



Safeguarding Policy

Approved and Adopted by the Trustees of the Henley Choral Society and Henley Voices Steering Committee in September 2024 and reviewed October 2025 and October 2026.

Available on the HCS website: www.henleychoralsociety.org.uk

Introduction

Commitment to safeguarding: Henley Choral Society (HCS), including Henley Voices (HV), believes that a child, young person or adults at risk should never experience abuse of any kind. We recognise that we all have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk. We are committed to safeguarding the well-being of all children, young people and adults at risk with whom we come into contact regardless of gender, race, disability, sexuality or beliefs. The welfare of children, young people and adults at risk is paramount and we are committed to protecting them from harm.

Safeguarding is included on the HCS AGM agenda annually at the review meeting, and is discussed as an agenda item at every meeting of the HV Steering Committee meeting. The Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently by both HCS and HV if this is necessary.

The Safeguarding Policy has three distinct parts listed below:

- Safeguarding Policy Statement
- Ground rules, ways of working and procedures
- Anti-bullying Statement

A i About this policy

- This policy is focussed on Henley Voices but the principles apply to all members, staff, professional musicians, volunteers, anyone working on behalf of Henley Choral Society, including Henley Voices, or taking part in any Henley Voices or Henley Choral Society activity.

- 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.
- This policy recognises vulnerable people as the following.
 - Children up to the age of 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, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs, or reduced physical or mental capacity.
 - The term *vulnerable people* will be used to cover all the above.
- This policy aims to:
 - protect children, young people and adults at risk who are members of, receive services from, or volunteer for, Henley Voices or Henley Choral Society;
 - ensure members, staff, professional musicians and volunteers working with vulnerable people are carefully recruited, and understand and accept responsibility for the safeguarding of those vulnerable individuals they are interacting with;
 - ensure that safeguarding vulnerable people is a primary consideration when Henley Voices undertakes any activity, event or project.

A ii How Henley Voices might work with vulnerable people: Membership of Henley Voices (HV) is open to young people between 7 and 17 years of age. We run regular rehearsals for members and put on concerts for the general public. As such our involvement with vulnerable people might include, but is not limited to:

- members of the group who attend rehearsals and concerts;
- relatives and friends of members who attend rehearsals and concerts in a volunteering capacity;
- audience members at public concerts.

A iii Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO): The Designated Safeguarding Officer for HCS and HV is Fi Harding who has been appointed to take the lead responsibility for safeguarding issues. All queries and concerns relating to safeguarding should be referred to DSO Fi Harding in the first instance.

The DSO is the point of contact for anyone in the organization or anyone not part of the organization who is concerned about a child or a vulnerable person who is part of the HCS or HV. The DSO is able to report any concerns raised by any person about a child or adult at risk, as outlined in parts 4 and 6 of the Ground rules, ways of working and procedures statement which is part of this document.

The DSO is selected by the Trustees and Committee of the HCS and the procedure for selection follows the recruitment procedure stated in the Recruitment Policy document

covering the recruitment of individuals published on the choral society website, www.henleychoralsociety.org.uk . An individual appointed as DSO is required to complete the appropriate training, have experience and be familiar with working with children, young people and vulnerable people. Currently the DSO is also the lead organiser for the HV rehearsals and performances and has regular contact with all the members of HV. She has had experience of teaching music for many years and has been a member of the adult choir for over 20 years. The DSO has an enhanced DBS check status with Children's Barred List check.

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

The DSO will ensure that all staff and volunteers who are working with the members of the HCS are fully trained and that each individual's training is refreshed regularly in line with the recommendations of the oversight organizations including Making Music and in line with the Bandsafe policies and procedures.

A iv Procedures and ground rules: A further document – 'Ground rules, ways of working and procedures' forms part of this policy.

A v Policy review: This policy will be reviewed and amended (as necessary) on an annual basis by the committees of Henley Voices and Henley Choral Society. It will also be reviewed in response to changes in relevant legislation, good practice, or in response to an identified failing in its effectiveness.

