



THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S CHOIR OF GREAT BRITAIN POLICY FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN

1. Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that:
“Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatments, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has care of the child.”

SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

This policy applies to all staff, including the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of the National Children's Choir of Great Britain.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect children and young people who receive services from the National Children's Choir of Great Britain.
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

The National Children's Choir of Great Britain believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special education needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0 to 25 years – Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities; HM Government 2014
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers; HM Government 2018
- Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; HM Government 2015
- General Data Protection Regulations 2018.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2024

This policy should be read alongside our policies and procedures on:

- Safer recruitment
- Anti-bullying
- Complaints
- Health and safety
- Supervision
- Equality of opportunity

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989.
- All children regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation or identity have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Lead for children and young people, one or more deputies and a lead board member for safeguarding.
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely and sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, their families, staff and volunteers.
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately.
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise.
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.

Contact details:

Designated Safeguarding lead

Head of Pastoral Care 07572 955227

Lead Board Member for Safeguarding

safeguarding@nccgb.com

Deputy Safeguarding leads

Chief Executive/Junior Choir Pastoral Lead 07894 021279

2. KEY PRINCIPLES

The key principles on which to base work with children are found in the Children Act 1989 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which the UK is a signatory.

All children deserve the opportunity to achieve their full potential. They should be enabled to:

- Be as physically and mentally healthy as possible.
- Gain the maximum benefit possible from good quality educational opportunities.
- Live in a safe environment and be protected from harm.
- Experience emotional wellbeing.
- Feel loved and valued and be supported by a network of reliable and affectionate relationships.
- Become competent in looking after themselves and coping with everyday living.
- Have a positive image of themselves and a secure sense of identity, including cultural and racial identity.
- Develop good inter-personal skills and confidence in social situations.

3. DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

In order to achieve this level of wellbeing, it is the responsibility of every organisation that works with children to protect them from abuse. There are four categories of abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

3a Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is defined as hitting, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

3b Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, or it may occur alone.

3c Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

3d Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve the failure to provide either physical or emotional care.

4. PROCEDURES

In order to safeguard the children in its care, NCCGB:

- Carries out enhanced DBS checks on all new staff to ensure, as far as is possible, that they are suitable to work with children and young people.
- Ensures that all current members of staff have appropriate DBS clearance.
- Ensures that staff have received safeguarding training.
- Has procedures in place in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff.
- Has a designated member of staff with responsibility for safeguarding children. The Designated Person for the NCCGB is the Head of Pastoral Care. A member of the Board of Trustees is also designated for safeguarding.
- Ensures that the relevant staff are available at all times of day during a residential course to deal with any safeguarding concerns that arise.

Where there are external visitors to the choir, such as visiting conductors, composers or workshop leaders, NCCGB will ensure that:

- They will be accompanied by staff members at all times when in the presence of choir members.
- If they will require unaccompanied access to choir members a DBS check will be done in advance, and the visitor will be required to read our safeguarding policy and sign to say they have done so.
- They will not have access to choir members' boarding houses.
- They will not have access to personal information regarding choir members.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the Designated Person to:

- Formulate the choir's safeguarding policy and make it available to all staff.
- Ensure that all members of staff have read the policy and procedures and understood them.
- Arrange for display of the safeguarding policy on the NCCGB website so that it is accessible to all parents and carers.
- Co-ordinate action in safeguarding issues and understand the DBS referral process.
- Ensure that all staff know who the designated member of staff is and know about the role.
- To follow NCCGB procedures and refer suspected cases of child abuse to the appropriate authorities.
- To take part in relevant and appropriate training.
- To maintain records in a secure and confidential file.
- To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding work carried out within the organisation.
- To provide information to the CEO to enable them to report to the NCCGB Trustees on safeguarding within the organisation.

It is the responsibility of the designated member of the Board of Trustees to:

- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the safeguarding of children within the organisation.
- Support and monitor the work of the Designated Person.

It is the responsibility of all members of NCCGB staff to:

- Understand their responsibility for referring safeguarding concerns using the proper channels.
- Ensure that any suspected exploitation or radicalisation of young people is regarded as a safeguarding concern and is referred to the Designated Person.
- Ensure that any mental health concerns are regarded as a safeguarding concern and are referred to the Designated Person.
- Be aware that abuse can occur between choir members and if there are concerns that this is taking place refer it accordingly.
- Treat the child's or young person's welfare as paramount.
- Be alert to potential indicators of abuse and neglect, and to the risks that individual abusers may pose to children and young people.
- Be aware of the effects of abuse and neglect on children and young people.
- Know how to respond to a choir member who may disclose abuse, including providing a written report to the Designated Person.
- Treat any allegation or complaint with respect.
- Contact the Designated Person if they become aware of a relevant safeguarding concern outside of a course, and there are no issues with confidentiality.

6. **ABUSE OF TRUST**

The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000 established a criminal offence of the abuse of trust affecting teachers and others who are in a relationship of trust with any young person including 16–18-year-olds. A relationship of trust is one where a member of staff or volunteer is in a position of power or influence over a choir member by virtue of the work or nature of the activity being undertaken. The legislation is intended to protect young people who are over the age of consent but under 18 years of age; and vulnerable adults. Grooming a child, a young person under 18 or a vulnerable adult with a view to a future sexual relationship may also be an offence in this context.

The principle of equality embedded in the legislation applies irrespective of sexual orientation; neither heterosexual nor homosexual relationships are acceptable within a position of trust. Any concern raised by a choir member, parent or carer or member of staff about a member of staff will be listened to and referred to the Designated Person.

