

Overview

Commitment to safeguarding: Grantham Choral Society (GCS) believes that a child, young person or adult at risk should never experience abuse of any kind. We recognise that we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk. We are committed to safeguarding the well-being of all children, young people and adults at risk whom we come into contact with and to protecting them from harm.

About this policy

- This policy applies to; all members, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of GCS or taking part in GCS activities, including freelancers (such as soloists/instrumentalists)
- The purpose of this policy is to provide members, volunteers and others listed above with the overarching principles that guide our approach to the protection of all vulnerable people
- This policy recognises vulnerable people as:
 - Children up to the age of 16 or young people aged 16-18.
 - Adults aged over 18 at risk as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. This might include adults with a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs, or reduced physical or mental capacity. This policy also recognises risk is determined by the activity an adult is taking part in and not solely on the personal characteristics or circumstances of the adult, as such any adult can be at risk, and the risk can be temporary.
- This policy aims to:
 - Protect children, young people and adults at risk who are; members of, receive services from, or volunteer for, GCS.
 - Ensure members and volunteers working with children, young people and adults at risk are carefully recruited and understand and accept responsibility for the safeguarding of those vulnerable individuals they are interacting with.
 - Ensure that safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk is a primary consideration when GCS undertakes any activity, event or project.

GCS 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. To carry out its charitable objects it presents several concerts a year, sometimes performing with orchestral groups, professional soloists and other choirs, including on some occasions, children's choirs.

Rehearsals are run by our Musical Director or a substitute on occasion, with an accompanist. They attend weekly rehearsals with members in term time to prepare for the concerts. There are no employed staff or volunteers in the conventional sense.

From time to time GCS organises other events such as choral workshops and social events. The choir typically has about 100 members, the great majority of whom are independent adults.

The membership of GCS is predominantly adult but young people aged 16-18 are eligible for membership. Whilst GCS does not advertise itself as an activity suitable for children under 16, it recognises that from time to time such young people, as well as those vulnerable adults who wish to sing and who fall within that category as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act, may wish to do so. In this case they will be made most welcome and this policy will apply in those situations.

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. The choir is therefore unlikely to be targeted by a person seeking opportunities to abuse children, young people or vulnerable adults.

GCS however 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. Any young person aged 16-18 becoming a member of GCS must do so only with the consent of their parent or carer.

With the above in mind, GCS involvement with vulnerable people might include, but is not limited to:

- Members of the group who attend rehearsals and concerts
- Non-members who join us for occasional events eg Come and Sing days and workshops
- Relatives and friends of members who attend rehearsals and concerts in a volunteering capacity (eg ticket sales)
- Audience members at public concerts

Named safeguarding person: Jackie Brooks has responsibility for safeguarding issues. All queries and concerns relating to safeguarding should be referred to Jackie Brooks in the first instance.

Any projects, events or other activities that will involve vulnerable people must be planned with the involvement of Jackie Brooks and in line with established procedures and ground rules (see below).

Procedures and ground rules: A further document – ‘Ground rules, ways of working and procedures’ is available and forms part of this policy.

Policy review: This policy will be reviewed and amended (if necessary) on an annual basis by the GCS Executive Committee. It will also be reviewed in response to changes in relevant legislation, good practice, or in response to an identified failing in its effectiveness.

Ground rules, ways of working and procedures

This document forms part of the GCS Safeguarding policy

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This document includes:

- Recruitment practices around safeguarding
- Ground rules and ways for working regarding safeguarding of vulnerable people
- Procedures for raising safeguarding concerns and incidents of abuse
- Procedures for dealing with concerns and incident of abuse

Recruitment practices around safeguarding

If an existing or potential new member or volunteer will be working with vulnerable people as part of the GCS activities the appropriate level of DBS will be requested before that work is undertaken.

The level of DBS check required will be decided by the committee and in line with DBS rules regarding regulated activity. The results of any check to inform a decision will be used confidentially.

