarding lead will be identified to children and any other vulnerable person, as the principal person they should turn to if they have any concerns or queries. Contact details for the safeguarding lead will be given on the parent/guardian consent form and on the choir website.

The Named Safeguarding lead will be appointed/ confirmed each year at the AGM. The Safeguarding lead will usually be in place for 2 years at a time.

Consideration will be given to the Safeguarding lead having access to training and support as needed

All choir members have a responsibility as members of the public to follow the community safeguarding guidance set out by the Oxfordshire Children's and Adults' Safeguarding Boards in their local referral pathways.

A choir member may however wish to seek support or advice from the Safeguarding lead. They must inform the safeguarding lead if a choir member or volunteer is involved in any allegation or concern.

4. Procedures for raising safeguarding concerns

If any member or volunteer in ECS witnesses, suspects or is informed of a witnessed or suspected case of abuse, neglect or exploitation they should immediately consult and follow the local safeguarding referral pathways below*:

Summary of actions to take:

- Deal with the immediate needs of the child, young person or adult at risk. This may mean taking reasonable steps to ensure the person is in no immediate danger and seeking medical treatment if required.
- Respond to the person who made the disclosure by:
 - Listening carefully
 - Reassuring them they have done the right thing, and that the matter will be disclosed only to those who need to know
 - Writing down what is said, with date and time and any names
 - Telling the person what you will do next; inform the relevant agency.
- If the suspected, reported or observed safeguarding issue involves a choir member or volunteer, the Safeguarding lead **must** also be informed. If the Safeguarding lead is not available, or is involved in or connected to the issue, it should be reported to the choir Chair or a committee member, who will then follow the procedures.
- If an individual wishes to report a safeguarding issue against themselves they should report it to the safeguarding lead or an individual they trust, who should then follow the local referral pathways.

5. Actions for the safeguarding lead on being informed of a safeguarding concern in the choir

The safeguarding lead (or person contacted in their absence) will first make a decision based on the immediacy of the concern. If the vulnerable person is in immediate danger or needs emergency medical attention – call the police and/or ambulance service.

The safeguarding lead will then:

- Make a note of the concerns reported to them.
- Make referral to a child or adult statutory agency as above
- Where cases are escalated the committee will cooperate with the police or local authority in dealing with the reported incident

6. Risk Assessment

ECS Committee will undertake appropriate risk assessment for all activities

7. Measures for implementation of this policy

- A copy of this policy is available on the choir's website eynshamchoral.org and is drawn to the attention of members annually at the AGM.
- 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.
- Safeguarding will be a standing item on the committee and AGM agendas
- Emergency contact numbers /websites for safeguarding concerns are kept by the Named Safeguarding lead, and committee via the safeguarding policy

C *LOCAL REFERRAL PATHWAYS

Children and Young People

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>

The Multi- Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is the front door to Children's Social Care for all child protection and immediate safeguarding concerns. If there is an immediate safeguarding concern where a child is deemed at risk or has potentially suffered significant harm, the MASH team should be contacted immediately.

If you have a concern about a child please call **MASH on 0345 050 7666 during office hours.**

Outside office hours call the Emergency Duty Team on **0800 833 408**

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.

- 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.
- 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.**

Adults

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>

Please visit Oxfordshire County Council's **Raising a Safeguarding Concern** page

This form will ask you a number of questions about the person you are concerned about, then someone from the Adult Safeguarding Team will contact you within 3 working days to discuss your concerns.

You can also raise a concern over the phone by calling **0345 050 7666** during office hours or the Emergency Duty Service out of hours on **0800 833 408**

Safeguarding is not an emergency service. If someone requires immediate protection because they are being harmed, call the police on **999**

September 2022, latest update September 2024