



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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 can be found from the following sources:

- UK Government (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-for-charities-and-trustees>)
- The NSPCC (<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>)

The Southend Bach Choir recognises that it is not the role of our organisation to decide whether or not a young person or vulnerable adult has been abused. This is the role of the Police and Social Services Department who have legal responsibility to do so. The NSPCC also have powers to investigate child protection concerns under the Children Act. However, we are committed to ensuring best practice within our remit.

Good Practice

In formulating this Policy the Trustees of the Choir have followed the guidance of Making Music, the national amateur music performance association, and Safe Network, the safeguarding advice resource of the NSPCC.

Who are Young People or Vulnerable Adults?

In this context anyone up to the age of 18 is classified as a young person and anyone over 18 years of age who is, or who may be, unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation, is classified as a vulnerable adult.

Contact with young people or vulnerable adults typically falls into the following categories

- Vulnerable adults as members of the Choir, attending rehearsals and other choir activities.
- Young people and vulnerable adults taking part in a concert, typically as part of a choir, as a soloist, or musician.
- Young people and vulnerable adults forming part of the audience at performances given by the choir.

How the Southend Bach Choir Operate

The Southend Bach Choir is a Registered Charity, composed of choir members, officers and other committee members who are elected to serve on the Committee as detailed within our Constitution. Others may be co-opted onto the Committee from time to time. Rehearsals are organised by our committee, led by our Music Director and accompanied by a pianist. All members and officials are volunteers. From time to time, the Choir organises other events such as social evenings and fund raisers.

The Choir does not advertise itself as an activity suitable for young people or vulnerable adults. Most Choir 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 directly charged with the care of others.

Choir rehearsals and performances are group activities, and there is no requirement for a member of the choir to be alone with another member of any age. The Choir is therefore unlikely to be targeted by a person seeking opportunities to abuse children or vulnerable adults. Nonetheless, the Trustees of the Choir recognise the need to safeguard the welfare of its members and in particular, any young and vulnerable people with whom we may work or come into contact.

This policy applies to our members, volunteers and all others invited to perform or work with the Choir.

The Southend Bach Choir's Safeguarding Policy

General principles and guidelines

1. The purpose of this policy is:
 - To protect its members, young people and vulnerable adults with whom the choir has any involvement, from abuse or exploitation.
 - To provide an outline of the principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.
2. Young people will be welcome to participate in the choir's concerts as part of a joint promotion with a youth organisation or educational establishment, provided a representative of that organisation is present, at all times, to look after the health and welfare of their members.
3. Vulnerable adults taking part in the choir's activities should be accompanied by an appropriately qualified carer to facilitate effective communication where necessary.

Privacy arrangements

4. In the rare event of it not being possible to arrive at a venue in concert dress, the Choir will endeavour to ensure an individual's privacy is respected, if required to change at a venue.
5. In accordance with our Data Protection Policy, members or officers of the choir will not disclose the personal details for any member without first obtaining their permission. In the case of a young or vulnerable person, permission must be obtained from both the person concerned and the appropriate adult responsible for their care. The purpose of any request for contact details, and the identity of any person making such a request must be provided before disclosure is authorised.
6. Parents and guardians should be aware that photography, audio and video recording may be undertaken from time to time at concerts. The images and recordings may be stored digitally and used both on- and offline, including on the Internet. These provide valuable tools to promote the work of the choir to a wider audience and form part of the historical record of our work.

Joint concerts with young people or vulnerable adults

7. The Choir will make appropriate joint working arrangements to ensure that school/youth groups/vulnerable adults will always be in the care of their teachers, helpers, parents or guardians, who will bear responsibility for their welfare at all times. 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.

Young people & vulnerable adults in audiences

8. 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/carer is not personally attending an event with their young person/vulnerable adult, this policy requires them to ensure that their young person/vulnerable adult will be accompanied and adequately supervised by a responsible adult acting on their behalf at all times.

Safeguarding Officer

9. The Safeguarding Officer will be a named individual, who is also a Trustee. See the foot of this document for the current officer.

Measures for implementation of this policy

10. A copy of this policy is available on the Choir's website and we draw it to the attention of new members. Any amendments will also be notified to our members. Copies will be supplied to partner organisations on request.
11. Choir members or anyone with concerns or a complaint should contact the Safeguarding Officer, who will take action as described in the "Approach to be taken in event of a complaints" section below and:
 - Obtain and record information from the person expressing the concern;
 - Assess the information and seek clarification as required.
 - Inform the relevant agency or the police, without delay, depending on the circumstances.
 - If in any doubt as to what to do, seek professional advice.
 - Maintain confidentiality as far as possible. In the case of a child or vulnerable person, the person responsible for their care will need to be informed, unless they are the subject of the complaint.
12. A permanent confidential record will be kept of the report by the Choir Secretary.
13. This policy and procedure will be reviewed annually.

Approach to be taken in event of a complaint

14. The Choir notes the importance of being alert to signals of abuse and to the difficulty individuals may have in reporting it. To assist in responding appropriately to a complaint, we offer the following strategy for anyone who is made aware of an issue:
 - Listen carefully.
 - Reassure the person involved that this matter will be disclosed only to those who need to know about it and that they are doing the right thing in telling you.
 - Avoid leading questions or closed questions.
 - Write down what has been said, with date and time and any names mentioned.

- Tell the child/person what you are going to do next (in the first instance, report the matter to the Designated Person for safeguarding)
- In the case of a complaint not amounting to a criminal offence, e.g. inappropriate language or behaviour, the Safeguarding Officer will investigate the matter in accordance with the Choirs Complaints Procedure.

15. In circumstances where a choir member has been convicted of a criminal offence, listed in the opening section on Legal Context, the Chair will revoke their membership immediately.

Designated Person for Safeguarding: Tom Gough