

Salford Choral Society Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

INTRODUCTION

Salford Choral Society ('SCS' or 'Society') is a registered charity (Reg. no. 510583) managed by a committee of volunteers elected at the Annual General Meeting. To carry out its charitable objects it presents several concerts a year sometimes performing with orchestral groups, professional soloists, and other choirs. SCS employs a musical director and an accompanist who are not members of the choir. They attend weekly rehearsals with members to prepare for the concerts. From time-to-time SCS organizes other events such as choral workshops, social events, and outings. SCS does not advertise itself as an activity suitable for children or vulnerable adults. Most choir members are independent adults and generally there are no members under the age of 18. Nevertheless, SCS recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of young people and children with whom it works and comes into contact, and believes all participating young people have the right to enjoy the activities of the Choir in a happy, safe, and secure environment.

Contact with children falls into the following categories:

- Young people may become members of SCS and attend its weekly rehearsals and SCS activities.
- Children form part of the audience at public performances given by SCS.
- Children take part in some concerts, organised in conjunction with local schools.

As a matter of good practice SCS has developed this policy to provide:

- protection for children with whom SCS has contact.
- guidance to ensure that the risks of harm to children's welfare are minimised.
- guidance on procedures that should be adopted in the event that any adult suspects a child may be experiencing or be at risk of experiencing harm.

The main laws and sources of guidance supporting this policy are:

- Children Act 2004
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) d
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Government guidance on safeguarding children
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- NSPCC (www.nspcc.org.uk)
- 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

The policy applies to SCS employees, choir members, volunteers and all others invited to perform or work with SCS.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Salford Choral Society ('SCS' or 'Society') is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in its care by creating a safe and stimulating environment in which they can feel comfortable and secure and in which they can be protected from neglect and physical, sexual and emotional abuse while engaged in any activity organised by the Society.

Employees, members and volunteer helpers should at all times show respect and understanding for individual children's rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the ethos and principles of the Society. It is expected that this policy is a model which can be easily adapted by all areas across the organisation of activities involving children.

This document provides definitions to help assist those interacting with children, and practical guidance to members and any other individuals connected to the Society who are working with children.

The guidelines and procedures prescribed within this policy do not apply to vulnerable adults within the context of Salford Choral Society.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- All children have the right to protection from abuse.
- All allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Children should be treated with care, respect and dignity.
- Those working for the Society will be perceived by children as trusted representatives of the Society.
- Employees should act responsibly with regards to physical contact with children which may be necessary for work or health and safety reasons, or under supervision.
- An offer of work to a position where working alone with children and young people is an expected part of the role will be subject to a satisfactory DBS check. This applies to individuals engaged in any type of SCS employment, paid or voluntary.
- A risk assessment should be carried out when children undertake SCS activities.
- Staff and volunteers should be made aware of the Society's Child Protection Policy, so that children in their care can be protected, and so that staff and volunteers do not place themselves in an unnecessarily vulnerable position.
- Teachers, group leaders, service providers and any other interested parties should be informed of the Society's expectations regarding child protection responsibilities when engaged in SCS sponsored activities.
- The following guidance provides procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against SCS members, staff, and volunteers.

DEFINITIONS

CHILD

Anyone under the age of 18 years should be considered as a child. ('Working Together to Safeguard Children' - 2018).

STAFF

A member of staff is any individual who is engaged, under a contract of employment to work for the Society on a given role, either on a permanent or fixed term agreement, within a remunerative package.

VOLUNTEER

A volunteer is any individual engaged in work at the Society who helps to fulfil the Society aims but does not receive payment in return, other than travelling and out of pocket expenses. Should a choir member be involved in the activities arranged by the Society, they would be considered a volunteer and as such, all references to 'volunteers' in this document encompass members who work with children on behalf of The Society.

CHILD ABUSE

"A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children". ('Working Together to Safeguard children March 2018') [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#), p.106

These types of abuse include Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse, and Neglect, as defined in the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' document.

Identifying Child Abuse

The following list is an outline and not exhaustive. It is NOT the responsibility of staff or volunteers to determine whether abuse is occurring, only to report their concerns:

- Changes in behaviour
- Poorly or unexplained bruises and injuries
- Fear of certain adults
- Use of sexually explicit language and actions.
- The child is reluctant to take part or to go home.
- The child or a third party tells you that they are being abused.
- A child does not integrate with the group.
- A child whose appearance deteriorates.

POLICY STATEMENT (SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN)

I. CHILD PROTECTION NOMINATED MANAGERS

The Society has a child protection nominated manager who has special responsibility for the implementation of this policy. The child protection nominated manager is the focal point for all child protection questions and is responsible for:

- Ensuring staff and volunteers are aware of the requirement to be in compliance with the SCS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Being the point of referral for any activities and events involving children and young persons and ensuring child protection
- Liaising with the DBS lead representative to advise which positions require DBS checks
- Being the point of referral for individuals who during the course of their work, believe that a child may be at risk of harm, and /or are told by a child or young person of a child welfare issue; and or believe that a person may pose a risk of harm to a child/children.
- Keeping a record of any child protection issues arising

Designated Child Protection Manager

Name: Susan Hilton

Post: Committee Member

Address: 13 Morville Road, Manchester, M21 0UG

Telephone: 0161 881 4318

The designated persons will inform the relevant outside organisation of the incident.

