



## **Safeguarding Policy, Wimbledon Community Chorus**

Wimbledon Community Chorus (WCC) Safeguarding Policy

This policy applies to all members, volunteers and all others invited to perform or work with the Choir.

### **Background Information**

Legal Context

The law requires any organisation involving young people and/or vulnerable adults to take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risk of harm to their welfare is minimised, and where there are concerns, to share them with other local agencies. The relevant legal requirements arise from:

- The Children Act 1989;
- The Human Rights Act 1998;
- The Protection of Children Act 1999;
- The Sexual Offences (Amendments) Act 2006;
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;

The relevant government guidance including:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015;
- Statement of Government Policy on Adult Safeguarding 2011 WCC (the Choir) recognises that it is not the role of our organisation to decide whether or not a child or vulnerable adult has been abused. This is the role of the local authority Children's or Adult Services department who have legal responsibility, or of the NSPCC who have powers to investigate child protection concerns under the Children Act. We are, however, committed to act responsibly within our remit.

Good Practice

In formulating this Policy, the committee of the Choir has followed the guidance of Making Music, (the national organisation advising and championing amateur musicians and music groups across the UK), and Safe Network, the safeguarding advice resource of the NSPCC.

Definition of 'Children' or 'Vulnerable Adults' in this context:

- Anyone up to the age of 18, i.e. under 18 is classified as a child.
- Anyone over 18 years of age is classified as a vulnerable adult, who is or who may be unable to take care of themselves or be unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

How Wimbledon Community Chorus (WCC) operates

The Choir is a community group, based in the London Borough of Merton, composed of adult choir members. Officers and Committee members are elected to serve on the Committee, and others may be co-opted onto the Committee from time to time. We engage on a self- employed basis:

- A Musical Director (or a substitute on occasion)
- A professional accompanist (or a substitute on occasion)
- Occasional guest practitioners (e.g. to rehearse for a specific event)

From time- to- time, WCC organises other events such as choral workshops and performance events. WCC is an adult choir, with all members aged 18+. Occasionally we perform in collaboration with other choirs including children's choirs. There are no employed staff or volunteers who are charged with the care of others. Choir rehearsals and performances are group activities, and there is no requirement for any member of the choir to be alone with another individual member. Nonetheless the Committee of the Choir recognises the need to safeguard the welfare of any young and vulnerable people with whom we may work or come into contact.

#### 1. General principles and guidelines

- WCC welcomes the participation of children and young people in designated concerts.
- WCC is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and ensuring their wellbeing.
- WCC holds that the safeguarding of all children and vulnerable adults who participate in choir activities is the responsibility of every choir member

The purpose of this policy is:

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

2. Contact with children and young people typically falls into the following categories:

2.1 Children who take part in a concert, as part of a youth, school or church choir. In these circumstances, WCC will expect that children/young people will be accompanied by an adult member or members of their choir, and that arrangements for safeguarding will be followed according to the policy of that choir. WCC will collaborate with the other choir to ensure that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place for the event(s). Except for emergency first aid, members of the choir will not conduct any form of health intervention and will not administer medication. In the case of a school or other choir, the responsible adults from that organisation will be required to take charge in accordance with their safeguarding policy.

2.2 Children as soloists. When children or young people take part in concerts as soloists, they should be accompanied by a parent /carer or other responsible adult nominated by the parent/carer.

- The child's parent/carer must provide written permission for their child to take part in choir activities. A consent form for this purpose will be provided by the Choir Secretary. An emergency contact number should be provided on the consent form in the event of health problems. When completed, the form shall be retained by the Choir Secretary. The choir will expect that the adults accompanying the child(ren) will act in loco parentis, or if they are the parents, they will be responsible for the safety of the child(ren). The choir will also exercise its duty of care towards the child(ren)
- Parents/carers will be asked to provide information about any health problems that may be necessary to inform the care of their children during choir activities. The Choir will secure parental consent in writing to administer emergency first aid and/or other emergency medical treatment, if the parent/carer cannot be contacted, and there is no parent designated adult present.
- Except for emergency first aid members of the choir will not conduct any form of health intervention and will not administer medication.
- The parent/carer retains full responsibility for the child's transport arrangements to and from rehearsals and the venues for performances or activities.
- Rehearsals and other activities will be conducted in an open environment to avoid private or unobserved situations. Choir members should ensure that they are not alone with a young person. The above guidance also applies to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults.

