

Malvern Festival Chorus Safeguarding Policy

This policy applies to employees, members, volunteers and all others invited to perform or work with the Malvern Festival Chorus (MFC).

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 are minimised, and where there are concerns, to share them with other local agencies.

The relevant legal requirements arise from:

- The Children's 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 includes: *Safe from Harm 1993*; *Working Together to Safeguard Children 1999*; *Caring for the Young and Vulnerable 2000*.

The Malvern Festival Chorus recognise 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 Social Services department who have legal responsibility or the NSPCC who have powers to investigate child protection concerns under the Children Act. However we are committed to undertaking responsibility within our remit.

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

- Protection for children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom MFC has contact (including the children/relatives of adults who use our services);
- Guidance to ensure that the risks of harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults welfare are minimised;
- Guidance for responding to a Child or Vulnerable Adult making an allegation of Abuse;
- Guidance on procedures that should be adopted in the event that any adult suspects a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of experiencing harm.

Who are Children or Vulnerable Adults?

In this context anyone up to the age of 18 is a child. An adult is defined in the Care Act 2014 as someone over 18 years old who has care and support needs, is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect as a result of their care and support needs or is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Contact with children may typically fall into the following categories:

- Young people become members of the Chorus and attend its weekly rehearsals and other activities.
- Children take part in a concert, typically as part of a youth choir or as a soloist.

- Children form part of the audience at public performances given by the Chorus.

How The Malvern Festival Chorus Operates

The Chorus is a Registered Charity, composed of choral members. Officers and other committee members are elected to serve on the Committee, and others may be co-opted onto the Committee from time to time. Rehearsals are run by our Musical Director or a substitute on occasion, with a professional accompanist. From time to time MFC organises other events such as choral workshops and social events.

The Chorus does not advertise itself as an activity suitable for children or vulnerable adults. Most Chorus members are independent adults. It happens only rarely that a young person or a vulnerable adult joins, rehearses and performs with us. There are no employed staff or volunteers who are charged with the care of others. Chorus rehearsals and performances are group activities, and there is no need for a member of the Chorus to be alone with another member of any age. The Chorus is therefore unlikely to be targeted by a person seeking opportunities to abuse children or vulnerable adults. Nonetheless the Trustees of the Chorus recognise the need to safeguard the welfare of any young and vulnerable people with whom we may work or come into contact.

Malvern Festival Chorus's Safeguarding Policy

1. Young people will be welcome to participate in choral works requiring children and/or youth voices with MFC as long as they bring a parent or other responsible adult who remains responsible for them throughout rehearsals and performances.
2. Rehearsals and other activities will be conducted in an open environment to avoid private or unobserved situations. Adult members and employees (other than a parent or guardian) should ensure that they are not alone with a young person.
3. Joint concerts with children
The Chorus will make appropriate joint working arrangements to ensure that school/youth 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 Chorus's general responsibility to provide a safe environment for joint activities and the principles of this safeguarding policy still apply.
4. Children in audiences
It is the responsibility of the parent, guardian or carer to ensure that their child/vulnerable adult is supervised at all times. If a parent/guardian/carers 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.

Measures for implementation of this policy

1. Malvern Festival Chorus will publicise its Safeguarding policy on its website (<http://www.malvernfestivalchorus.co.uk>) and draw it to the attention of members at each AGM. It will be reviewed annually at the first Committee meeting following the AGM.
2. A copy will be sent to each parent/guardian/carer upon request.
3. The Chorus has nominated a Designated Person who is DBS checked, who will 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 on the website.
4. Chorus members or anyone with concerns should report to the Designated Person (or in their absence the Chairman or Vice Chairman 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/vulnerable adult being paramount which means that information may have to be shared (but only with people who need to know about it).
5. A confidential record will be kept of the report by the Chorus Secretary.
6. If Malvern Festival Chorus should need to recruit staff, then we will apply safeguarding principles to ensure that appointees are suitable to work with young or vulnerable people

Approved by the Committee: 17 September 2018

Reviewed by the Committee: 9 January 2023