DURHAM
CHORAL SOCIETY

Durham Choral Society
Registered Charity No 514557

Safeguarding

Vulnerable Groups, Including Children In Durham Choral Society

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding: was originally the process of protecting children from harm - whether the harm is caused by accidents, deliberate abuse, neglect, bullying, discrimination or prejudice or failure to help children take part in activities that are open to most of their peers.

Under the law (Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004) and government guidance, voluntary groups have a responsibility to contribute to the safeguarding of the children with whom they work, to act on any concerns that a child is at risk of abuse and make sure that the way they work does not place children at unacceptable risk of harm. Safeguarding is discharged through assertive use of community care legal provisions.

'Safeguarding', which arose from the protection of children was then widened to include vulnerable adults. While this document is drawn up with this in mind, we are committed to ensuring the wellbeing of **all** who take part in our activities. In this context, our Safeguarding Policy should be read alongside our Risk Register.

The law requires any organisation involving young people & 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.

Durham Choral Society recognises that it is not the role of our organisation to decide whether a child or vulnerable adult has been abused or not. This is the role of the Social Services department who have legal responsibility or the NSPCC who have powers to investigate child protection concerns under the Children Act 1989.

Definition of Children and Vulnerable Adults

- In this context, a child is a person under 18 years of age.
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) regulations apply to those under 18 years of age in Schools, Colleges and training situations. That being so, Junior Singers under 18 years of age come under the conditions of a regulated activity, that is, one which occurs once, or more frequently, in a week, within a period of 30 days.
- A vulnerable adult is anyone 18 years or over who is in receipt of or may be in receipt of community care services or who may be unable to fully take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

How Durham Choral Society Operates

- Durham Choral Society is a Registered Charity, composed of choir members. Officers are elected to serve on the committee. Rehearsals are run by a Musical Director or an Assistant Musical Director,

both appointed by the Society, assisted by an accompanist, engaged by invitation. They are neither employed staff nor volunteers in the conventional sense.

- Most members of Durham Choral Society are independent adults. The Society does not advertise itself as an activity suitable for children or vulnerable adults. However from time to time, we may need the services of a Children's choir. A young person may rehearse and perform with us. However, those under 18 do not pay a membership fee and are prohibited by The Charity Commission from serving on the Committee.
- We recognise that among our members there *may* be adults who could be considered to be vulnerable adults.
- Choir rehearsals and performances are group activities, and there should be no need for a member of the choir to be alone with another member of any age. Nonetheless Durham Choral Society recognises the need to safeguard any young and vulnerable members and the Committee has therefore agreed the following Safeguarding Policy.

Durham Choral Society's Safeguarding Policy

Good Practice

In developing this policy, Durham Choral Society has taken input from the national amateur music performance association Making Music. This policy describes actions that the Society will take to prevent situations that may place children or vulnerable adults at risk while taking part in Society activities. Additionally, we recognise that from time to time we will need to make special provision to accommodate some of our members. This policy has been developed to ensure that the risks to them are minimised, as well as the risks to children and vulnerable adults.

It is our stated policy that no one shall be excluded from membership of the Society or de-barred from any official capacity on the Committee on the grounds of race, age, religion or belief, sex (gender), gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, disability or political affiliation.

Statement of Acceptable behaviour.

Durham Choral Society prides itself on being friendly and welcoming, therefore we expect everyone to treat others with respect.

Privacy arrangements

- In common with its policy for adult members, the Committee will not disclose contact details for any young or vulnerable member. If a request is made for this information, the parent's or carer's permission will be sought. The purpose for the request should be made known at the time.
- Parents and carers should be made aware that photography and video recording may be undertaken from time to time at concerts and rehearsals.
- The images and recordings may be used on the web and social media. The Society should be made aware of anyone who does not wish to be included in these recordings and appropriate arrangements will be made.

Guidelines

- The Society Safeguarding policy will be drawn to the attention of members at the beginning of each season and publicised on the website www.durhamchoralsociety.org.uk
- The Society will maintain a register of people holding DBS clearance who will act as designated persons in this context. DCS will require sight of appropriate documentation. If a DBS Certificate cannot be accepted, a reason will be given. If there is a shortfall, DCS will take steps to ensure that there is an appropriate number holding this clearance. DCS reserves the right to apply for a DBS certificate, if needed.

