

Wyre Forest Young Voices Staff and Volunteer Safeguarding Policy

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Introduction

This Code has been developed to provide you with advice that not only will help to protect children, but will also help you and your colleagues identify any practices which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse. Good practice will also protect WFYV through reducing the possibility of anyone using their role to gain access to children, in order to abuse. While it is not intended that this code should restrict staff from normal ways of working, e.g., comforting a distressed child through providing a hug, there is much they can do to avoid situations that may give rise to misinterpretation, which will also work to protect children. If in doubt, consider how an action or activity may be perceived as opposed to how it is intended. Wherever possible, you should be guided by the following advice. If it is necessary to carry out practices contrary to it, you should only do so after discussion with, and the approval of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Mission Statement: Putting Young People First

Wyre Forest Young Voices recognises that the safety and protection of children and young people is everyone's responsibility. In conjunction with our safeguarding policy, this document is designed to provide essential information for our Musical Directors and Volunteers. We value and encourage the involvement of children and young people and we are committed to promoting their wellbeing and enjoyment whilst protecting their health, wellbeing and safety. We can all help to provide a welcoming, safe and enjoyable experience for young people. Not all the guidelines will be relevant to all volunteers nor can every situation be covered. However, in every situation, great care and a common-sense approach will ensure that all activities are carried out as safely as possible and everyone's interests are safeguarded.

What does Safeguarding Mean?

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This means:

- Children are protected from abuse and maltreatment
- Preventing harm to children's health or development

- Ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

Importance of Safeguarding when planning Events and attending Rehearsals

There is a lot of pre-planning and preparation in place for rehearsals and events to ensure the safety of young people in the choir. The pastoral lead ensures that the children and young people have enough adult support in the venues by allocating volunteers to different roles dependent on availability.

All members of the Music Team and volunteers who represent WFYV at events and rehearsals are DBS checked and many are trained in first aid. All members of the team are identifiable by their purple WFYV lanyard, and the choir members know who to approach if they have any issues.

Responsibilities for Voluntary and Community Groups

We all have a responsibility to help keep children safe. Organisations working with children and young people must have safeguarding policies and procedures in place and be able to respond to child protection concerns. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) highlights that everyone who comes into contact with a child or young person has a responsibility to keep them safe.

If you have any worries or concerns about a child or young person attending choir please do not hesitate to speak to a member of the Safeguarding Team or one of the Trustees. It is important to tell the team immediately if you have any worries about a child as this may be an important piece of a jigsaw about the child's life.

WFYV Child Protection: Code of Good Practice

Avoid unobserved situations of 1-1 contact with a child. If it is unavoidable and you are likely to be on your own:

- Always keep a door open
- Ensure you are within hearing of other adults
- Tell someone what you are doing
- Ensure it is a short a time as possible
- Never invite a child to your home
- Never take, or offer to take a child anywhere alone in your own vehicle without the knowledge and consent of the parent / carer
- Develop a culture in which volunteers feel comfortable enough to point out inappropriate attitudes and behaviours to each other
- Do not engage in (or allow) any sexually provocative games involving or observed by children, whether based on talking or touching
- Avoid physical contact with a child at all times. This could include hugging, holding a child's hand or any other contact that whilst carried out innocently, could be portrayed as inappropriate. Please use your common sense
- Never make suggestive remarks or discriminatory comments to a child
- Don't engage in or tolerate any bullying of a child, either by adults or other children
- If a child is ill or needs medical attention, ensure that there are 2 volunteers providing assistance; one of whom is the same sex of the child

- Never enter a room where a child may be changing their clothes or not fully dressed without first getting their full consent and ensuring that you are accompanied by another adult
- Do respect all children regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, disability or sexual identity
- Avoid “favouritism” and singling out “trouble makers”
- Never trivialise child abuse and ensure that all concerns or allegations are reported to a member of the Safeguarding Team. This can be in person, via the Google Form or by email: dsl.wfyv@gmail.com

Different Types of Abuse

Abuse can be categorised into four distinct areas: physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.

What is Physical Abuse?

Physical abuse is when someone hurts or harms a child or young person on purpose. It includes:

- Hitting with hands or objects
- Slapping and punching
- Kicking
- Shaking
- Throwing
- Poisoning
- Burning and scalding
- Biting and scratching
- Breaking bones
- Drowning.

