

YATE CHORAL SOCIETY

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

This Safeguarding Policy applies to Yate Choral Society (YCS) employees, all membership grades (including committee members), volunteers and all others invited to perform or work with YCS.

Yate Choral Society is committed to ensuring that all children, young people and vulnerable adults have the same protection regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity. YCS is committed to anti-discriminatory practice and explicitly recognises the additional needs of children, young people and vulnerable adults from minority ethnic groups and the disabled and the barriers they may face, especially around communication.

The law requires any organisation involving children, young people or vulnerable adults to take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to vulnerable adults' and children's welfare are minimised, and where there are concerns, to share them with appropriate local agencies.

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

- protection for children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom YCS 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.

YCS recognises that it is not the role of our organisation to decide whether a child, young person or vulnerable adult has been abused or not. This is the role of the Social Services department which has the legal responsibility, the NSPCC who have powers to investigate child protection concerns under the Children Act or the Police.

The main laws and guidance supporting this policy are:

The Children's Act 1989 and 2004; The Human Rights Act 1998; The Protection of Children Act 1999; The Charity Commission's 'Strategy for dealing with safeguarding issues in charities' 2017

Who are Children or Vulnerable Adults?

In this context anyone up to the age of 18 is a child. An vulnerable adult is defined 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.

How Yate Choral Society operates

YCS is a registered charity of amateur Choral Singers managed by a committee of volunteers elected at the annual general meeting or co-opted as necessary.

Committee members are trustees of the charity. To carry out its charitable objects it presents a number of concerts a year sometimes performing with instrumental groups, professional soloists and other choirs. Rehearsals are run by a Musical Director or a substitute on occasion, with an accompanist. They attend weekly rehearsals with members mainly in term time to prepare for the concerts. There are no employed staff or volunteers in the conventional sense. From time-to-time YCS organises other events such as choral workshops and social events.

YCS does not advertise itself as an activity suitable for children, young people or vulnerable adults. Most choir members are independent adults and generally there would be very few, if any young people (under 18) out of a membership of around 40 who rehearse and perform with the choir. Choir rehearsals and performances are group activities, and there is no need for a member of the choir to be alone with another member of any age. YCS is therefore unlikely to be targeted by a person seeking opportunities to abuse children or vulnerable adults. Nevertheless, YCS recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable adults with whom it works and comes into contact, and believes that everyone has the right to enjoy the activities of the Choir in a happy, safe and secure environment.

The Committee has, therefore, agreed the following Safeguarding Policy.

THE POLICY

Yate Choral Society will publicise its Safeguarding Policy on its website www.yatechoralsociety.co.uk and draw it to the attention of members.

Guidelines

Membership - Should any child or close relative (under 18) of a member of YCS participate in choral works with YCS the member must act as a responsible adult. Should any other child/young person participate in any YCS activities they must be accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult who remains responsible for them throughout rehearsals and performances.

Joint concerts/events - YCS will make appropriate joint working arrangements to ensure that all groups will always be responsible for the welfare of their own members and supporters. This does not detract from the choir's general responsibility to provide a safe environment for joint activities and the principles of this safeguarding policy still apply.

Audiences and Social Events - YCS is aware that children and vulnerable adults may attend their concerts as members of the audience, or attend social functions hosted by YCS. It is the responsibility of the parent, guardian, or carer to ensure adequate supervision. If a parent/guardian/carer is not personally attending an event this policy requires them to be satisfied that the child or vulnerable adult will be accompanied and adequately supervised by a responsible adult acting on their behalf at all times.

Privacy - Parents and guardians should be aware that photography, audio and video recording are undertaken from time to time at concerts and rehearsals. The images and recordings are used both on- and off- line including on the web. They provide valuable tools to promote the work of the choir to a wider audience and form part of the historical record of our work.

Abuse - YCS endeavours by the implementation of this safeguarding policy to protect and minimise the risks of abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Measure for implementation of this policy

- The YCS committee shall identify an individual who shall be first point of contact for safeguarding issues.
- Any concerns regarding either, a child or a choir member, employee or other adult must immediately be reported to the Designated Person (or in his or her absence to the Chair of the Committee).

Recruitment – When recruiting YCS will apply safeguarding principles to ensure that appointees are suitable to work with young or vulnerable people.

Policy Review - This policy will be reviewed annually.

Adopted at a committee meeting on 30th November 2023