2.3 Children and vulnerable adults who form part of the audience at public performances given by the Choir.

The choir does not make special arrangements for children or vulnerable adults as part of the audience other than exercising a reasonable duty of care. It is the responsibility of the parent, or carer to ensure that their child/vulnerable adult is supervised at all times. If a parent/carer is not personally attending an event with their child/vulnerable adult, this policy requires them to be satisfied that their child/vulnerable adult will be accompanied and adequately supervised by a responsible adult acting on their behalf at all times. Choir members will not make

contact with, nor ask for the contact details of children and young people, or vulnerable adults not known to them.

### 3. Privacy arrangements

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

- The Choir will work with the school/youth groups to ensure their safeguarding requirements are met, such as providing separate changing rooms and toilets.
- In common with its policy for adult members, the Choir will not disclose contact details for any vulnerable adult without first obtaining permission from their carers. In the case of a minor, the parents/carers should be consulted. The purpose of any request for contact details, and the identity of any person making such a request will be provided.
- Parents/carers 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 and used both on-and off- line including on the Internet. These provide valuable tools to promote the work of the choir to a wider audience and form part of the historical record of our work. Prior approval to do so must be obtained in writing from the parent / carer as noted on the parent/carer consent form.

### 4. Joint concerts with children.

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

### 5. Measures for implementation of this policy

A copy of this policy is available on the choir's website and is sent by email to each choir member. Choir members are expected to sign to indicate that they have read understood and accept the policy. A copy will be sent to each parent / carer upon request. The policy and procedures will be brought to the attention of members at each choir AGM and be reviewed annually at the first Committee meeting following the AGM. Choir members will be informed of any changes as soon as the committee has approved them. The Choir has nominated a Designated Person, who will undertake appropriate training as required and will be identified to children/vulnerable adults as the principal person they should turn to, if they have any concerns or queries. Contact details for the named person are also given in the parent/carer consent form. Choir members or anyone with concerns should report to the Designated Person (or in their absence the Chairman of the choir Committee), who will take action as described in the 'Approach to be taken in event' section below and:

- Obtain and record information from the person expressing the concern •  
Assess the information quickly and carefully and ask for further clarification as appropriate

- Seek advice from Children's or Adult Services at the relevant Local Authority
- Seek medical attention if necessary and / or make a referral to a statutory child protection agency or the police without delay depending on the particular circumstances; A permanent confidential record will be kept of the report by the Choir Secretary.

## 6. Approach to be taken in event of a complaint

The Choir notes the importance of being alert to signs of abuse and to the difficulty individuals may have in reporting it. To assist in responding appropriately to a complaint, we offer the following strategy for anyone who is made aware of an issue from or concerning a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

- Ensure the child or vulnerable adult understands that information given about abuse cannot be kept confidential
- Listen carefully
- Reassure the child or person involved that this matter will be disclosed only to those who need to know about it and that they are doing the right thing in telling you.
- Avoid leading questions or closed questions
- Write down what has been said, with date and time and any names mentioned.
- Tell the child/person what you are going to do next (in the first instance, report the matter to the Designated Person).

## 7. General guidance to choir members participating in events alongside children, young people and /or vulnerable adults

- In implementing our safeguarding policy, we should ensure that if and when we participate in choir activities that also involve children, young people or vulnerable adults, we should:
- Value and respect them as individuals.
- Ensure that there is more than one adult present during activities with them.
- Watch out for each other and ensure that we are not drawn into situations that could be misinterpreted.
- Avoid physical contact.
- Avoid inappropriate remarks to or about them; even in fun this could be misinterpreted.

- Not take them to our homes, offer them transport, gifts or money.

Reviewed and agreed by WCC Chair and Committee members in June 2024, to be reviewed annually.