

Policy	Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
Effective Date	31 August 2016
Date Last Reviewed	May 2022
Authorised by	Trustees meeting
Scheduled Review Date	November 2022
Supersedes	All previous Policies and/or Statements

PURPOSE

To ensure The Harrogate Choral Society (HCS) – including the Halcyon singers, Beati and the Polyphonic Choir - is able to keep children and young people with whom it works safe; and to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse.

SCOPE

The policy applies to all staff and volunteers who act on behalf of the organisation and who come directly into contact with children. This includes the main choir, the Halcyon singers, Beati and the Polyphonic Choir. Every individual has a responsibility to inform the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy of concerns relating to safeguarding children. The Safeguarding Lead or their designated deputy must decide if the concerns should be communicated to Children's Social Care or the police.

POLICY STATEMENTS

HCS recognises that all children have a right to protection from abuse.

HCS takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people.

We will:

- Respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and provide parents and children with the opportunity to voice their concerns;
- Have a system for dealing with concerns about possible abuse
- Maintain good links with statutory child care authorities.

HCS recognises that some children and young people today are the victims of neglect, and physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Accordingly HCS has adopted the policy contained in this document (hereafter "the policy"). The policy sets out agreed guidelines relating to responding to allegations of abuse, including those made against staff and volunteers. HCS recognises the need to build constructive links with the child care agencies. These guidelines have been prepared in accordance with the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board Procedures. They will be kept under review and be supported by appropriate training.

POLICY DEFINITIONS

Child/Young Person

A child is defined in law as a person up to the age of 18 years. Therefore the term 'child' is used throughout this policy and procedure and this includes young people. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical Abuse

Is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

This is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities including Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), which may not necessarily involve a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

GOVERNANCE

HCS Trustees have ultimate responsibility for child protection and the day to day management of safeguarding. Other members may assist with particular responsibilities for child safeguarding, including offering legal advice. There will normally be a Lead Person for Child Safeguarding and several chaperones.

The Lead Person for Child Safeguarding and other members with particular responsibilities will have received safeguarding training. This will include contracted staff / officials, Halcyon volunteers and official chaperones.

At a minimum, this will be completion of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board NYSCB and CYSCB Online Safeguarding Basic Awareness E Learning Course and the training will be regularly updated as advised by NYCC. The Lead Person for Child Safeguarding and official Chaperones will undertake additional training as advised by NYCC or their licence issuing authority.

The Trustees will, with the Lead Person for Child Safeguarding, be responsible for ensuring that there is access to appropriate training and records of training received are maintained.

The Trustees together with the Lead Person for Child Safeguarding will ensure any licensing requirements specified by North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) are carried out and appropriate records kept. In particular any performances involving children of compulsory school age are held under Body of Persons Approval (BOPA) from NYCC or the relevant local authority for the concert location if not in North Yorkshire and follow the required guidelines issued by the relevant local authority.

PROCEDURES FOR CHILD SAFEGUARDING: Main Choir, Beati and Polyphonic

The Secretary is responsible for making arrangements for all potential new members to join the main choir, including young people. All potential new members under the age of 18 will be classed as Halcyon singers. They will not be members of the Main Choir, Beati or the Polyphonic until the start of the season after they reach 18 years of age, although as Halcyon singers they may be present singing at rehearsals and performances with the adult choir.

PROCEDURES FOR CHILD SAFEGUARDING: Halcyon

The Secretary will inform the Lead Person for Child Safeguarding when a potential new member under 18 starts to attend rehearsals. Young singers under 18 will be seated near or with a DBS cleared choir member unless they have a parent also singing or staying on the premises for the rehearsal.

The Lead person for Child Safeguarding will ensure that at each event (rehearsal, singing practice, performance, etc) arrangements to ensure safeguarding of children have been made so that there will be a sufficient number of licenced chaperones, DBS cleared officials or- volunteers in attendance as appropriate, with a specific person being "in charge" on each occasion. ie nominated, licensed chaperone(s) for performance day and DBS cleared adults when a chaperone is not required.