It is important to remember that physical abuse is any way of intentionally causing physical harm to a child or young person. It also includes making up the symptoms of an illness or causing a child to become unwell.

What is Emotional Abuse?

Emotional abuse includes:

- Humiliating or constantly criticising a child
- Threatening, shouting at a child, or calling them names
- Making the child the subject of jokes, or using sarcasm to hurt a child
- Blaming and scapegoating
- Making a child perform degrading acts
- Not recognising a child's own individuality or trying to control their lives
- Pushing a child too hard or not recognising their limitations
- Exposing a child to upsetting events or situations, like domestic abuse or drug taking
- Failing to promote a child's social development
- Not allowing them to have friends
- Persistently ignoring them
- Being absent
- Manipulating a child
- Never saying anything kind, expressing positive feelings or congratulating a child on successes
- Never showing any emotions in interactions with a child, also known as emotional neglect.

What is Sexual Abuse?

When a child or young person is sexually abused, they're forced or tricked into sexual activities. They might not understand that what's happening is abuse or that it's wrong. And they might be afraid to tell someone. Sexual abuse can happen anywhere – and it can happen in person or online. It's never a child's fault they were sexually abused – it's important to make sure children know this.

What is Neglect?

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and the most common form of child abuse. A child might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision or health care. This can put children and young people in danger. And it can also have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing.

How to Report a Cause for Concern

Children will occasionally disclose abuse to an adult they have come to feel they can trust. This happens for many reasons but the important thing to remember is that if they do tell you, they are doing so in the hope that you will act to stop it happening, even if they ask you not to do anything with the information.

Children may feel as if they are betraying someone they are close to and whom they love. It is not unusual for a child to love the abuser but want the abuse to stop, especially when that person is a parent or carer. Equally, it may be someone they fear e.g., an adult whom they perceive to be able to influence decisions concerning their future. Either way, it takes great courage for a child to talk to an adult about abuse and your response can be crucial.

It is important to remember too, that it can be more difficult for some children to tell than for others. Children who have experienced prejudice and discrimination through racism may well believe that people from other ethnic groups or backgrounds don't really care about them. They may have little reason to trust those they see as authority figures and may wonder whether you will be any different.

Children with a disability will have to overcome barriers before disclosing abuse. They may well rely on the abuser for their daily care and have no knowledge of alternative sources. They may have come to believe they are of little worth and simply comply with the instructions of adults.

If the Child wants to Speak to You

If the child wants to speak to you, please ensure that there is another volunteer present, or within eye-sight.

Do:

- Make it clear you take them seriously
- Acknowledge their courage in telling you
- Tell them they are not responsible for the abuse
- Remain calm and receptive
- Listen without interrupting
- Only ask questions of clarification if you are unclear what the child is saying
- Please allow the child to speak freely and do not ask them leading questions
- Please make notes of the conversation, using their own words
- Please inform the child that you cannot keep secrets for them and may need to share the information with other people to keep them safe
- Please inform a member of the Safeguarding Team or Trustees about the discussion
- Please do not speak to other volunteers about the incident
- The Safeguarding Team will ask you to write down details of the conversation so this can be recorded accurately on the safeguarding database
- If a referral is needed to children's social care please be assured that this will be done by a member of the Safeguarding Team
- Let them know you will do what you can to help them

Do Not:

- Allow your shock or distaste to show
- Probe for more information/ask other questions
- Make assumptions or speculate
- Make negative comments about the abuser
- Make promises you cannot keep
- Agree to keep the information secret

You should pass all the information to the DSL for further investigation. The DSL will discuss your concerns with you to clarify their cause and obtain all the known relevant information. If necessary the information will then be forwarded to the appropriate local Social Services Department stating that it concerns child protection. In the absence of any DSL being available, you should report the concerns directly to the local Social Services Department and then inform your DSL as soon as possible.

Statement of Confirmation regarding Safeguarding Obligations on behalf of WFYV

Please copy and paste this paragraph and send to Kat Holmes at dsl.wfyv@gmail.com

I have read, understood and can confirm that I agree to comply with all safeguarding obligations and responsibilities on behalf of WFYV whilst I am in the presence of young members of Wyre Forest Young Voices.

Signed.....

Dated.....