

OVERVIEW

Legal Context

The law requires any organisation involving young people and 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.

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’, DfE (2018)
- Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused’, DfE (March 2015)
- The Human Rights Act 1998

The organisation

St Edmundsbury Male Voice Choir recognises that it is not the role of our organisation to decide whether a child or vulnerable adult has been abused. This is a multi-agency role, coordinated by the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership.

St Edmundsbury Male Voice Choir (SEMVC) is a registered charity managed by a committee of volunteers elected at the Annual General Meeting. To carry out its charitable objective, it presents a number of concerts a year, sometimes performing with orchestral groups, professional soloists and other choirs.

SEMVC employs a musical director and three accompanists who are not members of the Choir. They attend weekly rehearsals with members in term time in order to prepare for the concerts. From time to time SEMVC organises other events such as choral workshops, social events and outings, and foreign tours (“SEMVC activities”).

SEMVC does not advertise itself as an activity suitable for children or vulnerable adults. Most Choir members are independent adults and generally there are only one or two young people (under 18) out of a hundred members who rehearse and perform with the choir. Nevertheless, SEMVC recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of young people and children with whom it works and comes into contact, and believes all participating young people have the right to enjoy the activities of the choir in a happy, safe and secure environment.

ABOUT THIS POLICY

This policy applies to: all members, staff (whether employees or freelancers), volunteers and anyone working on behalf of SEMVC or taking part in SEMVC activities.

The purpose of this policy is to provide members, staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to the protection of vulnerable people, information and procedures.

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 might include adults with:
 - a learning or physical disability,

- a physical or mental illness,
- addiction to alcohol or drugs,
- reduced physical or mental capacity,
- experience, or risk of abuse and neglect,

This policy aims to:

- Protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who are; members of, receive services from, or volunteer for, SEMVC
- Ensure members, staff and volunteers working with children, young people and vulnerable adults 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 vulnerable adults is a primary consideration when SEMVC undertakes any activity, event or project.

HOW SEMVC MIGHT WORK WITH VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Occasional membership - Should any child or close relative (under 18) of a member of SEMVC participate in choral works with SEMVC, the member must act as a responsible adult. Should any other child/young person participate in any SEMVC activities they must be accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult who remains responsible for them throughout rehearsals and performances.

Joint concerts with schools - SEMVC will make appropriate joint working 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 choir's general responsibility to provide a safe environment for joint activities and the principles of this safeguarding policy still apply.

Audiences and Social Events - SEMVC is aware that children and vulnerable adults may attend concerts as members of the audience, or attend social functions hosted by SEMVC. It is the responsibility of the parent, guardian or carer to ensure adequate supervision

Privacy - Parents and guardians should be aware that photography, 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 choir to a wider audience and form part of the historical record of our work.

RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

If an existing or potential new member, staff member (Music Team) or volunteer will be working with vulnerable people as part of SEMVC activities, the appropriate level of DBS check 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.

NAMED SAFEGUARDING PERSONS

The SEMVC committee will designate a committee member to be the 'Designated Safeguarding Lead' (DSL) and Alternative Safeguarding Lead (ASL) who have responsibility for safeguarding issues. All queries and concerns relating to safeguarding should be referred to the DSL in the first instance.

Any projects, events or other activities that will involve vulnerable people must be planned with the involvement of the DSL and in line with established procedures and ground rules (see App 1).

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed and amended (if necessary) on an annual basis by the 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.

APPENDIX 1

NAMED SAFEGUARDING LEADS

DSL – TIM FRETHY

ASL – SYLVIA WILSON

Ground rules and ways for working regarding safeguarding of vulnerable people

When SEMVC organises an activity or event where they will be responsible for vulnerable adults they will ensure:

- Planning and Risk Assessment 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.
- 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 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.
- If a vulnerable person wishes to take part in SEMVC activities written permission (email is acceptable) 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

- **It is the responsibility of all members and associates of SEMVC to be proactive in matters of safeguarding**
- If any member, staff or volunteer in SEMVC witnesses, suspects or is informed of a witnessed or suspected case of abuse they should immediately report it to the DSL. If the named person is not available, or is involved in or connected to, the abuse, it should be reported to the ASL. In either case, they will then inform the relevant authorities.
- If an individual wishes to report an incident of abuse against themselves they should report it to a named safeguarding officer or an individual they trust.
- If a disclosure is made to the DSL/ASL, it will be recorded. Leading questions should not be asked but a clear factual record made of what has been disclosed. If a concern is noticed, (such as evidence of physical abuse, severe neglect or distress), this should be reported in the same way as for disclosures. All referrers should follow this summary guidance:
 - Record the time and date
 - Don't promise to keep what you're told a secret
 - Tell the child or young person what you will do next
 - Don't make promises you cannot keep

- Where appropriate, responsible adults (i.e. parents, guardians and carers), will be informed unless such a disclosure would cause significant distress or threat to the individual making it. This decision will be made by the relevant safeguarding named person.
- The referrer will not have information fed back to them as to any outcome, but they should check the information has been passed on.

APPENDIX 2

Categories of abuse in children

There are four main categories:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect

Categories of abuse in adults

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Self-neglect

Signs of abuse include

- Unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
- Becoming withdrawn
- Seeming anxious
- Becoming uncharacteristically aggressive
- Lacks social skills and has few friends, if any
- Poor bond or relationship with a parent
- Knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age
- Running away or going missing
- Always choosing to wear clothes which cover their body