Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy

This Policy was agreed by the Voices in Harmony Committee on 5th September 2017

The Safeguarding Officer is Victoria Tromans

Introduction:

Voices in Harmony is a voluntary community choir formed in 1997. Although a member of the National Association of Choirs, it is an autonomous body, managed by a Committee which is elected annually at the choir’s AGM. It is, however, a registered charity and, therefore, subject to the Charity Commission regulations.

Definitions:

Voices in Harmony, hereafter called VIH, includes its junior choir Pure Harmony, hereafter called PH. Unless a clause refers explicitly to either VIH or PH, any reference to VIH includes PH.

For this Policy it is assumed that a child is a person yet to reach their fifteenth birthday, and a young person is yet to reach their eighteenth birthday.

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 or over who is permanently or temporarily unable to fully take care of her/himself, or could be open to significant harm or exploitation. Examples of vulnerability could include bereavement, illness, financial loss, redundancy, divorce or separation, trauma as well as a disability of some kind.

Safeguarding Officer: The person appointed by the Committee to act in this capacity. He/she is the first point of contact for any issue covered by the Policy. The Safeguarding Officer has the right to see a person’s DBS certificate if required, as does a member of the Committee. The PH Leadership has the same right in relation to PH matters. The Safeguarding Officer will keep a register of DBS checked members, and, with appropriate consultation, verify that an existing DBS certificate is relevant to the role in VIH.

Complainant: The person who alleges that something has been done against them. In the case of a child the complainant is likely to be a parent or guardian.

Informant: The person who informs VIH about something they consider merits investigation relevant to the Policy.

Application:

This Policy addresses the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is intended to be a dynamic Policy. It is intended to support VIH in being a safe, supportive and caring community for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

It is hoped and expected, and will be actively encouraged, that common sense will be applied for the benefit of everyone to whom this Policy is applicable.
**Commitment:**

VIH believes each person has a value and dignity regardless of age, gender, ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation. This implies a duty to value all people as equal and therefore to protect them from harm.

VIH is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and affirms that the needs of such persons are paramount.

VIH recognises that none of us is invulnerable but that there is a particular need for those whose vulnerability is increased by age and/or gender, by situations, by disabilities, by reduction in capacities or by previous experiences. It is recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible.

VIH recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults and understands that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual or institutional abuse or neglect. It accepts its responsibility for ensuring that, within reason, all people are safe when in rehearsal, performance or social activity.

VIH commits itself to respond without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may have been harmed when in rehearsal, performance or social activity. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust.

VIH commits itself to the provision of support and advice for choir members that will ensure people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this safeguarding Policy is to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for children, young people and adults in our care.

**Good Practice:**

VIH believes that good practice means that:

i) All people are treated with respect and dignity.

ii) Those who act on behalf of VIH should not meet or work alone with a child, young person or vulnerable adult where the activity is not readily visible to others.

iii) Any VIH organised transport of children, young people or vulnerable adults will be checked to ensure the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and any other adult are appropriate for the occasion.

iv) A child, young person or vulnerable adult will not be visited in their home, school or workplace by a VIH Committee Member or choir member alone, unless specific permission had been obtained from a parent or guardian or the adult concerned.

**Safeguarding during Choir Events:**

A choir event will include concerts and other public performances, rehearsals at Lawrence Lane Methodist Church or elsewhere, social events wherever held.

The following will be implemented at all VIH Events:

i) The host venue will be advised at the time of booking in writing if a child or young person is attending or is likely to attend. This will be confirmed or otherwise nearer the event date.
ii) If a young person is to be present at the event, the Safeguarding Officer or a Committee member (or choir member), who is DBS checked to the satisfaction of the Safeguarding Officer will be designated to oversee the welfare of that young person.

iii) If a child is to be present (i.e. a member of PH), the PH leadership will oversee the welfare of that child.

iv) When PH is part of the event with VIH, adequate facilities will be discussed with the host venue to enable the children to meet, change, and be supervised to the satisfaction of the PH leadership.

v) If any vulnerable adults will be present, the Safeguarding Officer or Committee member will ensure that adequate facilities are in place for those adults to be appropriately accommodated.

