

Charnwood Voices Safeguarding Policy

Charnwood Voices is a registered charity managed by a committee of volunteers elected at the annual general meeting. To carry out its charitable objects it presents a number of concerts a year sometimes performing with orchestral groups, professional soloists and other choirs. Charnwood Voices has a musical director who is not a member of the choir. The musical director attends weekly rehearsals with members in term time in order to prepare for the concerts. From time to time Charnwood Voices organizes other events such as choral workshops, social events and outings, and foreign tours.

Charnwood Voices does not advertise itself as an activity suitable for children or vulnerable adults. Most choir members are independent adults and it is exceptionally rare for there to be any young people (under 18) amongst the members who rehearse and perform with the choir. Nevertheless Charnwood Voices 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 who may become members of Charnwood Voices and attend its weekly rehearsals and occasional additional activities.
- Children form part of the audience at public performances given by Charnwood Voices.

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

- protection for children with whom Charnwood Voices 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 guidance supporting this policy are:

- Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Government guidance on safeguarding children
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

- The Safe Network's 'Are they safe?' Guide (www.safenetwork.org.uk)
- London Community Foundation's Developing your Safeguarding Policy and Procedures resource pack
- The Charity Commission's 'Strategy for Dealing with Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Issues in Charities'.

The policy applies to Charnwood Voices, all choir members (including honorary members), the musical director, volunteers and all others invited to perform or work with Charnwood Voices.

Safeguarding Policy

Guidelines:

- Children under the age of 18 must have the written permission of their parent or guardian to join Charnwood Voices. The parent or guardian retains full responsibility for the child's transport arrangements to and from rehearsals and the venues for performances or activities.
- Charnwood Voices will also secure parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other emergency medical treatment.
- Rehearsals and other activities will be conducted in an open environment to avoid private or unobserved situations. Adult members should ensure that they are not alone with a young person.

Tours or trips:

- Any child who wishes to go on a tour/residential trip or day trip with the choir must be accompanied by a parent or guardian or a responsible adult of their parent/guardian's choice to act in loco parentis.
- On residential tours/trips only the parent/guardian or adult acting in loco parentis may share a room with the child. Other adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- Parents or guardians will be informed of arrangements for the tour and asked to confirm their approval.

Privacy arrangements

- In the rare event of it not being possible to arrive at a venue in concert dress, Charnwood Voices will endeavour to ensure a child'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 the child's permission.

The purpose of any request for contact details, and the identity of any person making such a request will be given to the child.

- Parents and guardians should be aware that photography, audio and video recording are undertaken from time to time at concerts and rehearsals. The images and recordings are used both on-and off- line including on the web and social media. They provide valuable tools to promote the work of the choir to a wider audience and form part of the historical record of our work.

Joint concerts with children

Charnwood Voices will make appropriate joint working arrangements to ensure that school groups will always be in the care of their teachers and helpers and/or parents 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 for joint activities and the principles of this safeguarding policy still apply.

Children in audiences

It is the responsibility of the parent, guardian or carer to ensure that their children are supervised at all times. If a parent/guardian/carer is not personally attending an event with their child/children, this policy requires them to be satisfied that their child/ children will be accompanied and adequately supervised by a responsible adult acting on their behalf at all times. A copy of this policy is available on the Charnwood Voices website and will be sent to each parent/guardian/carer before the event upon request.

Event organisers and stewards

Charnwood Voices relies entirely on volunteers to carry out its work. Volunteers on duty at an event will wear clear identification.

Child abuse

Charnwood Voices endeavours by the implementation of this safeguarding policy to protect children and minimise the risks of abuse of young people. The term child abuse is used to describe a range of ways that people harm children. They can be inflicted on a child or knowingly not prevented. In many cases children are subjected to a combination of forms of abuse. There are four main categories of abuse namely physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect. Charnwood Voices notes the importance of being alert to signals of abuse and to the difficulty children may have in reporting it. To assist in responding appropriately to a child who has a complaint, it offers the following strategy:

- Listen carefully.
- Reassure the child 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 what you are going to do next (in the first instance, report the matter to the 'named person' for safeguarding)

Charnwood Voices notes that it is not its role to investigate whether a child has been abused or not and it is not qualified to do so. This is the role of bodies such as Social Services, the NSPCC, or the police.

Measures for implementation of this policy

- The Charnwood Voices committee will designate an appropriate committee member to be the 'named person' in respect of safeguarding. The named person shall undertake appropriate training as required and will be identified to children as the principal person they should turn to if they have any concerns or queries. Contact details for the named person are also given to any new member upon enrolment and on the website.
- Any concern regarding either a child or a choir member, or other adult must immediately be reported to the named person (or in his or her absence to the Chair of the Committee) who will:
 - Obtain and record information from the person expressing the concern;
 - Assess the information quickly and carefully and ask for further clarification as appropriate;
 - 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;
 - If in any doubt as to what to do, seek advice from Social Services;
 - Maintain confidentiality as far as possible subject to the principle of the welfare of the child being paramount which means that information may have to be shared (but only with people who need to know about it).
- The policy is published on the Charnwood Voices website and is disseminated to all members, who are required to familiarise themselves with its contents. It will be brought to the attention of any persons invited to participate in any choir activity.
- The policy and procedures will be reviewed annually by the Committee and will be drawn to the attention of members after each review.