The Lead Person for Child Safeguarding will maintain a register of current DBS cleared members who are willing to take child safeguarding responsibilities within HCS. Current is defined as a certificate obtained in the last 3 years. All members potentially taking this role will be provided with a copy of this policy.

Current DBS status is defined as a certificate obtained in the last 3 years or one of continuous renewal (as for an official chaperone).

It should be noted that a chaperone licence is awarded by the Council area in which chaperone resides, a BOPA licence is awarded in area where the performance takes place. Licensed chaperones are required for an actual performance plus any rehearsal on that day, otherwise a DBS cleared adult is acceptable.

The following procedures apply to all of singing practices (rehearsals), joint rehearsals with others and concerts (events).

- Responsibility for safe arrival at venue is the responsibility of the parent/guardian, and the registration form will be signed by a parent to this effect.
- If a singer has NOT sent apologies and is not at Singing Practice/Event within 10 minutes of the arranged time, parent/guardian will be called to ensure they are aware of non-attendance.
- Departing Singing Practice/Event: Parents are responsible for collecting their child from Singing Practice/Event or for making arrangements for them to go home with another parent, or even (if old enough) to allow them to make their own way home. Parents will sign a registration form to this effect and will let the Halcyon administrator know how their child will leave.
- For performances a register will be kept for all Halcyon singers or performers of compulsory school age unless they are part of an official school group.

All people with child safeguarding responsibilities will be aware of the guidance and procedures in the following section with regard to what to do in case there is a child safeguarding issue.

In all cases, The Lead Person for Child Safeguarding will be informed and will advise on the appropriate next steps (who might need informing, record keeping, etc). The Chairman will subsequently be informed of the event and action taken. In appropriate circumstances, the Charity Commission will need to be notified of any incident.

PROCEDURES FOR CHILD SAFEGUARDING: Event involving a School or Schools (such as the Harrogate Christmas Concert)

The groups of children will be under the supervision of the relevant school which will be responsible for the safeguarding arrangements for their children.

If children from the Halcyon Choirs, or individual children, are participating the procedure relating to Halcyon above will apply (unless the child is being chaperoned by their parent).

In either instance the necessary BOPA licence will be applied for and arrangements will be made for those under 17 to have their own dressing room area.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE IF AN ISSUE ARISES

What to do if children talk to you about abuse or neglect

It is recognised that a child may seek you out to share information about abuse or neglect, or talk spontaneously to individuals or in groups. In these situations you must:

- Listen carefully to the child. DO NOT directly question the child.
- Give the child time and attention.
- Allow the child to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make an accurate record of the information you have been given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child's presentation as well as what was said. Recordings must be kept secure and in accordance with organisation procedures.
- Use the child's own words where possible.
- Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.

Reassure the child that:

- You are glad they have told you;
- They have not done anything wrong;
- What you are going to do next.
- Explain that you will need to get help to keep the child safe.

Children should not be required to provide multiple accounts of events within the organisation

You must:

- Treat all children and young people with respect
- Ensure that, whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- Encourage young people and adults to be comfortable and caring enough to point out if they are uncomfortable with any practices within your organisation by being open to criticism.
- Recognise that caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- Operate within the organisation's principles and guidance and any specific procedures
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse.

You must not:

- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or young people
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour/ make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people
- Reach conclusions about others without checking facts
- Either exaggerate or trivialise safeguarding issues
- Show favouritism to any individual

What you should do if you suspect abuse

You may become concerned about a child for a number of reasons, for example:

- They have not spoken to you or avoid speaking to you
- They are upset
- Because of your observations, or you are given information from another party about a child.
- It is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused, or respond to a child wanting to talk to you. This practice can help clarify concerns and result in appropriate action.
- If you are concerned about a child you must share your concerns. Initially you should talk to the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy. You should make a note of your concerns and any actions agreed following your discussion with the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy.

Remember: If it's not written down then it did not happen.

Also be sure to concentrate on facts not opinions.