Safeguarding Policy of Henley Choral Society and Henley Voices. Ground rules, ways of working and procedures

1. Introduction

This document forms part of the Henley Choral Society (HCS) and Henley Voices (HV) Safeguarding Policy. It is focussed on Henley Voices but the principles apply to all members of Henley Choral Society, their volunteers and their hired or contracted personnel.

- The policy applies to all members, staff, professional musicians, volunteers, anyone working on behalf of, or taking part in Henley Voices/Henley Choral Society activities.
- The purpose of this policy is to provide members, staff, professional musicians and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to the protection of vulnerable people.
- This policy recognises vulnerable people as the following.
 - Children up to the age of 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, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs, or reduced physical or mental capacity.

- Hereafter, *vulnerable people* will refer to all the above.

This document includes:

- recruitment practices around safeguarding;
- Ground Rules document listing ways for working regarding safeguarding of vulnerable people;
- procedures for raising safeguarding concerns and incidents of abuse;
- procedures for dealing with concerns and incidents of abuse.

2. Recruitment practices around safeguarding

If an existing or potential new staff member or volunteer will be working with vulnerable people as part of the Henley Voices and Henley Choral Society activities, the appropriate level of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be requested before that work is undertaken, which is likely to be an Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List Check.

The DBS check is to ensure that HCS and HV has done everything that they can to check records and prevent unsuitable individuals from any work with vulnerable groups and to check whether there is any reason why a potential employee or volunteer is inappropriate for the role they have applied for. These checks are usually requested by an employer so that they can make safer recruitment decisions and are set out in this Safeguarding Policy.

The level of DBS check required will be in line with DBS rules regarding regulated activity. The results of any check to inform a decision will be used confidentially.

Details of our approach to recruitment are set out in the Recruitment Policy published on the website www.henleychoralsociety.org.uk

3. Ground rules and ways for working regarding safeguarding of vulnerable people

When Henley Voices or Henley Choral Society organises an activity or event where they will be responsible for vulnerable people they will ensure the following:

- Planning is carried out in line with this policy and procedures.
- An event involving HV is attended by an appropriate number of DBS checked adults. Minimally this will be two but more when practically possible.
- The total number of all adults in attendance compared with the total number of children and young adults will be in line with the ratio table below following Ofsted recommendations where possible. There will always be at least two DBS checked adults with the children / young adults.
- All adults will be DBS checked and are responsible for the safety for the vulnerable people in their care.
- Adults without DBS checks are not left unsupervised with children or young people.
- A Body of Persons Approval (BOPA) will be obtained from Brass Bands England (BBE) under HCS's membership of their Bandsafe programme. The BOPA demonstrates that HCS and HV meet certain criteria and have demonstrated that they have clear, robust and well embedded safeguarding policies and arrangements in place to protect children. In the event that the BBE BOPA cannot be used, alternative arrangements will be put in place.

- The DSO will have access to emergency contact details and other relevant details (e.g. parents' contact details, information about picking up arrangements for vulnerable people).
- In the absence of the DSO, a designated DBS checked person will deputise.
- If vulnerable people of different gender are taking part in activities, whenever possible, adults of different gender will be in attendance and provide appropriate chaperone duties.
- One-to-one contact should be avoided and where unavoidable it should happen in view of others or with the door open.
- 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.

In the event that HV rehearsals are not able to take place in-person, and have to take place online, parents will be sent the information set out in *appendix 1*.

Specific, common real life practical examples:

- A register is taken at each rehearsal and event to ensure correct attendance at both youth choirs.
- When a child / young adult needs to go to the toilet, a DBS checked adult ensures appropriate chaperone duty.
- When dismissing the children / young adults after youth choir, DBS checked adults supervise at exits, ensuring that youngsters are transferred into the care of the parent / adult collecting them, unless written permission has been given for their child / young adult to travel home unaccompanied.
- Children / young adults will be collected by their parent / guardian or another named adult by arrangement.
- Children / young adults will not be transported by HV staff or volunteers to and from rehearsals, performance, workshops or other events.
- All parents should be made aware in writing of HV's policy for dealing with uncollected children. This is part of the Welcome pack *See appendix 2*.

