



## **Safeguarding Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults**

**January 2017**

### **1. Purpose and aim of the procedures**

This procedure applies to all adults and members who either volunteer or work with Cantores Oecumenica, in any capacity.

The purpose of the procedures is to ensure that any concerns are swiftly and efficiently reported in the correct quarters so that all children and vulnerable adults are safe when under our care.

It is not the responsibility of Cantores Oecumenica or any of the persons listed in section 4 below to determine who is a vulnerable adult. This is the responsibility of appropriately qualified professionals. Cantores Oecumenica will ultimately rely on vulnerable adults being identified as such by either themselves, their guardians or carers or appropriately qualified professionals.

### **2. Different categories of abuse**

These are physical, emotional, sexual abuse, and neglect. More information about these types of abuse is available at [www.safenetwork.org.uk](http://www.safenetwork.org.uk) or via the NSPCC website. Their document "Child Protection Fact Sheet: The Definitions and Signs of Child Abuse" is a useful and concise reference. Information is also available from the Office of the Public Guardian in particular the Safeguarding Policy which is available at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-policy-protecting-vulnerable-adults](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-policy-protecting-vulnerable-adults)

### **3. How to recognise the signs of abuse**

Recognising abuse is key, but is not easy. Please refer to the NSPCC "Child Protection Fact Sheet: The Definitions and Signs of Child Abuse" for full information.

### **4. How to respond to signs or suspicions of abuse**

If you are concerned about any child at Cantores Oecumenica, you should first speak to one of the people listed below:

Neil Provost – Musical Director	07581 503297
Ian Provost – Media Executive	07973 639922
Frances Provost – Business Executive	07973 639922
Marie Dixon – Business Executive	07801 970771

### **5. How to respond to allegations of abuse against a member of staff, other worker or volunteer.**

All allegations against a member of staff, other worker or volunteer should be passed on to Neil Provost (in person or by phone). If the allegation is against him, it should be passed to Marie Dixon.



## 6. How to respond to a child or vulnerable adult telling you about abuse

Remember that you cannot promise confidentiality, but that you can promise that the only people you will tell are those who will help make things better. If the child or vulnerable adult is concerned that you should not tell their parents, guardians or carers, you can assure them that you will not do so if to do so would put them at risk of harm. You must be clear that you will keep a record of what is said and you will report it to the proper authorities but never directly to the person against whom the allegation is made.

A child or vulnerable adult may say that they need to tell you something but that you can't tell anyone about it. To come in heavy handed at this point may not be helpful – it may be that they just want to tell you about a secret birthday present! You will need to feel your way carefully – a good question might be, “is it a nice secret or a nasty secret?”

When you are listening to a child or vulnerable adult;

- Listen positively to what the child or vulnerable adult says and take it seriously
- Accept what is being said (this is not the same as deciding whether the allegation is true or not – others will address this later)
- Avoid leading the child or vulnerable adult and keep any questions to the absolute minimum. Ask only what is necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said
- Be aware of interpreting what the child or vulnerable adult says, especially if they have learning or physical disabilities which affect their ability to communicate or English is not their first language
- Reassure the child or vulnerable adult that they were right to tell
- Do not promise complete confidentiality. Explain to the child or vulnerable adult “I will only tell people whose job it is to keep you safe”
- Try to explain what will happen next in a way that the child or vulnerable adult can understand
- Make careful notes (the circumstances, what the child or vulnerable adult said, what you said etc) as soon as possible, preferably within an hour. Include dates and times of incident/recording and keep the notes safely
- Inform any of the people listed in section 4
- Check that an appropriate referral has been made
- Make sure support is in place for the child or vulnerable adult and seek support for yourself
- Make a record of what actions you have taken and keep in a secure place (if completing the form electronically, do not save copies to the hard drive or floppy disk. Print a copy, sign and date and then delete immediately.)

You must not:

- Speak directly to the person against whom allegations have been made
- Attempt to investigate the situation yourself



## **7. How to respond to allegations of abuse against someone not working in the group**

This may be a parent, guardian or carer, another child, school teacher or anybody else.

You should follow the guidelines in section 6 above “How to respond to a child or vulnerable adult telling you about abuse” and pass this information as quickly as possible to any of the people listed in section 4 above.

## **8. How information will be recorded**

It is Cantores Oecumenica’s policy that all allegations are treated seriously until proven otherwise.

You should record all information given to you either at the time of disclosure or (if this is inappropriate in the context) as soon as possible afterwards. All notes should be either made on paper, or if typed must be printed, signed, and dated, and handed to the appropriate person (see section 4 above).

The information will be kept confidential to those who have a need to know in order to investigate the allegation made.

All information should be passed on as quickly as possible so that no child or vulnerable adult stays at risk for longer than absolutely necessary.

## **9. Confidentiality policy**

The legal principle is that the “welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount”

Privacy and confidentiality should be respected where possible but if doing this leaves a child or vulnerable adult at risk of harm then the child’s or vulnerable adult’s safety has to come first. Remember:

- Legally, it is fine to share information if someone is worried about the safety of a child or vulnerable adult.
- Not everyone needs to know when a concern or worry is raised. This respects the child’s, vulnerable adult’s, family’s and/or staff’s rights to privacy. So only people who need to know should be told about it. Otherwise there might be gossip and rumours or other people may be genuinely concerned.
- It is fine to say that a concern has been raised and it is being dealt with following the group’s procedures.

## **10. It is not child or vulnerable adult protection but I am still concerned**

Sometimes concerns about a child or vulnerable adult may not be about abuse. You may be concerned that a child, vulnerable adult, or family/guardian/carer need some help in making sure all the child’s or vulnerable adult’s needs are met to address a particular problem. Examples of this might be where a child or vulnerable adult is suffering because of poverty, getting into trouble in the community, or has a disability and needs extra help.

If you have concerns of this type, please raise them with the any of the people listed in section 4 above.

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