- Young people will be welcome to participate in choral works requiring children and/or youth voices with Durham Choral Society, (DCS).
- Young people who choose to participate individually in DCS activities, rehearsals and performances, must provide the Society with the written permission of their parent/carer to participate. The parent/carer should acknowledge and retain full responsibility for the young person's transport arrangements to and from rehearsals and performance venues.
- When young people are accompanied by parents during Society activities, the Society assumes that parents carry responsibility for their child.
- Any visiting choir/youth group must have a responsible adult in attendance throughout rehearsals and performances, who will bear responsibility for the safety of their group at all times and will vouch for parental permission.
- An individual young person will be supervised by an appropriate adult from within the Society with DBS Clearance (Designated Persons), when a parent or carer is not present.
- NO member of the Society will be involved in the disciplining of any child or young person involved in Society activities.
- Vulnerable adults who have informed the Society of their needs will be designated a person or persons to assist them when needed and will be supervised by the designated person.
- Rehearsals and other activities will be conducted in an open environment to avoid private or unobserved situations. Adult members and other performers should ensure that they are never left alone with a young person or vulnerable adult.

Reporting

- Choir members are expected to report any concerns in the first instance to the Membership Secretary (named person for Safeguarding protection) or in that person's absence, to an Officer of the Society, or someone from the list of Designated Persons, all of whom carry DBS clearance, who will take any immediate necessary action. A permanent confidential record of the incident will be kept.
- The person taking this report should
    - Obtain and record information from the person expressing the concern;
    - Assess the information quickly and carefully and 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;
- The record will be kept confidential as far as possible subject to the principle of the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult being paramount. The designated persons or Officer of DCS dealing with the matter may have to share information (but only with people who need to know about it).

HOWEVER, DCS notes that it is not its role to investigate whether a child or adult 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.

The relevant legal requirements for this document arise from:

- The Children's Act 1989 (as amended)
- The Children Act 2004 (as amended)
- The Human Rights Act 1998 (as amended)
- Equality Act 2010 (as amended)
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (changed from Amendments Act)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act, 2006 (as amended)
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Caring for the Young and Vulnerable 2000

Review
The policy and procedures will be reviewed annually by the Committee. It will be drawn to the attention of members twice a year.

This policy was originally adopted on 29 September 2015

Document History

29 September 2015	Policy adopted	✓
April 2022	no amendments	✓
September 2022	Changes for grammar and typos, DBS checks list updated (held by committee)	✓
27 September 2022	Revisions to be reviewed by committee - accepted	✓
September 2023	Policy reviewed	✓
20 November 2023	Revisions to be reviewed by committee - accepted	✓
August 2024	Policy reviewed, small revision to bring wording into line with the Equality Act 2010.	✓
30 September 2024	Revisions to be reviewed by committee - accepted	✓
20 September 2025	Minor revisions to be reviewed by committee - accepted	✓
17 September 2026	Minor revisions to be reviewed by committee - accepted	✓

Durham Choral Society

Safeguarding a Young Person - Parental consent form

Name Of Young Person	
Date Of Birth	
Parent/Carer	
Address	
Home Telephone Number	
Email Address:	
Emergency Telephone Number(S)	

Durham Choral Society usually rehearses in Belmont Community School. Any change of venue will be notified in the weekly newsletter. Concerts are usually held in Durham Cathedral or Elvet Methodist Church. In the interests of the young person we ask you to read and declare your agreement/disagreement to the following. Please note that this form and any copies will be destroyed when the young person ceases to sing with DCS.

Activity	**Agree**		**Disagree**	
To be transported to or from a Society activity by parent or appropriate adult by prior agreement with parent/carer				
Photographs or videos taken for website				
Photographs taken for articles in the press				
Photographs or videos taken for publicity				
Give consent to deal with any accident/emergency				

Also, we need to know of any relevant medical information regarding your child, so please could you provide these details

Any medical conditions, including allergies, and any medicines being taken:

Name & contact details of relevant G.P.

I/we confirm:

I/we have read DCS Safeguarding Policy	YES/NO
I/we understand that DCS can only take responsibility for my Young Person when in the performance or rehearsal venue during the rehearsal and concerts	YES/NO
I/we will be responsible for transportation to and from rehearsals and concerts	YES/NO

Signature(s): (Parent/Carer)		
Please print name(s):		Date:
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY DETAILS:	Name:	
Contact Number:		**Email:** join@durhamchoralsociety.org.uk

Form copied to:	Membership Secretary Date:	Parents/Carers Date:
	Officers: Date	

Durham Choral Society

Safeguarding Reporting Form

This form should be completed as soon as possible following the incident, but after all necessary emergency actions have been taken	
Name of person reporting the incident (making the complaint)	
Date of birth (if under 18)	
Date incident took place	
Location incident took place	
Approximate time incident took place	
Name of person who is the subject of the incident, if not yourself.	
If not yourself, who made the report to you?	
Brief description of what prompted the report – what took place, in the words / language used by the person making the report. Record only facts. (Continue overleaf if necessary)	
Names of anyone witnessing the incident. Please include their contact details.	
Action taken following the incident	Action taken:
	By whom:
	In what capacity:
Name of the person taking the report:	
Telephone Number:	
Email address:	
I confirm that the information provided by me is factual and does not contain my views or opinions on the alleged incident.	
Signature	Date