Social Services: The Bridge Partnership, Salford

T: 0161 603 0500 (08.30-16.30 Monday-Friday)
or 0161 794 8888

Email - worriedaboutachild@salford.gov.uk

Web: [Worried about a child • Salford City Council](#)

Police: Greater Manchester Police

Central Park
Northampton Road
Off Oldham Road
Manchester
M40 5BP

T: 101

NSPCC Help line: T: 0808 800 5000 (24 hour freephone)

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Web: [NSPCC | The UK children's charity | NSPCC](#)

Child Line: T: 0800 1111

II. HEALTH & SAFETY

Risk Assessments:

Risk assessments must be undertaken prior to any activity involving children. These will assess what might occur during the activity, the likelihood of their occurrence and the steps that can be taken to manage the risk. Staff and volunteers participating in the event should be made aware of the risks. The risk assessment should outline the arrangements for care and supervision and how these will be communicated to appropriate parties. Each risk assessment should be signed off by two members of the Society.

Employers and Public Liability:

The Society has cover in accordance with the relevant legal liability statutes for injury to employees and injury to third parties. For further details, contact Angela Ager on 07771745108.

Health and Safety:

Other areas that need careful consideration when planning events include fire procedures, first aid, and access.

If a member is organising a visit to another venue, a preparatory visit to the venue should be arranged in order to: undertake a risk assessment, get to know the venue prior to the visit, ensure the venue is suitable for children, and make sure the venue is suitable for the aims and objectives of the planned activity.

Internet

If children are to undertake any activities involving the internet, it is essential that the following guidelines be followed:

- Children should be informed that they should never give out their email address or information that could identify them on the internet.
- Children should be closely supervised at all times and not allowed to access any unauthorised sites, chat rooms, discussion forums, instant messaging services and bulletin boards. Software is to be used to restrict viewing of inappropriate websites.

Communications

Staff, members and volunteers should not give out their own personal mobile phone number or personal email to children involved in an activity. Volunteers, members and staff should not send messages to children from their personal telephones.

III. GUIDANCE

Stated below are the standards of behaviour required of staff, members and volunteers in order to fulfil their roles within the Society and to ensure that a positive culture and climate is created during all activities involving contact with children.

Attitudes

- Treat all children equally and with respect and dignity.
- Value each child and recognise the unique contribution of each individual.
- Encourage each child and always listen to what he or she is saying.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.

By Example

- Be an excellent role model – (do not smoke, drink or use inappropriate language in the company of children and challenge any inappropriate behaviour by a child or an adult working with children).
- Respect children's right to privacy.
- Never allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking situations.
- Never exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues or make suggestive remarks or gestures.
- Never reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Never allow or encourage abusive peer activities.
- Never make sexually suggestive comments to or within the hearing of a child even in fun.

One to One Contact

- Always work in an open environment - avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment (no secrets).
- Involve teachers, parents/carers and other key influencers wherever possible.
- Do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children, away from others. If privacy is needed ensure that other staff are informed of the meeting and its whereabouts.
- Never allow a child to travel on his or her own with you in a vehicle.
- Never share a room with a child.
- Never take children to your home where they will be alone with you.
- Never enter a toilet with children unless another adult is present or gives permission.

Physical contact

- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.
- Never allow, or engage in, inappropriate touching or contact of any kind.
- Never engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.

- Never physically restrain a child unless the restraint is to prevent physical injury, damage to property or the commission of a criminal offence.

General

- Be aware that someone might misinterpret your actions no matter how well intentioned.
- Secure parental consent for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment wherever such prior permission seems appropriate.
- Be aware of children whilst they are involved in Society related activities.
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Obtain written consent prior to any photographs, videoing or audio recording.
- Never allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Never do things of a personal nature for a child or a young person that they can do for themselves. If such an incident arises, for example, where a child or young person has limited mobility, staff should seek a member of the school staff or youth organisation to deal with such an incident.

NOTE: It is recognised that some of the volunteers working on behalf of the Society may be very close in age to the children with whom they are working. It is still important that they maintain a professional distance and it is not appropriate for them to establish a close relationship with any of the children with whom they work. Volunteers and interns must follow all the guidelines and requirements contained herein.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks

All members of staff involved in activities involving extensive contact with children must have undergone an enhanced disclosure from the DBS. It is the role of the staff with responsibility for running the activity to determine whether any staff or volunteers need to undergo DBS check. The risk assessment process will inform this, and the level of disclosure required.