4. Child to adult ratio table

The following child to adult ratios are used at HV, in line with NSPCC guidance. At least 2 adults will be present, even for small groups.

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
13-18	1	10

5. Working with parents / guardians

Members / volunteers / professional staff of HV and HCS are aware that close co-operation with parents is vital to ensure the safety and welfare of all children and young adults in their care.

Henley Voices will keep a register of children and young adults attending rehearsals, performances, workshops and all events outside regular scheduled rehearsals. Children / young adults will be signed in and out of events. The list of parental contacts, medical and other relevant information is available at every event. In the event that the HV Manager is not present at a rehearsal / performance / workshop etc, the above information is passed to a named deputy.

When HV is taking part in a performance, a named adult will be allocated a specific group of children / young adults (in line with minimum appropriate ratios) to be responsible for.

Parents are required to provide information about health issues such as inhalers and allergies, plus an emergency phone number and confirm that they consent to emergency treatment being given if deemed necessary.

6. Procedures for raising safeguarding concerns and incidents of abuse

- If any member, staff or volunteer in Henley Choral Society or Henley Voices witnesses, suspects or is informed of a witnessed or suspected case of abuse, they should immediately report it to the DSO and not discuss the episode or people involved with anyone else.
- If the DSO is not available, or is involved in or connected to, the abuse, it should be reported to the Chair of HCS, the Vice Chair of HCS or any other officer of HCS.
- If an individual reports an incident of abuse against themselves, the person receiving the report should listen, record and notify the DSO as soon as possible.

7. Procedures for dealing with concerns and incidents of abuse

The DSO (or the person reported to in their absence) will make a decision based on the immediacy of the concern.

1. If the vulnerable person is in immediate danger or needs emergency medical attention – call 999 and co-operate fully with the authorities.
 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.
 - Make a note of the concerns reported to them.
 - Report the incident to [Multi-Agency](#) Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 01865 519800. Out of hours (emergency team) 0800 833408
 - The DSO will talk as soon as practicable to MASH.
 - Henley borders Berkshire and Buckinghamshire and a child's home authority decides where the report goes to.
 - For adult safeguarding concerns, report it on www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/adult-social-care/reporting-concern.
- **In all cases:**
Listen, record, pass information to designated safeguarding officer who will judge the next step.
 - This may be by:

- Raising concerns with the police for serious or possible criminal offences immediately / within the same day. Consult when in doubt.
- Reporting to MASH (as above).
- If the DSO believes a person has caused harm or poses a future risk of harm to vulnerable people, a referral should be made to disclosure and barring service (DBS).
- Inform parents unless advised otherwise by statutory agencies or if doing so may increase risk,

If the DSO is concerned about an adult who works with children including volunteers and agency staff, they should contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who will give advice and guidance. about the most appropriate way to manage the concern or allegation and helps to establish what the next steps should be.

The LADO and Assistant LADO's can be contacted via
lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk or 01865 810603.

Concerns may relate to a person who works with children who has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates that they may not be suitable to work with children.

8. Resolution

- If abuse is found to have taken place, the DBS must be informed and the person responsible will be barred from further contact with vulnerable persons in HV or anywhere else.
- In the event of abuse taking place in the home or at school, this will be dealt with by MASH. The DSO will report the incident to the MASH (as above).

