

St Mary's Singers (Truro) Safeguarding Policy

St Mary's Singers (SMS) Music Society is a registered charity managed by a committee of volunteers elected at the Annual General Meeting.

Since its inception in 1985, the society has deputised for the choir of Truro Cathedral at half-term holidays, after Christmas, on Palm Sunday and on other occasions when the Cathedral Choir is unavailable. In addition the choir performs concerts, at weddings and at events raising money for local charities.

SMS does not advertise itself as engaging in an activity specifically suitable for children or vulnerable adults. Most of the members are independent adults over the age of 18. However, since 2001, as part of its stated educational charitable objective, SMS has a policy of accepting a few younger persons under 18, up to a maximum of 8 persons, for free places for rehearsals and all the other musical activities of the choir. In addition, at least once every 2 years local school choirs are invited to take part in a 'Schools Concert' with SMS in Truro Cathedral. On occasions, persons under the age of 18 are engaged as soloists in our activities, either as singers or instrumentalists. In all these activities SMS recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of young people and children with whom it works and comes into contact, and believes that all participating young people have the right to enjoy the activities of the choir in a happy, safe and secure environment.

As a matter of good practice SMS has developed this policy to provide protection for children with whom SMS has contact, to provide guidance to ensure that the risks of harm to children's welfare are minimised, and to provide to choir members guidance on procedures that should be adopted in the event that any adult suspects that a child may be experiencing, or be at risk of experiencing harm.

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

Safeguarding Policy

Guidelines and Code of Behaviour

Children under the age of 18 who wish to sing with the choir on a regular basis, or as occasional soloist, must have the written permission of their parent or guardian specifically to join in SMS activities. The parent or guardian retains full responsibility for the child's transport arrangements to and from rehearsals and the venues for performances or activities.

In the case of schools concerts, involving groups of children from different schools, there is an additional responsibility of child protection resting on the supervising staff of the schools involved. The responsibility for gaining parental permission should be clarified with the schools involved during the planning phase of the activity.

SMS is committed to taking all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to children's welfare are minimised. It recognises its duty of care towards the children to ensure that all young people's rights to protection from abuse are upheld.

Rehearsals and other activities will be conducted in an open environment to avoid private or unobserved situations. Adult members and employees should ensure that they are not alone with a young person.

All choir members and officers are required to familiarise themselves with this Safeguarding Policy

The choir recognises that all suspicions or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. Any expression of concern regarding either a child, or a choir member, will immediately be reported to the designated Safeguarding Officer, for consideration of seeking advice from the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Safeguarding Children Partnership. If appropriate and urgent, any member of the choir can raise a safeguarding concern independently with the Safeguarding Children Partnership using contact details listed below.

Responding to reports of abuse from a child.

('Abuse' can be in categories of Physical, Sexual, Emotional and Neglect)

The child chooses to whom they make the initial disclosure, and this person, whether or not they are the designated safeguarding officer, should respond using the following recommended responses.

- Listen carefully, without initial interruptions
- Make it clear that you are taking the child seriously
- Reassure the child that the 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 or 'closed' questions (i.e. questions with only Yes or No answers)
- Write down what was said, using the child's actual words wherever possible, recording date, time, and who was present.
- Tell the child what will happen next – (discussion with the designated safeguarding officer and confidential reporting to the Safeguarding Children Partnership for further inquiry)

Contact Details

Where a concern is expressed by a child to a choir member, or a concern exists relating to the conduct of another choir member towards a child, the matter should be brought to the attention of

- Designated Safeguarding Officer = Lois Bush 01872 225630
lmbush@hotmail.co.uk
- SMS Chairman = Ian Brown 01872 272664
brownian630@gmail.com
- Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Safeguarding Children Partnership
Multi-Agency Referral Unit – 0300 1231116
Out of Hours –01208 251300

Nov 2018