Where staff, members or volunteers begin work prior to a satisfactory DBS check being received, they must not work alone or unsupervised with children until the check has been received. If restricted duties are not possible then the individual will not be allowed to start work. Volunteers who are unable to provide supporting documentation should not be included in any events involving contact with children as this would place them and the children in an unnecessarily vulnerable position.

Those working in positions which do not usually entail working with children or young people may be asked to complete the personal disclosure form where an assignment involves supervised contact with children, but a DBS check is not required. Those who disclose that they have been convicted of any offence relating to children, or young people, or are subject to any disciplinary sanction relating to children or young people will not be permitted to work on any production/project which involves contact with children or young people.

IV. DISCLOSURE

In the event that a child discloses abuse to you, please follow the guidance set out below:

Listening

Listen to the child and allow the child to speak without interruption. Accept what is said, taking the child seriously and offering reassurance. Remember that it is NOT your role to investigate or question. Remain calm and make it clear that you are glad the child has told you and alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation if possible.

Do not make promises or guarantee absolute confidentiality as child protection will always take precedence and you must pass on the information. Explain what actions you will be taking and whom you have to tell.

Do not pass judgement and try to avoid displaying signs of shock or disapproval. Be aware of your own feelings which may differ to those of the child and do not jump to conclusions.

Take care of yourself by making sure that you have an opportunity to discuss your feelings with someone at a later stage.

Reporting

Contact a Designated Manager for advice and guidance and to report any disclosure. The designated person may then discuss the concern/suspicion with the relevant organisation and if appropriate make a direct referral. If abuse has been disclosed to you or you suspect that it is happening, you must inform the Nominated Child Protection Manager as soon as possible.

If the designated person is not available or it is inappropriate to approach them, the volunteer/staff with the concern should make direct contact with the relevant organisation.

If you have concerns regarding a staff member or volunteer behaving in an inappropriate manner whilst working with children, in the first instance try and talk, calmly and confidentially, with the person concerned. If this is not possible, indicate your concerns confidentially to the Designated Child Protection Manager.

If an allegation is discussed by a child to a staff or volunteer on external premises the above guidelines should be followed, and the staff or volunteer should report the allegation to the appropriate person responsible for child protection within the external setting. Where possible the contact details of the designated child protection officer for an external organisation should be made available to staff and volunteers prior to their attendance at the external setting.

Recording Information

Any disclosure or suspicions of abuse, even if later retracted must be recorded. It is essential that the details of the alleged abuse including any discussions or actions taken be recorded

correctly and legibly as this will be critical in any later proceedings. This should be done immediately and certainly within 24 hours. Record the discussion accurately as soon as possible after the event. Use the child's words or explanations. Do not destroy any evidence as it may be useful in a court of law. All records, information and confidential notes should be kept in separate files in a locked drawer or filing cabinet. Only designated persons will have access to these files.

V. SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT CHILD PROTECTION

Every effort will be made to assure that, should individuals have concerns, they will be listened to and taken seriously.

It is the responsibility of the SCS committee to ensure that information is available to and exchanged between all those involved in this organisation and its activities. Some information is confidential and should only be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis.

Details of the Designated Child Protection Manager, and a full copy of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, are published on the Society website <http://www.salfordchoral.org.uk>

Children and Young People

Have a right to information especially any information that could make life better and safer for them. The Society will act to ensure they have information about how and with whom they can share their concerns, complaints and anxieties.

When sharing information the Society personnel will be sensitive to the level of understanding and maturity as well as to the level of responsibility of the people with whom they are sharing.

Parents

Parents/persons with parental responsibility are ultimately responsible for their children's welfare at all times, and they should be assured that their children are involved with a credible organisation.

The Society achieves this by publicising information on all its outreach work.

Staff and Volunteers

As an organisation offering support and guidance to children it is imperative that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under Child Protection legislation and have working knowledge of the Society's procedures. Each member of staff will receive updated training in Child Protection.

Other Bodies

A copy of the Society's Child Protection Policy will be made available to any other appropriate body.

Schools and Events

SCS activities involving visits to schools should write to the school or event organisers concerned to advise that the Society has a child protection policy in place and inform the event organisers that:

- Society individuals who attend are in compliance with this policy, which is also available on the website <http://www.salfordchoral.org.uk>
- Society individuals will not ask for the personal details or contact details of any young person or offer their own details. Only generic SCS contact details will be provided.
- Society staff, members and volunteers must not be placed in a caring or supervisory position, without the express agreement of all parties which has been made in advance of the visit/event
- Society staff, members and volunteers who, through the course of their work in a school, become concerned about the welfare of a child will share that concern with the school's designated child protection teacher, who will follow locally agreed procedures. If it is felt more appropriate, any issue can be referred through the Child Protection Designated Manager.

VI. PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

VII. RECORD OF ALLEGATIONS OF SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

In any case where an allegation is made or someone has concerns a record should be made. Details must include, as far as practical:

- Child's full name
- Date of Birth / Age
- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns, or passing on those of somebody else?

This policy is dated 21 June 2021 and will be reviewed every year.