



Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

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Person responsible for implementation: Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) –
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Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs works in partnership with the Cornwall Youth Choirs (CYC) for the benefit of the choirs and to support its members. In one of Europe's most deprived areas where more than 30,000 young people live in poverty, it develops a sense of community by engaging young people of all ages and their families to participate in rehearsals, events and volunteering opportunities, providing a pathway for all young people in Cornwall to participate in the various choirs, which build their confidence and ability, and provide opportunities to raise aspirations. We recognise the importance of singing, group learning and strong leadership on young people's mental health and well-being. It is committed to putting young people at the forefront of its decisions and will always ensure that its programmes meet one or more of the following needs for their benefit:

1. Fundraising
2. Supporting CYC projects financially and in person
3. Organising events and rehearsals which further music education or personal growth through music.
4. Promoting CYC membership

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)
- 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 Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs employees, choir members, volunteers and all others invited to perform or work with Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs.

Policy Statement

Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs acknowledges it has a responsibility under Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 for the safety of all children and young people involved in all of its activity and wants to provide a safe and secure environment in which children and young people flourish and feel comfortable. It also recognises that good safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are of benefit to everyone involved with its work. Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs believes that it is always unacceptable for a child to experience abuse of any kind and accepts its duty of care to safeguard the welfare of all children, by committing to practices that protect them.

The following principles underpin Cornwall Youth Choir's approach to safeguarding and child protection.

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, disability, sex, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Working in partnership with children, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

A child is defined in law as a person up to the age of eighteen years. Therefore the term 'child' is used throughout this policy and procedure and this includes young people.

For the purpose of this policy, it applies to volunteers in any capacity.

Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the workforce, including volunteers:

- Are clear about how to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns about children
- Have a clear understanding of the principles and practice involved in the safeguarding and protection of children
- Understand the importance of prevention in responding proactively and efficiently to all concerns.

The policy aims to ensure that:

- All attending children are safe and protected from harm;
- Other elements are in place to enable children to feel safe and adopt safe practices; and
- Staff, children, volunteers and parents are aware of the expected behaviours and Cornwall Youth Choir's legal responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children.

Ethos

Safeguarding is considered everyone's responsibility and as such Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs aims to create the safest environment within which every Child has the opportunity to participate. We will do this by working in partnership with other agencies and seeking to establish effective working

relationships with parents, carers and other colleagues to develop and provide activities and opportunities.

All staff will be made aware of this policy as part of their initial induction process and there will be regular briefings and updates for all staff.

Responsibilities

We have a responsibility to make sure that Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs has an effective safeguarding policy and procedures in place and monitors that all comply with them. A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has been appointed who has lead responsibility for dealing with all safeguarding issues. In the absence of the DSL, it is the role of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

For this policy to be effective, it is essential that staff and volunteers have an understanding of what safeguarding is, know that 'safeguarding is everybody's responsibility', know how to access safeguarding information, know of any possible contribution that they may be required to make to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults and how to access further advice, support or services.

All members of staff and volunteers know how to respond to a child who discloses abuse, and the procedure to be followed in appropriately sharing a concern of possible abuse or a disclosure of abuse.

All parents/carers are made aware of Cornwall Youth Choir's responsibilities in regard to child protection procedures through publication of this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

We also have a Safer Recruitment Policy and our selection and recruitment procedure includes all appropriate checks on staff and volunteers suitability, including appropriate Disclosure Barring System checks and we hold a Single Central Record of workers.

Should we dismiss or remove a member of staff or a volunteer because they have harmed a child, or would have done so if they had not left, we will report this to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) 01872 326536 lado@cornwall.gov.uk.

Our safeguarding policies and procedures will be annually reviewed and updated.

Designated Safeguarding Lead's (DSL) Responsibilities

Safe recruitment practice will be adhered to if and when it becomes necessary and appropriate (as detailed in our Safer Recruitment Policy) and would include scrutinising applications, verifying identity and qualifications, obtaining character and professional references, checking previous employment history and that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job, and a face to face interview as well as a mandatory enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check. **The Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs do not currently employ anyone directly.**

Where staff 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.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for:

- contacting by telephone the Multi Agency Referral Unit (MARU) 0300 123 1116 as a matter of urgency, (for urgent referrals after 17:15 or at the weekend call the Out of Hours Service on 01208 251 300) in order to discuss the child protection concerns of possible abuse or neglect that the designated person has in connection with the child, being prepared to provide the child's details and follow advice and guidance provided by the person handling the call and as in the guidance referred to above;

- providing a written record of any formal referral by post/e-mail to the Referral and Assessment Service using the multi-agency referral form within 48 hours;
- ensuring that, where a formal referral has not been agreed other sources of support for the child will be considered including instigating a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process;
- ensuring that written records of concerns about a child are kept even if there is no need to make an immediate referral;
- ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from Child records, with a front sheet listing dates and brief entries to provide a chronology;
- ensuring that an indication of further 'child protection related' record keeping is marked on the Child's records;
- acting as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns and liaising with other agencies and professionals;
- ensuring that all staff and volunteers are aware of this policy and know how to recognise and refer any concerns;
- Keeping themselves up to date with knowledge to enable them to fulfil their role, including attending relevant training
- Supporting the staff in implementing all recommendations applicable to Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs arising from serious case reviews.

