



Village Voices - Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy applies to all members, volunteers and other personnel who perform or work with Village Voices (also referred to in this document as VV or The Choir).

2. Relevant Definitions

- Safeguarding: Principles and guidelines protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment, whether physical or psychological.
- Child: Anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday.
- Vulnerable adult: Any adult aged 18 or over who, owing to disability, mental function, age, illness or current personal circumstances, may not be able to take care of or protect themselves.

3. The Law

3.1 Various Acts of Parliament cover Safeguarding obligations. Fundamentally, the law requires any organisation involving children and/or vulnerable adults to take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risk of harm to their welfare is minimised and, where there are concerns, to share them with other local agencies principally the Police and/or Local Authority.

4. VV Working Practices within the Legal Context

4.1 In this regard VV does not promote itself as an activity suitable for children or vulnerable adults and choir members are all independent adults in their own right. There are no volunteers or members charged with the care of others.

4.2 However, VV may work from time to time with youth choirs or have individual young people performing on an ad hoc basis in concerts, and the choir recognises the possibility of safeguarding issues in those situations. It also recognises the need to remain vigilant to issues within its older membership. This policy explains the choir's procedures should any safeguarding situations arise.

5. VV Ethos

5.1 Village Voices is a community choir consisting of independent adult members. It exists for 2 main reasons:

- To enjoy friendship and fellowship through the joy of singing.
- To raise money for charity.

5.2 The choir is managed by a committee elected on an annual basis by choir members. From time to time, others may be co-opted onto the committee when assistance is required for a specific purpose. Overall responsibility for Safeguarding lies with the elected committee.

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6. Statement of Principle

6.1 It is the overriding principle of Village Voices to value every member regardless of age, sex, ethnicity or religion. At the heart of the choir is a deep sense of welcome, hospitality and openness, demonstrated through the friendship and fellowship to one another and exemplified through its music.

6.2 The purpose of this policy is to detail the guidelines that govern the choir's approach to Safeguarding so ensuring that our Statement of Principle is upheld.

7. Guidelines

7.1 To ensure the above general principles are followed, the following Safeguarding guidelines will be implemented:

7.2 Joint Concerts with Children.

7.2.1 Whenever VV performs or rehearses with a choir involving children, VV will make appropriate joint working arrangements to ensure that school/youth choirs will always be in the care of their teachers, assistants and/or parents/carers who will bear responsibility for the children's welfare at all times.

7.2.2 This does not detract from the VV's general responsibility to provide a safe environment and to follow the principles of this policy.

7.3 Children as Soloists.

7.3.1 When children or young people take part in VV concerts as soloists, and in rehearsals for such concerts, they will be accompanied by a parent/carer or other responsible adult nominated by the parent/carer.

7.3.2 The choir will ensure that the child or young person is never left alone with a member of the choir and any rehearsals will be conducted in a room or rooms with open doors accessible to and/or visible to the rest of the choir.

7.4 Equipment and Documentation available.

7.4.1 At every rehearsal and concert, VV will have available the following:

- A First Aid Kit
- A Defibrillator (for which training sessions are given)
- An "In Case of Emergency" (ICE) register detailing a relative or friend with telephone numbers nominated by each member whom they wish to be contacted in case of emergency.
- A Health and Safety Risk Assessment



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7.5 Actions in the Event of Potential Abuse or Allegations of Abuse

7.5.1 It is vitally important that suspected abuse situations are acted upon and not ignored. **Appendix A** contains safeguarding advice to choir members who have concerns about possible abuse or who receive allegations of abuse.

8. Administration

8.1 A copy of this policy is available on the choir's G Drive and website.

8.2 The policy and procedures will be brought to the attention of members at each choir AGM and will be reviewed annually at the first Committee meeting following the AGM.

8.3 Choir members will be informed of any changes as soon as the committee has approved and implemented them.

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APPENDIX A

Generic Safeguarding Advice

Village Voices (VV) recognises that it is not the role of the choir or any of its members to decide whether or not a child or vulnerable adult has been abused nor to investigate any such allegation or suspicion of abuse. This is the role of the local authority Children's or Adult Services department who have legal responsibility, or of the NSPCC who have powers, to investigate child protection concerns under the Children Act. VV is, however, committed to act responsibly within its remit. The following contains Generic Safeguarding Advice in specific circumstances:

- 1. If a member has concerns about possible abuse (including allegations):**
 - a. Consult a member of the committee.
 - b. Do not investigate – always consult and/or refer
 - c. Decide together whether to seek further advice or to make an immediate referral to the appropriate agency.
 - d. Keep a record of what happened. Document your concerns and your actions.

In an emergency respond immediately by contacting one of the agencies below (shown at Key Contacts).

- 2. Responding to a child, young person, parent or other adult who shares with you about abuse:**
 - a. Never promise to keep it secret.
 - b. React calmly; be aware of your non-verbal messages.
 - c. Don't stop someone who is talking freely about what has happened.
 - d. Don't ask leading questions.
 - e. Reassure the person they have done the right thing by telling you.
 - f. Avoid making comments or judgements.
 - g. Tell the person what will happen next.
 - h. Record and document, using the person's own words and noting any important dates and times.

Report to a member of the committee in the first instance,



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3. Remember good practice

- a. Treat everyone with respect, setting a positive example.
- b. Respect people's personal space.
- c. Ensure your actions cannot be misinterpreted.
- d. Challenge unacceptable behaviour in a constructive way.
- e. Do not put yourself or other people in vulnerable situations.
- f. Do not have inappropriate physical contact with others.
- g. Always share safeguarding concerns.

KEY CONTACTS

Committee Members

WCC Local Child/Adult Safeguarding Hub:
01926 414144 (and out of hours 01926 886922)

Warwickshire Police Child Protection
01926 415000 or 101 or 999

NSPCC Helpline for advice for concerned adults
0808 800 5000

Childline.org.uk for concerned children and young people **0800 1111**