

Eltham Choral Society Safeguarding Policy

Eltham Choral Society (ECS) is a registered charity managed by a committee of volunteers elected at the annual general meeting. Committee members aged 18 or over are trustees of the charity. To carry out its charitable objects it presents a number of concerts a year sometimes performing with orchestral groups, professional soloists and other choirs (including children's choirs although this is very infrequent). ECS engages a music director and an accompanist who are self-employed. They attend weekly rehearsals with members in term time in order to prepare for the concerts. From time to time ECS organizes other events such as choral workshops, social events and outings, and foreign tours ("ECS activities").

ECS does not advertise itself as an activity suitable for children or vulnerable adults. Most choir members are independent adults although the choir welcomes young people to join and participate in the Choir's rehearsals, concerts and other ECS activities including singing training, subject to their parent/ guardian's permission. ECS recognises that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and believes all participating young people have the right to enjoy the activities of the Choir in a happy, safe and secure environment. ¹

As a matter of good practice ECS has developed this policy to provide:

- protection for children with whom ECS has contact
- guidance to ensure that the risks of harm to children's welfare are minimised
- guidance on procedures that should be adopted in the event that any adult suspects a child may be experiencing or be at risk of experiencing harm.

The main laws and guidance supporting this policy are:

- The Children Act 1989 (as amended)
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018
- GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>

The policy applies to ECS choir members (including trustees and honorary members), volunteers and all others invited to perform or work with ECS on a regular or ad hoc basis.

¹ For the purposes of this policy, the terms 'young people' / 'child' are interchangeable and used to describe any person under the age of 18 regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity.

Safeguarding Policy

Guidelines:

- Children under the age of 18 must have the written permission of their parent or guardian to join ECS, and both the child and parent must complete an enrolment form. The parent or guardian retains full responsibility for the child's transport arrangements to and from rehearsals and venues for performances or activities.
- ECS will also secure parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other emergency medical treatment.
- Rehearsals and other activities will be conducted in an open environment to avoid private or unobserved situations. Adults should ensure that they are not alone with a young person.

Tours or trips (day and/or residential):

- Any child who wishes to go on a tour/residential trip or day trip with the choir must be accompanied by a parent or guardian or a responsible adult of their parent/ guardian's choice to act in loco parentis.
- On residential tours/trips only the adult acting in loco parentis may share a room with the child. Other adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- Parents or guardians will be informed of arrangements for the tour and asked to confirm their approval.

Privacy arrangements

- In the rare event of it not being possible to arrive at a venue in concert dress, ECS will endeavour to ensure a child's privacy is respected if required to change at a venue.
- In common with its policy for adult members, the Committee will not disclose contact details for any child member without first obtaining the child's permission. The purpose of any request for contact details, and the identity of any person making such a request will be given to the child.
- 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 and social media. 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.

Joint concerts with children

In accordance with the principles of safeguarding, ECS will make appropriate joint working arrangements to ensure that school groups/other groups

comprising young people will always be in the care of their teachers/leading adults and/or parents who will bear responsibility for their welfare at all times.

Children in audiences

It is the responsibility of the parent, guardian or carer to ensure that their children are supervised at all times. If a parent/guardian/carer is not personally attending an event with their child/children, it is their duty to satisfy themselves that their child/ children will be accompanied and adequately supervised by a responsible adult acting on their behalf at all times

Event organisers and stewards

ECS relies entirely on volunteers to carry out its work. Volunteers on duty at an event will wear clear identification. The Secretary of ECS will maintain a register of all volunteers who are not members of ECS.

Child abuse

ECS endeavours by the implementation of this safeguarding policy to protect children and minimise the risks of abuse of young people. The term child abuse is used to describe a range of ways that people harm children. The four main categories of abuse are physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect. In addition all should be aware of the risks of peer to peer abuse.

ECS notes the importance of being alert to signals of abuse and to the difficulty children may have in reporting it. To assist in responding appropriately to a child who has a complaint, it offers the following strategy:

- Listen carefully.
- Reassure the child that this matter will be disclosed only to those who need to know about it and that they are doing the right thing in telling you.
- Avoid leading questions or closed questions.
- Write down what has been said, with date and time and any names mentioned.
- Tell the child what you are going to do next (in the first instance, report the matter to the ***Designated Safeguarding Officer*** 'DSO')

ECS notes that it is not its role to investigate whether a child has been abused or not and it is not qualified to do so. This is the role of the statutory organisations mentioned in the next section.

Measures for implementation of this policy

- The ECS committee will designate a committee member or other co-opted choir member to be the DSO in respect of safeguarding. The DSO shall undertake appropriate training as required and will be identified to children as the principal person they should turn to if they have any concerns or queries. Contact details for the DSO are also given in the enrolment form and on the website.

- Any concern regarding a child, adult choir member, or any other adult associated with the choir must immediately be reported to the DSO (or in his or her absence to the Chair or Deputy chair of the Committee) who will take the lead on responding to information that may constitute a child protection concern. This includes:
 - receiving and recording the information from the person expressing the concern;
 - Assessing and clarifying the information
 - consulting with and informing the Chair of the Committee
 - making referrals to statutory organisations (The local authority child protection services/the Police) as appropriate
 - storing and retaining records according to legal requirements
 - Maintaining confidentiality as far as possible subject to the principle of the welfare of the child being paramount which means that information may have to be shared (but only with people who need to know about it).

If in any doubt as to what to do, the DSO or other person acting shall seek advice from NSPCC Helpline by calling 0808 800 5000 or emailing help@nspcc.org.uk.

- ECS will recruit music directors and accompanists safely ensuring all reasonable checks are made. Prior to being engaged two satisfactory references will always be obtained and
- Recruits will be required to give a statement in writing that they have no past convictions, cautions or bind-overs
- The policy is published on the ECS website and is disseminated to all members, adults and volunteers associated with the choir, who are requested to familiarise themselves with its contents. It will be brought to the attention of any persons invited to participate in any choir activity.
- The policy and procedures will be reviewed periodically by the Committee and will be drawn to the attention of members after each review.

Reviewed September 2019