

SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

This Safeguarding Policy applies to Chester Music Society members (including trustees), volunteers and all others invited to perform or work with the Society

Chester Music 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.

Chester Music Society 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 other local agencies.

As a matter of good practice Chester Music Society has developed this policy to provide:

- protection for children, young people, and vulnerable adults with whom Chester Music Society have 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.

Chester Music Society 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 Sexual Offences (Amendments) Act 2006.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991.

Government guidance on safeguarding children.

Caring for the Young and Vulnerable 2000.

The Care Act 2014.

The Charity Commission's; Strategy for Dealing with Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Issues in Charities.

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Chester Music Society will publicise its Safeguarding Policy on its website www.chestermusicsociety.org.uk and draw it to the attention of members at the beginning of each term.

Who are Children or Vulnerable Adults?

In this context anyone up to the age of 18 is a child. An adult is defined in the Care Act 2014 as someone over 18 years old. A vulnerable adult is someone 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 Chester Music Society operates

Chester Music Society is a registered charity. It has three sections; an adult choir, (the Choir) a professional concert series, (celebrity concerts) and a concert series for local school age performers and amateur musicians, (showcase.) Each section's activities are managed by a committee of volunteers elected at the annual general meeting or co-opted as necessary. There is a board of trustees that oversees the whole of the activities of the society. To carry out its charitable objectives it provides in the region of 24 events a year. This includes a series of concerts by the choir, a celebrity concert series, a showcase concert series, competitions for young musicians, events in schools, come and sing days and workshops for string players. Other events and activities may also be organised to meet the society's charitable aims. There are no employed staff or volunteers in the conventional sense. The Music director and accompanist of the choir are paid fees.

Chester Music Society does not advertise itself as an activity suitable for children, young people or vulnerable adults. Most members are independent adults and perform with the choir or attend concerts and events as participants or audience members. Choir rehearsals and performances are group activities as are concerts and events and there is no need for a member of the choir or a performer to be alone with another member of any age. Chester Music Society is therefore unlikely to be targeted by a person seeking opportunities to abuse children or vulnerable adults.

Chester Music Society 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 Society in a happy, safe and secure environment.

Guidelines

Events in schools – Chester Music Society will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that school groups will always be in the care of their teachers and helpers and/or parents who will bear responsibility for their welfare at all times. This does not detract from the Society's general responsibility to provide a safe environment for joint activities and the principles of this safeguarding policy still apply.

Concerts rehearsals and other events – Chester Music Society is aware that children and vulnerable adults may attend their concerts as members of the audience, or attend other events organised by the society. It is the responsibility of the parent, guardian or carer to ensure assess what level of supervision is required and ensure that is in place for the event.

Privacy – Parents, guardians and carers should be made aware that photographs, 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 Society to a wider audience and form part of the historical record of our work.

Abuse – Chester Music Society endeavours, by the implementation of this safeguarding policy, to protect and minimise the risks of abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults. The term child abuse is used to describe a range of ways that people harm children. Abuse of adults can happen anywhere. It can happen at home, in a residential or nursing home, in a hospital, at work or in the street. There are five main categories of abuse namely physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse and neglect. Chester Music Society notes the importance of being alert to signals of abuse and to the difficulty children or vulnerable adults may have in reporting it.

Measure for implementation of this policy

The Societies Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) is Liz Jones. This person is appointed by the board. The DSO shall undertake appropriate training as required and will be identified to all members of the society as the principal person they should turn to if they have any concerns or queries. Contact details for the DSO are given on the website.

Any concerns regarding either, a child or a choir member, employee or other adult must immediately be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (or in his or her absence to the Chair of the relevant society Committee).

SAFEGUARDING GUIDANCE

How to respond to safeguarding concerns or allegations:

What is a safeguarding concern?

- A person discloses alleged abuse.

- A person discloses concern for another person.
- You notice signs of abuse.
- There is an accident to a vulnerable person in your care.
- There is a disclosure regarding an offender against a person.
- Behaviour is observed which poses risk to others or to themselves.

Be aware of your feelings. It is very natural to feel the following emotions:

- Anxiety
- Panic
- Fear
- Disbelief
- Split loyalties
- Anger
- Denial – you want it to disappear

Recognising your emotions will help you be able to handle the situation appropriately.

What should you do?

- Listen carefully to the person disclosing.
- Take the person seriously.
- Be non-judgemental.
- Ask open questions.
- Do not promise to keep it secret.
- Tell them what you will do next (if possible).
- Check you have the necessary contact information.

Action:

Immediate danger – call the police immediately

Non-emergency – seek advice from the designated Safeguarding Officer

Make sure you:

- Write down what has happened or been disclosed and keep that record.
- Talk to the designated Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours.

Remember:

- Safeguarding concerns are the responsibility of statutory agencies.
- The priority is the person's safety.
- Do not delay.
- Avoid gossip.

Who may need support?

- Alleged victim.
- Family and friends of alleged victim.
- Alleged perpetrator.
- Family and friends of alleged perpetrator.

- Other members of the Society affected.
- Yourself.

Confidentiality

- You must tell designated Safeguarding officer.
- Say as little as possible to others without being too secretive.
- Kill rumours.

Afterwards

- Remain non-judgemental.
- Avoid gossip – and try and prevent others from gossiping.
- The board (via the safeguarding officer) will review how the Society operates to reduce/prevent future risks.

Procedures for dealing with concerns and incidents of abuse

The Designated Safeguarding Officer (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.

If none of the above applies the named person will:

- Make a note of the concerns reported to them.
- Speak with relevant society committee members to decide how to handle the reported abuse excluding any committee members who were 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.
- Where cases are escalated the committee will cooperate with the police or local authority in dealing with the reported incident.

The Designated Safeguarding Person will make an annual report to the board on any incidents that occurred in the previous 12 months.

Date August 2021