

# **Eltham Choral Society Safeguarding Policy**

Eltham Choral Society (ECS) is a registered charity managed by a committee of volunteers elected at the annual general meeting. Committee members aged 18 or over are trustees of the charity. To carry out its charitable objects it presents a number of concerts a year sometimes performing with orchestral groups, professional soloists and other choirs. ECS employs a musical director and an accompanist who are not members of the choir. They attend weekly rehearsals with members in term time in order to prepare for the concerts. From time to time ECS organizes other events such as choral workshops, social events and outings, and foreign tours (“ECS activities”).

ECS does not advertise itself as an activity suitable for children or vulnerable adults. Most choir members are independent adults and generally there are only two or three young people (under 18) out of a hundred members who rehearse and perform with the choir. Nevertheless ECS recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of young people and children with whom it works and comes into contact, and believes all participating young people have the right to enjoy the activities of the Choir in a happy, safe and secure environment. <sup>1</sup>

## **Contact with children falls into the following categories:**

- Young people may become members of ECS and attend its weekly rehearsals and ECS activities.
- Children form part of the audience at public performances given by ECS.
- Children take part in some concerts (typically the Christmas concert) organised in conjunction with local schools.
- Children may serve on its committee in a non-trustee capacity.

## **As a matter of good practice ECS has developed this policy to provide:**

- protection for children with whom ECS has contact
- guidance to ensure that the risks of harm to children’s welfare are minimised
- guidance on procedures that should be adopted in the event that any adult suspects a child may be experiencing, or be at risk of experiencing harm.

## **The main laws and guidance supporting this policy are:**

- Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003

---

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this policy, the terms ‘young people’ / ‘child’ are interchangeable and used to describe any person under the age of 18 regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity.

- Government guidance on safeguarding children
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- The Safe Network's 'Are they safe?' Guide ([www.safenetwork.org.uk](http://www.safenetwork.org.uk))
- London Community Foundation's Developing your Safeguarding Policy and Procedures resource pack
- The Charity Commission's 'Strategy for Dealing with Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Issues in Charities'.

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

## **Safeguarding Policy**

### **Guidelines:**

- Children under the age of 18 must have the written permission of their parent or guardian to join ECS, and both the child and parent must complete an enrolment form. The parent or guardian retains full responsibility for the child's transport arrangements to and from rehearsals and the venues for performances or activities.
- ECS will also secure parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other emergency medical treatment.
- 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.

### **Tours or trips (day and/or residential):**

- Any child who wishes to go on a tour/residential trip or day trip with the choir must be accompanied by a parent or guardian or a responsible adult of their parent/ guardian's choice to act in loco parentis.
- On residential tours/trips only the adult acting in loco parentis may share a room with the child. Other adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- Parents or guardians will be informed of arrangements for the tour and asked to confirm their approval.

### **Privacy arrangements**

- In the rare event of it not being possible to arrive at a venue in concert dress, ECS will endeavour to ensure a child's privacy is respected if required to change at a venue.
- In common with its policy for adult members, the Committee will not disclose contact details for any child member without first obtaining the

child's permission. The purpose of any request for contact details, and the identity of any person making such a request will be given to the child.

- Parents and guardians should be aware that photography, audio and video recording are undertaken from time to time at concerts and rehearsals. The images and recordings are used both on-and off- line including on the web and social media. They provide valuable tools to promote the work of the choir to a wider audience and form part of the historical record of our work.

### **Joint concerts with children**

ECS will make appropriate joint working arrangements to ensure that school groups will always be in the care of their teachers and helpers and/or parents who will bear responsibility for their welfare at all times. This does not detract from the choir's general responsibility to provide a safe environment for joint activities and the principles of this safeguarding policy still apply.

### **Children in audiences**

It is the responsibility of the parent, guardian or carer to ensure that their children are supervised at all times. If a parent/guardian/carer is not personally attending an event with their child/children, this policy requires them to be satisfied that their child/ children will be accompanied and adequately supervised by a responsible adult acting on their behalf at all times. A copy of this policy is available on the ECS website and will be sent to each parent/guardian/carer before the event upon request.

### **Event organisers and stewards**

ECS relies entirely on volunteers to carry out its work. Volunteers on duty at an event will wear clear identification. The Secretary of ECS will maintain a register of all volunteers who are not members of ECS.

### **Child abuse**

ECS endeavours by the implementation of this safeguarding policy to protect children and minimise the risks of abuse of young people. The term child abuse is used to describe a range of ways that people harm children. They can be inflicted on a child or knowingly not prevented. In many cases children are subjected to a combination of forms of abuse. There are four main categories of abuse namely physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect.

ECS notes the importance of being alert to signals of abuse and to the difficulty children may have in reporting it. To assist in responding appropriately to a child who has a complaint, it offers the following strategy:

- Listen carefully.
- Reassure the child that this 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 questions or closed questions.

- Write down what has been said, with date and time and any names mentioned.
- Tell the child what you are going to do next (in the first instance, report the matter to the 'named person' for safeguarding)

ECS notes that it is not its role to investigate whether a child 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.

### **Measures for implementation of this policy**

- The ECS committee will designate a committee member to be the 'named person' in respect of safeguarding. The named person shall undertake appropriate training as required and will be identified to children as the principal person they should turn to if they have any concerns or queries. Contact details for the named person are also given in the enrolment form and on the website.
- Any concern regarding either a child or a choir member, employee or other adult must immediately be reported to the named person (or in his or her absence to the Chair or vice chair of the Committee) who will:
  - 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;
  - Maintain confidentiality as far as possible subject to the principle of the welfare of the child being paramount which means that information may have to be shared (but only with people who need to know about it).
- ECS will recruit employees and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made. Before an appointment is made, employees and volunteers will be required to give a statement in writing that they have no past convictions, cautions or bind-overs. Two references will always be obtained for employees.
- The policy is published on the ECS website and is disseminated to all members, employees and volunteers, who are required to familiarise themselves with its contents. It will be brought to the attention of any persons invited to participate in any choir activity.
- The policy and procedures will be reviewed annually by the Committee and will be drawn to the attention of members after each review.

(6/11/2013)