

Safeguarding

Procedure and ways of working



This document forms part of the HCS Youth Choirs Safeguarding policy and was reviewed in September 2019.

It applies to all members, staff (whether employees or freelancers), volunteers and anyone working on behalf of HCS Youth Choirs or taking part in HCS Youth Choirs activities.

This policy recognises vulnerable people as:

- Children up to the age of 16 or young people aged 16-18.
- Adults aged over 18 defined as vulnerable by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006;

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, staff member or volunteer will be working with vulnerable people as part of the HCS Youth Choirs 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 and in line with the HCS Youth Choirs equal opportunities policy.

Ground rules and ways for working regarding safeguarding of vulnerable people

When HCS Youth Choirs organises a rehearsal 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.
- 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 will not be left alone with an adult, unless that adult is DBS checked and carrying out regulated activity.
- Two adults (one DBS checked) should be the last to leave a venue once the activity has finished and will be responsible for ensuring vulnerable people get home safely.

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 parents/carers: If a vulnerable person wishes to take part in HCS Youth Choirs 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 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, staff or volunteer in HCS Youth Choirs witnesses, suspects or is informed of a witnessed or suspected case of abuse they should immediately report it to the named safeguarding officer (Carole Kain¹)
- If the named person is not available, or is involved in or connected to, the abuse, it should be reported to a DBS checked adult;
- 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.

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 are 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 of 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 chance 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 the HCS Youth Choirs.

Any disciplinary action will be taken in line with the HCS Youth Choirs constitution.