7. **CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE – CHOIR MEMBERS**

Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2023 states that there is a need to ensure that a 'child protection policy includes procedures to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse'. NCCGB has the following policies in place that should be read in conjunction with this section:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equality of Opportunity in NCCGB
- E-safety policy

There are many forms of abuse that may occur between children and this list is not exhaustive:

7.1 Physical abuse e.g. (biting, hitting, kicking, hair pulling etc.)

Physical abuse may include, hitting, kicking, nipping, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person. There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important to understand why a young person has engaged in such behaviour, including accidentally before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken.

7.2 Sexually harmful behaviour/sexual abuse e.g. (inappropriate sexual language, touching, sexual assault etc.)

Sexually harmful behaviour from young people is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. There may be many reasons why a young person engages in sexually harmful behaviour, and it may be just as distressing to the young person who instigates it as well as the young person it is intended towards. Sexually harmful behaviour may range from inappropriate sexual language, inappropriate role play, to sexually touching another or sexual assault/abuse.

7.3 Bullying (physical, name calling, homophobic etc.)

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. Bullying is unkind behaviour that has been repeated over time. Both young people who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

7.4 Cyber bullying

Cyberbullying is the use of phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above.

7.5 Sexting

Sexting is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video. This includes sending 'nude pics', 'rude pics' or nude selfies. Pressuring someone into sending a nude picture can happen in any relationship and to anyone, whatever their age, gender or sexual preference.

7.6 Prejudiced Behaviour

The term prejudice-related bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, physical or emotional or both, which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society – in particular, prejudices to do with disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, (for example in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class), gender identity and sexual identity (homosexual, bisexual, transsexual).

7.7 Teenage relationship abuse

Teenage relationship abuse is defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent (between the ages of 13 and 18) against a current or former partner. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physical or sexual abuse. The abusive teen uses this pattern of violent and coercive behaviour, in a heterosexual or same gender relationship, in order to gain power and maintain control over the partner.

8. **SEXUAL ACTIVITY BETWEEN CHOIR MEMBERS**

Sexual activity between choir members is illegal under the age of 16 and is not acceptable for any choir member during a course.

9. **PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED IN CASE OF AN INCIDENT OR ALLEGATION BY A CHOIR MEMBER**

Members of staff

- If any member of staff is told of an incident or there is suspicion of physical or sexual child abuse occurring during a course or in the home, he or she must report the information immediately to the Designated Person. Should the Designated Person be absent from the course the report must be made to a Deputy Safeguarding Lead. If the allegation or suspicion is about the Designated Person, a report must be made to the Chief Executive and to the Children's Services office local to the host school. If the allegation or suspicion is about the Chief Executive, a report must be made to the Designated Person, to the Lead Board Member for Safeguarding via email to safeguarding@nccgb.com and to the Children's Services office local to the host school. If staff members are concerned about safeguarding policies and practices, they should first consult the Designated Person or their Deputies. If concerns persist staff can contact the Lead Board Member for Safeguarding via email safeguarding@nccgb.com, who will investigate further.
- If the allegation relates to a member of staff, the member of staff that the allegation relates to will be asked to temporarily leave site whilst the allegation is being investigated.
- Members of staff must not investigate reports of abuse themselves.
- Staff should never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to choir members or staff wishing to tell them about something serious. They should guarantee that they will only pass on information to the minimum number of people who must be told in order to ensure that proper action is taken to sort the problem out, that they never tell anyone who does not have a clear need to know, and that they will personally take whatever steps they can to protect the informer from retaliation or stress that might be feared.

Designated person

The designated person will:

- Interview the person(s) involved in the presence of another senior member of NCCGB staff.
- Inform the designated Trustee of the issue.
- Promptly refer a suspected case of abuse to the Children's services department in the choir member's area of residence and/or the police.
- If appropriate contact the parents or carers of the child or young person.
- In the case of a serious incident, make a report to the Charity Commission
- Arrange for the DSL, CEO and any other staff who have had a significant involvement in an incident to meet to discuss learning points from an incident. The DSL will ensure that any learning points will be included in the staff training at the beginning of the next course.

10. **THE SAFEGUARDING OF STAFF AND TRUSTEES**

NCCGB is committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of its staff and Trustees.

10.1 Staff

The safeguarding of staff is covered in the following policies:

- NCCGB Staff Grievance Procedure
- Equality of Opportunity in NCCGB
- NCCGB Whistleblowing Policy
- NCCGB Health & Safety Policy and Procedures
- NCCGB Fire Safety Procedure
- NCCGB Medical Procedures
- NCCGB GDPR Policy and Procedures.

10.2 NCCGB is committed to supporting staff who have been subject to abuse or may be at risk, and undertake the following:

- The DSL, CEO and Mental Health First Aider(s) are available to speak to should a member of staff have something they need to discuss.
- The DSL and CEO will then signpost staff to appropriate NHS and charitable services if they would like further support
- The DSL or CEO will speak to any staff who are identified as being at risk or who have been involved in dealing with a serious safeguarding incident on a course, to talk through their feelings and concerns and see if they require further support

10.3 Trustees

The Board of Trustees is protected by the same policies as paid members of staff and volunteers.

This document will be reviewed annually by the NCCGB Board of Trustees and updated if necessary.

14.1.25

NCCGB, Court House, Court Road, Bridgend, CF31 1BE

Tel: 07894 021279

Charity number: 1093292 Company registration number: 04293391

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