Ground rules and ways for working regarding safeguarding of vulnerable people

When GCS organises an activity or event where they will be responsible for vulnerable people they will ensure:

- Planning is carried out in line with this policy and procedures.
- The event is attended by an appropriate number of DBS checked adults – this will be a minimum of one but more when practically possible.
- Where practically possible the total number of adults in attendance (not necessarily DBS checked) compared with the total number of children will be in line with the ratio table below - as per Ofsted recommendations. (Note that where children under the age of 12 are involved in GCS activities, this would normally be under the auspices of a school or other choral organisation, and we would agree with the adults leading such a group how our joint safeguarding responsibilities are managed.)
- There is a main contact for safeguarding on the day - this will be an individual who has been DBS checked.
- The main contact has access to emergency contact details and other relevant details (e.g. information about picking up arrangements for vulnerable people).
- That if vulnerable people of different gender will be taking part in activities adults of different gender will be in attendance too.

- A vulnerable person is not to be left alone with an adult, unless that adult is DBS checked and carrying out regulated activity.
- Two adults (one DBS checked, at least one of whom is the same gender as any vulnerable people attending the event) should be the last to leave a venue once the activity has finished and will be responsible for ensuring vulnerable people get home safely or are collected by a responsible person eg their parent or guardian – see below for pick-up arrangements.

Child to adult ratio table

Child's age	Number of adults	Number of children
0-2	1	3
2-3	1	4
4-8	1	6
9-12	1	8
12-18	1	10

Working with schools: Where schools are participating in GCS activities (eg a concert), the school leadership and staff supporting the event will take responsibility for the safeguarding of the children and young people involved.

Working with parents/guardians: If a vulnerable person wishes to take part in GCS activities written permission (email is fine) should be obtained from parents/guardians where appropriate, and before the activity takes place. Written permission should include: emergency contact details (ideally two phone numbers) of any relevant pick-up arrangements – including permission for another adult to pick up the vulnerable person after the activity has finished.

Procedures for raising safeguarding concerns and incidents of abuse

- If any member or volunteer in GCS witnesses, suspects or is informed of a witnessed or suspected case of abuse they should immediately report it to the named safeguarding officer; Jackie Brooks.
- If the named person is not available, or is involved in or connected to, the abuse, it should be reported to the group chair (Teri Deal) or a DBS checked adult: Jean Breckenridge, Jackie Brooks, Diana Burrows, Rob Fieldson, Steve Gelsthorpe, Jill Henshall, Stuart Hadley, Tonya Pacey, Fiona Zealley. This list is updated and maintained separately on an annual basis.
- If an individual wishes to report an incident of abuse against themselves, they should report it to the named safeguarding officer or an individual they trust.
- For the avoidance of doubt, where schools are participating in GCS activities (eg a concert), the school leadership and staff supporting the event will take responsibility for the safeguarding of the children and young people involved.

Procedures for dealing with concerns and incidents of abuse

The Named person (or person reported in their absence) will first make a decision based on the immediacy of the concern and the following two factors:

1. If the vulnerable person is in immediate danger or needs emergency medical attention – call the police and/or ambulance service.
2. If the person at the centre of the allegation is working with vulnerable persons at the current time – remove them, in a sensitive manner, from direct contact with vulnerable people and follow the procedures below.

If none of the above applies the named person will:

- Make a note of the concerns reported to them.
- Speak with committee members to decide how to handle the reported abuse. Excluding any committee members who of involved in the incident.
- Escalate the report by either:
 - Raising concerns with the police – for serious or possible criminal offences.
 - Requesting an assessment by the local authority social care department about whether a vulnerable person is in need of protection.
 - An internal investigation – for less serious incidents where they feel internal mediation will be successful.
- Where cases are escalated the committee will cooperate with the police or local authority in dealing with the reported incident.
- Where an internal investigation takes place the committee will:
 - Inform all parties involved of the reported abuse as soon as possible.
 - Inform the family/guardians of the person reported as being abused in the incident.
 - Arrange separate meetings with both parties within 10 days of the reported incident. A joint meeting may be arranged if appropriate.
 - Both parties should be given the change to bring a friend or representative to the meeting.
 - Meetings will be attended by the named safeguarding officer and at least one other committee member.
 - All parties will also be invited to submit a written statement in advance of the meeting.
 - Once meetings have taken place the committee will decide on next steps and communicate them to all parties in writing within 5 days. They will be either:
 - Escalate the incident to the relevant authority.
 - Further investigation – with established procedures and timelines to work towards a resolution.
 - A decision or resolution.

Resolution and disciplinary action

- If abuse is found to have taken place any final resolution or decision will be taken in the best interest of the person who has suffered the abuse and the best interests of GCS.
- Any disciplinary action will be taken in line with the GCS constitution.