



# child protection policy

## romsey youth choir

### Overview

Romsey Youth Choir (RYC) believes that all children and young people have the right to be safe, happy and healthy and deserve protection from abuse. RYC is committed to safeguarding from harm all children and young people involved in any of its activities, and to treat them with respect during their dealings with us.

This policy is based on our responsibilities under the Children Act 1989 and all regulations made there under.

The aims of the policy are to:

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties
  - Support the promotion of a safe environment and a culture of care in which the rights of all children and young people are protected and respected
  - Promote best practice in how RYC adults interact with children and young people
  - Develop clear guidance and procedures for those adults working with children and young people and ensure through awareness and support that they are aware of these and able to implement them
- The policy is in respect of RYC's responsibility towards:
- Children and young people, legally defined as any person under the age of 18. (From this point the terms child or children will be used to refer to this group.)
  - The adults of RYC who have dealings with children and young people and who are required to act in a position of trust and to act responsibly and within the law.

### Responsibility

The final overall responsibility for the safety and well being of all children who come into contact with the organisation rests with the musical director. The day-to-day management of the policy has been delegated as shown below.

**Marion Maxey** is the appointed person with primary responsibility for all issues relating to Child Protection and for ensuring that the organisation is kept informed of any changes in Legislation or accepted good practice.

### Good Practice Guidelines

The following guidelines are for adults that come into regular contact with children through our choir activities. Good practice creates a positive child protection climate and assists in protecting adults from false allegations of abuse.

## **Good Practice**

- Always have another adult present and never be on your own with a child
- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations) and encouraging an open environment (e.g. no secrets)
- Treating all people equally, with respect and dignity
- Always put the welfare of each young person first
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance
- Building a balanced relationship based on mutual trust which empowers children
- Making activity fun and enjoyable
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Immediately inform a colleague and the parents of a child if you have any concerns that a child might have reason to make an allegation against you, for example if you accidentally hurt a child; if he/she seems distressed in any manner; if a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions; or if a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

## **Practices to be avoided**

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If a case arises where these situations are unavoidable (e.g. the child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session), it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the organisation or the child's parents. Otherwise, avoid:

- spending time alone with children away from others
- taking or dropping off a child to an activity

## **Practice never to be sanctioned**

- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Be the only adult present with a child.

## **Systems and Procedures**

### **Disclosure and Barring Service**

All volunteers of RYC working directly with the children are subject to systematic checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service.

### **Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations**

False allegations of abuse do occur, but they are rare. Disclosures, suspicions and allegations should always be taken seriously and if the information gained causes concern action should be taken immediately.

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know

basis only. This includes the following people who will need to know: the Child Protection officer, the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused, the person making the allegation, social services/police, the alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child). The Director will in all cases refer the matter to Social Services or the Police and will together with those agencies decide whether immediate suspension is required while the allegation is investigated. Any evidence that a choir adult has abused a child or has failed to comply with best practice procedure will no longer work with the choir, with immediate effect.

### **Email / Text / Social Media**

Choir members will be contacted directly through text and email. This should be done only through official RYC email accounts. Text messages will only be sent by Marion Maxey, Choir Director. Choir members will only be contacted about things directly involving the choir. All messages will be professional and will use appropriate language at all times.

If any inappropriate messages are sent by choir members, then their parents will be informed immediately.

### **Photography and other Media**

Consent is sought for any photographs, films or recordings to be taken or used of children from a parent or carer. If consent is not given, photographers will avoid taking photos of them.

All photos, film and recordings will be securely stored and used responsibly and appropriately. They will be used for RYC reasons only. No image of a child will appear with a name attached at any time.

### **Availability**

This policy is available to carers and/or parents of the children to whom RYC is providing services and can be found on our website.

### **Contact Information**

Marion Maxey, Musical Director, RYC 0780 7879113

### **Review and Version Control**

This policy and the guidance will be reviewed annually or whenever there is a change in the related legislation or when an incident occurs. This will help us ensure that these documents are up to date and fit for purpose.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Review Date</b>
20 <sup>th</sup> November 2013	Marion Maxey	November 2014