vi) Should the facilities required in iv) and v) not be in place, VIH reserves the right to cancel the performance if, in the opinion of the Safeguarding Officer or designated Committee member and/or the PH leadership, a person or persons covered by the Policy may be at risk or not adequately protected.

vii) Events which are VIH only, will not require child safeguarding, unless a child is taking part in the event as a guest. Safeguarding for young people and vulnerable adults will naturally still apply.

viii) Events which are PH only will be overseen by the PH leadership, with assistance by a designated Committee member, if required, or the assistance of one or more parents or guardians if considered appropriate. The discretion of the PH leadership will be paramount in making the necessary arrangements.

Photography Policy:

Any person has the right to opt out of being photographed, especially where the photograph(s) may be seen by the general public, e.g. website and social media.

In the case of children:

i) A parental permission form must be obtained giving consent for a child to be photographed or videoed, and must include an explicit reference to the VIH website.

ii) The names of children must not appear in photograph captions.

iii) Photography must only be of PH as a choir and not individual children, unless the PH leadership is satisfied otherwise, e.g. a PH choir member performing a solo, duet, etc.

iv) Photography must only take place in the presence of the PH leadership.

v) At the discretion of the PH leadership, who will check as appropriate, anyone taking official photographs should be DBS checked. Photographing/videoing by parents or guardians during a VIH event should be carefully controlled, within the bounds of common sense, as it is recognised with current technology that total control is unrealistic.

Complaints procedure:

The complainant should, in the first instance meet with the Safeguarding Officer and one other Committee member, (or two Committee members if the Safeguarding Officer is unable to be present), and a record will be made of the conversation, and signed and dated by those present. The complainant may be accompanied by another person if they so wish. The complainant will be advised that the complaint will be outlined to the full Committee as soon as practicable for a
decision as to the way forward. If, in the opinion of the Safeguarding Officer and Committee member (or two Committee members), the complaint is so serious that immediate action is required, they will so advise the remaining Committee members and instigate the action.

**Information procedure:**

The informant should in the first instance meet with the Safeguarding Officer and one other Committee member, (or two Committee members if the Safeguarding Officer is unable to be present), and a record will be made of the conversation, and signed and dated by those present. The informant may be accompanied by another person if they so wish. The informant will be advised that the information will be discussed by the Committee and appropriate action instigated to ascertain whether there are grounds for taking it further. If the information imparted is considered urgent and/or serious, the Safeguarding Officer and Committee member (or two Committee members) may investigate immediately.

**Confidentiality and anonymity:**

The complainant/informant will be assured of confidentiality, unless and until, subsequent actions necessitate disclosure, for example, the involvement of the police. If the complainant/informant tells the Committee members that they wish to remain anonymous, this will be honoured, but they will be advised that it will limit subsequent actions.

**Redress:**

Should the Committee discover that a complaint or information has been made by a member of VIH falsely or maliciously and without foundation, the Committee may, at its discretion, invoke clause 6 of the VIH Rule Book "Expulsion of Members" notwithstanding that the person falsely accused may well pursue their own course of action.

**Review:**

The Policy will be reviewed annually, and no later than fifteen months from the previous review, by at least two members of the Committee and, where appropriate, the PH leadership. The review may be carried out personally or electronically. External directives, e.g. Legislation from Government or the Local Authority or a change in Charity Commission conditions may require an earlier review.

The next review is due on 4th September 2018 and no later than 4th December 2018

**Continuity:**

In the event that either VIH or PH ceases to exist, the remaining VIH or PH may adapt or rewrite the Policy as appropriate.

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**Document Control:**

First draft - May 2017
Final draft - June 2017
Final revision - July 2017
Approved version - September 2017

The Policy was reviewed on Monday 10th September 2018 during rehearsal by the Chairman and AMD, in consultation with the Safeguarding Officer, and there had been no activity during the year and the Policy was considered appropriate. No amendments required. The next review will be during September 2019.
The Policy was reviewed on Tuesday 10th September 2019 following the Committee meeting, by the Chairman and AMD. No activity under the Policy during the year, and the Policy could continue without amendment. The next review will be required during September 2020.