Informing parents

It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parents/carers about any concerns; however, you must not discuss your concerns with parents/carers in the following circumstances:

- a. delay in sharing relevant information with an appropriate person or authority would increase the risk of harm to the child or young person
- b. asking for consent may increase the risk of harm to the child, young person, you or anyone else. It is good practice to be open and honest at the outset with the parents/carers about concerns, and the need for a referral.

All reasonable efforts should be made to inform parents/carers prior to discussing concerns with Children's Social Care; however, this should not be delayed if concerns cannot be discussed with the parents.

Where the child expresses a wish for his or her parents not to be informed, their views should be taken seriously and a judgement made based on the child's age and understanding, as to whether the child's wishes should be followed (see <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/legal-definitionchild-rights-law/gillick-competency-fraser-guidelines/>).

Consultation with Children's Social Care

Where concerns have been highlighted to the Safeguarding Lead, they will contact the Customer Contact Screening Centre to discuss the concerns with Children's Social Care. Please see below for contact information.

You may also wish to consult with Children's Social Care in the following circumstances:

- When you have been unable to contact the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy and you believe the child is at risk of harm
- When you remain unsure after internal consultation as to whether safeguarding concerns exist
- When there is disagreement as to whether safeguarding concerns exist, or when the concerns relate to any member of the organising committee

Consultation is not the same as making a referral but should enable a decision to be made as to whether a referral to Social Services or the Police should progress.

Making a Referral to Children's Social Care

In order to make a referral to Children's Social Care, the Customer Contact Screening Centre should be contacted in the first instance. This will usually be by the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy.

The Customer Contact Centre can be contacted by the following methods:

During Office Hours - By Phone: 01609 780780 –

Email: social.care@northyorks.gov.uk

Outside Office Hours Emergency Duty Team (evenings, weekends + bank holidays): 01609 780780

Confirmation of Referral

A written confirmation of the referral must be completed and submitted within 24 hours. This will normally be completed by the Safeguarding Lead. Where possible, North Yorkshire CYPS request that you use their "Referral Form to Children's Social Care or Disabled Children's Service" to ensure that all relevant information is provided to ensure that the referral can be progressed as effectively as possible.

When contacting the Customer Service Centre the staff should:

- Clearly identify themselves, their agency/relationship with the child (ren) and family,
- Give details of where they can be contacted.
- Provide as much relevant family information as possible and, clearly stating the name of the child, the parents/carers and any other children known to be in the household, the dates of birth and addresses and any previous addresses known
- Provide details of any special needs or communication needs of either the child or any family member
- State why they feel the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.
- Share their knowledge and involvement of the child(ren) and family
- Share their knowledge of any other agency involved
- Indicate the child's, parent's/carer's knowledge of the referral and their expectations
- Ensure they record within their agency files the concerns and action taken

Informing the Charity Commission

If there is a safeguarding incident it must also be reported to the Charity Commission.

CONTACT DETAILS

Trustees - Main responsibility rests with the Executive (Amy Wall and Paul Jackson Co-Chairs; Gill Walsh, Treasurer; Ruth Pridmore, Secretary)

HCS Lead Person for Safeguarding generally: Kate Rogata 07711 302818

HCS Lead Person for Child Safeguarding: Gill Walsh 07891 460553

Helplines

Help for adults concerned about a child Call NSPCC on 0808 800 5000

Help for children and young people Call ChildLine on 0800 1111

Change Control History

Date of Change	Summary of Revisions Made
August 2017 (changes to be noted at Trustees meeting on 25 th September)	Removal of reference to the post “Trustee with responsibility for legal matters” as it is unlikely such a post will ever exist Addition of BOPA detail Various other amends linked to Committee decision that all singers under 18 would be classed as Halcyon singers.
September 2018 (for approval at meeting on 24 th Sept)	Contact details updated
September 2019 (initially for approval at Committee on 30 th Sept, but final approval complete by email 10 Nov 2019)	Removal of references to Halcyon Children’s choir and associated staff/volunteers.
November 2020	No updates needed, agreed by email
May 2022	No updates made