Disclosure

If a child makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult or other child or young person, staff will:

- stay calm and listen carefully;
- reassure the child that s/he has done the right thing in telling you;
- not investigate or ask leading questions;
- let the child know that s/he will need to tell the DSL;
- not promise to keep what they have told you a secret;
- inform the DSL as soon as possible; and
- make a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident which will be signed, and dated using the Cornwall Youth Choir's safeguarding record procedure

Confidentiality

- We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential;
- the DSL or DDSL will disclose personal information about a Child 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 which might compromise the child's safety or well-being, or that of another; and
- we will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to MARU with their parents/carers, unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with the Multi-Agency Referral Unit on this point.

Managing Allegations against staff

We are aware of the possibility of allegations being made against members of staff or volunteers that are working with or may come into contact with children and young people at Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs. Allegations will usually be that some kind of abuse has taken place. They can be made by children and young people or other concerned adults.

If an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the DSL or DDSL;

- The DSL or DDSL on all such occasions will follow the procedures in the Our Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

(<https://ciossafeguarding.org.uk/scp/p/professionals/what-you-need-to-know-if-you-have-a-concern-about-a-person-who-works-with-child>) and will inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)- 01872 326536

- If the allegation made to the member of staff concerns the DSL or DDSL the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the most senior person available; and
- They will need to discuss with the LADO the nature of the allegations in order for appropriate action to be taken. This may constitute an initial evaluation meeting or strategy discussion depending on the allegation being made.

Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs will also need to:

- Consider safeguarding arrangements of the child or young person to ensure they are away from the alleged abuser;
- contact the parents or carers of the child/young person if advised to do so by the LADO;
- consider the rights of the staff member for a fair and equal process of investigation;
- ensure that the appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed, including whether suspending a member of staff from work until the outcome of any investigation is deemed necessary;
- act on any decision made in any strategy meeting; and
- advise the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where a member of staff has been disciplined or dismissed as a result of the allegations founded, or would have been had they not resigned.

Whistleblowing

Staff and volunteers are aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude and actions of colleagues where these are inappropriate or unsuitable. If necessary the member of staff or volunteer, should speak to the delegated 'Whistleblowing' person who is Angela Renshaw. Advice can also be sought from the NSPCC Advice line:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>

Staff Conduct

Stated below are the standards of behaviour required of staff and volunteers in order to fulfil their roles within Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs and to ensure that they conduct themselves in a way that reflects the ethos and principles of Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs.

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 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
- 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, there should already be a policy in place that sets out the correct procedure and staff should always work alongside another member of staff.

We understand that staff should have access to advice on the boundaries of appropriate behaviour. The document: 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults Working with Children and Young People' provides advice on these and the circumstances which should be avoided in order to limit complaints against staff of abuse of trust, and/or allegations of physical or sexual abuse.

<https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Guidance-For-Safer-Working-Practice-COVID-addendum-April-2020.pdf>

We recognise that staff working for Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs who have become involved in the case of a child who has suffered harm, or appears likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We support such staff by providing an opportunity to discuss their anxieties with the DSL or DDSL.

Physical Restraint

We have a procedure in place for recording each significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a child, and for the reporting of these incidents to the Child's parents as soon as practicable after the incident.

A member of staff who has used appropriate physical restraint will have a reasonable defence to any legal action against them, if:

- The purpose of the physical intervention was to avert an immediate danger of injury to any person;
or an immediate danger to the property of any person (“person” includes the Child);
or to prevent the committing of a criminal offence;
or where a young person’s conduct leads to behaviour that prejudices good order and discipline;
and
- no more force was used than was reasonably necessary in the circumstances

Wherever possible such events are recorded and signed by a witness. We understand that physical intervention of a nature that causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

Prevention

We recognise that Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to children by providing them with effective lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection. Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs will support all Children by:

- Establishing and maintaining an ethos, understood by all staff and volunteers, which enables children to feel secure and encourages them to talk, knowing that they will be listened to.
- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs and ensuring that all children know that there is an adult at Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- Providing opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for help.
- Encouraging the development of self-esteem and resilience in every aspect of life
- Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.
- Recognising that children come from a variety of different cultural backgrounds, Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs has developed policies to ensure that we embrace diversity in religion and faith, race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation.

Health and Safety

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 Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs.

Employers and Public Liability:

Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs has cover in accordance with the relevant legal liability statutes for injury to employees and injury to third parties.

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.

Communications

Communication with the children and young people in the choir by the choir leaders, when it is by mobile phone, is solely through group messaging platforms, such as What's App. The volunteers should not communicate with any of the children using mobile phone or email.

Training

All members of staff and volunteers will have access to safeguarding training at least every three years. We will also, as part of our induction, issue information in relation to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Our DSL and DDSL will also undertake additional training at least every two years in managing allegations against staff and volunteers who work with children and young people and to support the annual review of this policy, in order to keep it updated in line with local and national guidance/legislation.

Policy Review

Friends of Cornwall Youth Choirs are responsible for ensuring the annual review of this policy and for additional policies that are relevant to safeguarding and child protection.

Implementation

This policy will be discussed with all staff and volunteers.

A copy of this policy will be provided to all staff and volunteers as part of their induction.

reviewed : due for review January 2024

reviewed by :