9. Social Media

It is recognised that the internet provides unique opportunities to promote HCS and HV including vacancies and performances using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and You Tube. It is also recognised that online platforms can provide the means to make teaching, webinars, rehearsals and events accessible when direct, face to face contact may be difficult for all or some participants. Nonetheless the use of social media and online technologies can also present safeguarding risks that need to be mitigated as far as possible. These guidelines aim to protect individuals within HCS and HV and to encourage them to take responsibility for what they write, exercise good judgment and common sense. Inappropriate use of social media can pose risks to the Choirs' reputations, and can jeopardise compliance with legal obligations. The guidelines also aim to enable

choirs to take advantage of the many opportunities offered by online technologies whilst at the same time remaining committed to the safeguarding of members and others.

There is a difference between, on the one hand, informal social media groups set up and used by groups of friends who happen to be part of HCS / HV, and, on the other hand, official HCS/ HV social media groups, coordinated by someone in an official role, and used as part of the Choirs' methods of promotion, networking and support. Informal social media friendship groups are not required to abide by this guidance, although their members should bear in mind the need to use the same personal standards of behaviour in their online communications as in their face to face contact. Informal groups should also avoid calling themselves by a name which could give the impression that they are official choir groups.

Official social media groups are:

- Agreed in advance by the Committee, who should be made aware of the name and purpose of the group and outlining how it will be effectively risk managed.
- Have a nominated individual who will be responsible for monitoring it and moderating its content. This is not someone who is under 18.
- Operated in accordance with our Safeguarding policy and procedures which are reviewed on an annual basis.

HCS and HV websites and social media pages

Permission is gained prior to posting images of HCS and HV members on official and websites and social media pages. This permission, obtained through the Registration Form, states what the images are to be used for and how long they will be kept.

Personal details such as names, phone numbers and email addresses are not posted on the internet without the permission of the individual.

10. Electronic Communication with Children, Young Adults and Adults at Risk

Communication by electronic means or by texting will not be used with individual children under the age of 18. All communication in these forms will be via their parents/carers. The rest of the principles relate to group communication or to individual communication with adults at risk and young adults aged 18 and over. The key point is that communication should be in a context of transparency and accountability.

- Leaders, staff and volunteers will not share their personal phone numbers with anyone under 18; communication that needs to be made electronically will be via email and parents should be copied in.
- Electronic communication will only be used for reasons relating to choir business and not for general socialising purposes.

- Other members of the Choir Committee will be made aware of the situations in which these means of communication are being used.
- Leaders, staff and volunteers will not invite young people and adults at risk to their personal social networking page and will politely decline requests from any young person under the age of 18, explaining that this is Choir policy.
- Where possible, group pages or Whatsapp Groups will be used for communicating.
- Care will be exercised in posting to Facebook, Twitter etc as comments made on the spur of the moment may not always come out as intended and can be passed on extremely quickly around a large audience.
- Where possible, email and messaging will take place to and within groups rather than individuals.
- Webcams will not be used where an online platform is used for one to one conversations.
- Records of communications will be kept just as they would be for written communication. If a staff member's or volunteer's mobile phone does not allow text messages to be saved then a written record should be kept.
- The principles for the use of social media will be communicated to children, young people and adults.
- Any content which raises a safeguarding concern should be reported to the Choir's Safeguarding Officer using the procedure outlined in the Safeguarding procedure.

Appendix 1: Online Rehearsals

In the event that in-person rehearsals are not able to take place, for example due to a medical pandemic or very bad weather, parents of HV members will be sent a link for an online rehearsal. The following will be included with the link:

- Where possible, children / young adults should undertake the rehearsal in a public space in their house (not their bedroom), free from distractions and interruptions.
- Rehearsal standard behaviour is expected from all participants.
- The children / young adults should not record or share a video of the rehearsal with anyone without having received express permission from Fi Harding.

Appendix 2: Late collection of children

A DBS checked HV volunteer waits at the exit for 5- 10 minutes. Any child or young adult not collected is returned to the rehearsal room with a DBS checked HV volunteer while the HV Manager (or nominated volunteer) tries to make contact with the first emergency contact (parent/guardian) listed on the registration form. If there is no response from the 1st emergency contact, then the 2nd emergency contact is telephoned immediately. If after a subsequent 30 minutes the child or young adult remains uncollected then the HV Manager calls MASH for advice on the best course of action.

