



Choirs Connected Safeguarding Policy

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Maria Brannelly

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Samantha Gorton

Created: October 2016 Review date: Oct 2017

Legal Context

The law requires any organisation involving young people to take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risk of harm to children's and vulnerable adults' welfare are minimised, and where there are concerns, to share them with other local agencies.

The legal requirements arise from the Children's Act 2002. The relevant government guidance includes Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015. It is in line with the Worcestershire model Safeguarding Policy for schools. Choirs Connected has also used the policy and procedures of the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain as a guide, which was produced in consultation with the NSPCC.

No child should suffer harm, either at home or at school. Choirs Connected recognises their responsibility, alongside their host schools, to make sure that all children, young people and vulnerable members are safe and has therefore agreed the following policy and procedures.

1. Liaison with Other Bodies

- We work within the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board guidelines
- We work within our host school's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures
- We have a copy of "Levels of Need Guidance" for parents/carers and staff, and all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns. (See Appendix 1)
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues, to ensure that it is easy in any emergency for Choirs Connected and the Safeguarding Children's Team to work well together.
- If a referral is to be made to the local authority Safeguarding Children's Team we act within their guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents/carers at the same time.
- If there are concerns about a child who resides in Worcestershire, we will contact Family Front Door (formerly the Access Centre) as a first point of contact
- Choirs Connected will share concerns with the hosting school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and Head Teacher.

2. Who are Children or Vulnerable Adults?

In this context, it is anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'children and young people' throughout.

3. How Choirs Connected Operates

Choirs Connected consists of a number of 'Pop-up' Choirs located at designated school venues. It is a 10 week singing project for two people, usually from the same family (one student and one adult) and we believe this student-adult partnership is unique to Choirs Connected as they join as a pair. The adult may be their parent, carer, step parent, grandparent, auntie, uncle or even teacher. These 'Pop-up' Choirs then converge at the Palace Theatre, Redditch to create the Choirs Connected Choir of 100+ mixed voices for a dress rehearsal and concert.

Rehearsals are run by the founder and Music Director and/or Vocal Coach at the student's school either during the school day or just at the start or end of the day. Both are trained and experienced teachers, who have enhanced DBS checks and are trained regarding safeguarding children (including PREVENT). Rehearsals will be held together as one large choir or divided into smaller groups.

4. Staffing and Volunteering

- We work within our host school's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures
- Our designated lead, with responsibility for safeguarding children is: **Maria Brannelly (Deputy – Samantha Gorton)**
- Our Safeguarding Policy is on our website www.choirsconnected.org.uk
- For the purpose of this policy, it applies to staff in any capacity: music teachers, visiting musicians and volunteers.
- All conductors and teachers (who have responsibility for the children in Choirs Connected) hold a valid Safeguarding certificate as evidence of training
- Volunteers will be connected to our host schools and will have undergone the necessary DRB checks, according to the school's safeguarding advice for volunteers and visitors.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to Choirs Connected.
- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual as well as neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their work
- Where such evidence is apparent, the Music Director makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the host school's designated Safeguarding Lead. The information is stored safely.
- Staff from Choirs Connected take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or by asking questions of children.

5. Concerns about a Child

If whilst working with a child you become concerned about

- Comments made by a child

- Marks or bruising on a child
- Changes to the child's behaviour or demeanour

Report these concerns to the Music Director or Vocal Coach, who if they feel appropriate will pass on to the Senior Designated Person for Safeguarding.

- You may be asked to complete a concern sheet (Appendix 2)

6. Managing a Disclosure

Although the likelihood of this is small, it is important that all staff know what to do in an eventuality.

- Listen carefully to what is said without displaying shock or disbelief; accept what is being said
- Allow the child to talk freely
- Reassure the child but do not make promises that might not be possible to keep
- Do not promise confidentiality but explain to the child that you may have to tell the Music Director or the Head Teacher in order that they can provide appropriate help
- **Do not interrogate** the child or ask leading questions
- Reassure the person that it is not their fault
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell
- Do not force the child to repeat what he/she said in front of another person.
- Do not ask the child to write a statement
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator
- Remember it is not our job to **investigate**, but to record and share appropriately.
- Report immediately to the Safeguarding Leader and complete a hand-written record as soon after the disclosure as possible and in any case within 24 hours, using the child's words as far as possible. (See appendix 3) **Please ensure you have signed and dated the record.**

7. Information Sharing & Confidentiality

- We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.
- The Safeguarding Lead will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.
- All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets.

8. Allegations Against Staff

- We acknowledge that a participant may make an allegation against a member of staff. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Music Director.
- The Music Director on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the LA's Senior Adviser for Safeguarding Children in Education. Choirs Connected will follow the DfE and LA procedures for managing allegations against staff.
- If the allegation concerns the Music Director, the Head Teacher of the host school will be informed immediately.
- The host school will follow their own Safeguarding policy and procedures.

9. The Safeguarding Lead is to be responsible for:

- Providing information and advice on child protection within Choirs Connected
- Being aware of government guidance on safeguarding and child protection
- Responding to information from staff, members, children or parents and carers who have child protection concerns or concerns about the welfare of a vulnerable adult, and to record this information
- Assessing the information quickly and carefully and asking for further clarification as appropriate
- Knowing the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy in each school establishment which hosts the choir, should a discussion need to take place.
- Sharing concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead of the school or theatre hosting the event.
- Making a referral to a statutory child protection agency or appropriate agency for vulnerable adults, or the police if necessary and without delay
- Ensuring that an accurate written record is maintained of the concern, action taken, liaison with other agencies and the outcome
- Updating the policy and procedures on safeguarding.
- **If in any doubt about what to do, to seek advice from Children’s or Social Services**
- **It is not the Safeguarding Lead’s role to investigate**
- The Policy and procedures will be reviewed annually

10. Additional Information and contact details

- See Appendix 1 for Levels of Need Guidance from Worcestershire County Council. (This is saved as a separate document)
- See Appendix 2 for Choirs Connected confidential record of suspected abuse form

- Important contact details: Maria Brannelly (Music Director and Safeguarding Lead for Choirs Connected)
Email: maria@choirsconnected.org.uk Tel: 07954 463572

- Jon Hancock is the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) for Worcestershire and is available for advice if you are not sure whether to make a referral.
Email: jhancock22@worcestershire.gov.uk Tel: 01905 766090

This policy has been written and agreed by Maria Brannelly on behalf of Choirs Connected

Signed

Date

This Policy will be reviewed annually.

