

Glossop Choral Society Safeguarding Policy

Glossop Choral Society (GCS) 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. GCS has an honorary musical director and an accompanist 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 GCS organizes other events such as choral workshops and social events. ("GCS activities"). GCS does not advertise itself as an activity suitable for children or vulnerable adults. Most choir members are independent adults and generally the choir's membership does not include children under 18, although it is possible for older teenagers to become members and rehearse and perform with the choir. Nevertheless GCS 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.

Contact with children falls into the following categories:

- Young people may become members of GCS and attend its weekly rehearsals and GCS activities.
- Children may form part of the audience at public performances given by GCS.
- Children may take part in some concerts organised in conjunction with local schools.

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

- protection for children with whom GCS 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:

- Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Government guidance on safeguarding children
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- The Safe Network's 'Are they safe?' Guide (www.safenetwork.org.uk)
- The Charity Commission's 'Strategy for Dealing with Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Issues in Charities'.

The policy applies to all choir members (including trustees and honorary members), volunteers and all others invited to perform or work with GCS.

Safeguarding Policy

Guidelines:

- Children under the age of 18 must have the written permission of their parent or guardian to join GCS, 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 the venues for performances or activities.
- GCS 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. All adults associated with GCS should ensure that they are not alone with a young person.

External Choral Workshops:

- Any child who wishes to attend a choral workshop 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*.
- Parents or guardians will be informed of arrangements for the workshop 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, GCS will endeavour to ensure a child's privacy is respected if required to change at a venue.
- The Committee, in common with its policy for adult members, will not disclose contact details for any child member without first obtaining the permission of the parent/guardian. The purpose of any request for contact details, and the identity of any person making such a request will be given to the parent/guardian.
- 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

GCS 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.

Event organisers and stewards

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

Child abuse

GCS 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. They can be inflicted on a child or knowingly not prevented. In many cases children are subjected to a combination of forms of abuse. There are four main categories of abuse, namely: physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect. GCS 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 'named person' for safeguarding). GCS 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 bodies such as Social Services, the NSPCC, or the Police.

Measures for implementation of this policy

- The GCS committee will designate a committee member to be the 'named person' in respect of safeguarding. The named person 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 named person are also given in the enrolment form and on the website.
- Any concern regarding either a child or a choir member, employee or other adult must immediately be reported to the named person (or in his or her absence to the Chair or vice chair of the Committee) who will:
 - Obtain and record information from the person expressing the concern;
 - Assess the information quickly and carefully, ask for further clarification as appropriate;
 - Seek medical attention if necessary and or make a referral to a statutory child protection agency or the police without delay depending on the particular circumstances;
 - If in any doubt as to what to do, seek advice from Social Services;
 - Maintain 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).
- GCS will recruit musicians, soloists and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- The policy will be published on the GCS website and is disseminated to all members, employees and volunteers, who are required 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 annually by the Committee and will be drawn to the attention of members after each review.

A copy of this policy is lodged with the choir's Safeguarding Officer and will be available as soon as possible on the GCS website. It can also be sent to each parent, guardian or carer before the event upon request.

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

j.g.
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