Safeguarding policy of Henley Choral Society and Henley Voices. Anti-bullying Statement

We recognise that:

Bullying is behaviour, 'usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group of individuals, physically or emotionally'.

One person or a group can bully others.

Bullying can occur either face-to-face between individuals or groups or online, using information technology, such as computers or mobile phones.

Bullying can include:

- verbal teasing or making fun of someone;
- excluding members from activities and conversations;
- pressurising other members not to be friends with the person who is being bullied;
- spreading hurtful rumours or passing round inappropriate photographs/images/drawings;
- shouting at or verbally abusing someone;
- stealing or damaging someone's belongings;
- making threats;
- forcing someone to do something embarrassing, harmful or dangerous;
- harassment based on race, gender, sexuality or disability;
- physical or sexual assault (although all sexual incidents and all but very minor physical incidents constitute abuse and must be dealt with in accordance with child protection and adult safeguarding procedures).

Bullying causes real distress. It can affect a person's health and development and, at the extreme, can cause significant harm. People are often targeted by bullies because they appear different from others. Bullying may be perpetrated either directly in person or online.

We all have a role to play in preventing bullying and putting a stop to bullying.

The purpose of this Statement is:

- to prevent bullying from happening in our choir, as much as possible;
- when bullying does happen, to make sure it is stopped as soon as possible and that those involved receive the support they need;
- to provide information to all members, volunteers, young people, adults at risk, and their families about what we should all do to prevent and deal with bullying.

We will seek to prevent bullying by:

- Developing a code of behaviour that sets out the 'dos and don'ts' in terms of how everyone involved in HV is expected to behave, both in face-to-face contact and online.
- Advertise and promote HV in a way that will help to attract members from diverse groups.
- Provide welcome information to new members and help them to settle in.
- Hold discussions with members, volunteers, young people, adults at risk and families who are part of HV to ensure that they understand our anti-bullying policy.

When bullying occurs, we will respond to it by:

- Having a clear anti-bullying procedure in place;
- Providing support and training for all Officers and volunteers on dealing with all forms of bullying, including racial, sexist, homophobic and sexual bullying;
- Addressing the issue from the point of view of the person being bullied, the bully, any bystanders and HV as a whole;
- Reviewing the plan developed to address the bullying, to ensure that the problem has been resolved;
- Avoiding any punishments that make the individuals concerned seem small, or look or feel foolish in front of others.

Procedure for reporting bullying

- Children should report bullying incidents to an adult, volunteer or staff member, or someone who they can trust. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by the DSO on a behaviour log sheet and investigated initially by the DSO or another adult appointed by the DSO, or the Chair or a Trustee of HCS. Any incident will be logged and passed immediately to the Chair of HCS or the DSO who will ensure this matter has been resolved.
- Parents must report any bullying incidences to HV.
- In serious cases parents will be informed and will be asked to come to a meeting to discuss the problem.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying will be investigated and the bullying addressed.
- Appropriate feedback will be given to the parent reporting the bullying in a timely manner.
- HV accepts that any child could display bullying behaviour and that we have a moral imperative to help those doing so to change their behaviour.
- If necessary and appropriate, external agencies will be consulted to provide support.

Outcomes

- HV will investigate the incident.
- The child displaying bullying behaviour will be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences such as (a) an apology letter or (b) a written contract may be required.
- HV will aim to sort out differences and encourage the pupils to reconcile.
- In serious cases, parents will be informed in writing and suspension or even exclusion will be considered.
- After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place and it will be considered that the incident/incidents are closed.

Signed by

Angela Law, Chair of Henley Choral Society

16th October 2026

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www.henleychoralsociety.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 276728

BULLYING INVESTIGATION FORM	
Names of investigator(s)	Date the investigation took place
Main finding(s)	
Actions taken and support for the subject	
Signature:	Date: