



## **POP VOICES YOUTH SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

### **1. Introduction**

POP VOICES is an amateur choir that brings together adult and child groups to perform in annual concerts.

Pop Voices recognises its duty of care under the following statutes:

- The Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- The Child (Performances) Regulations 1968
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000

Pop Voices recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. Pop Voices is committed to practices which seek to safeguard young people from these threats. All members of Pop Voices accept and recognise their collective responsibility to be aware of safeguarding issues and to nurture a safe and appropriate environment in which a young person's talents can flourish.

### **2. Lead Safeguarding Officer**

The Lead Safeguarding Officer will be a choir member who has the relevant enhanced DBS checks in place. This role will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The Lead Safeguarding Officer will be responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is adhered to and reporting any breaches to the appropriate authority
- Providing points of contact for all young choir members during rehearsals and shows
- Ensuring any allegations/suspensions of abuse are properly investigated
- Alerting the Committee to any developments in child safeguarding arrangements
- Recruiting at least two safeguarding officers (one for each gender) who will provide support and guidance during rehearsals
- Recruiting chaperone(s) to take on duties during show week
- Ensuring all choir and team members are briefed on relevant safeguarding procedures

### **3. Safeguarding Officers (Mentors)**

Pop Voices will appoint at least two safeguarding officers or 'Mentors' who have the relevant enhanced DBS checks in place. They will:

- Have an understanding of the safeguarding policy and child protection procedures
- Be accessible to the young choir members to provide support, guidance and to listen to any concerns the young choir members might have
- Report any concerns to the Lead Safeguarding Officer

### **4. Chaperones**

Solihull Pop Chorus will appoint chaperones to support young choir members during shows who will:

- Ensure one-to-one unsupervised contact with young choir members is avoided
- Provide support, guidance and to listen to any concerns the young choir members might have
- Report any concerns to the Lead Safeguarding Officer

### **5. Administration**

The Choir Director and Lead Safeguarding Officer will ensure the appropriate administration is completed in order to safeguard young choir members and adhere to statutory obligations. This will include:

- Overseeing the performance licence application process
- Maintaining a register of all young choir members with emergency contact details
- Liaising with local authorities concerning licensing arrangements
- Ensuring DBS checks are sought for chaperones

### **6. Parents**

Parents of young choir members will be provided with a copy of this policy and advised of the contact details of the Lead Safeguarding Officer. They will be responsible for providing:

- Their contact details for emergencies
- A parental consent form
- A medical declaration form
- Proof of the young choir member's date of birth
- Arrangements for travel to and from rehearsals

### **7. Standards of Behaviour**

Pop Voices will ensure that:

- All young choir members will be treated equally, with respect and dignity
- The welfare of each young choir member will always be put first
- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned
- All adult members of the choir provide positive role models

- All choir members will have an understanding of the society's child protection procedures (see Appendix 1)
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour
- It will keep up-to-date with health & safety legislation
- It will hold a register of every child involved with the choir and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies

## **8. Licensing Arrangements**

Pop Voices recognises its responsibility to ensure its activities are properly licensed in accordance with the relevant statute.

It will liaise with the local authority and seek to ensure performance license arrangements are in place in good time before show week.

It will adhere to any conditions attached to the performance licence including the pursuit of enhanced DBS checks or ISA registration status for those members directly involved in chaperone activities.

## **9. Photography/Videography**

The Choir Director will gain consent from parents/carers for appropriate photographs/videos to be taken for the purpose of publicity, for example photographs to be included in the programme, for display in the theatre, the Pop Voices website, Facebook page or on Twitter. The child or young person's name can be used to accompany photographs in the programme if necessary but other information should be limited for safeguarding purposes. For example, the school they attend or area they live in should not be included.

Consent for parents/carers should be sought for informal photographs, for example those taken during performances and in communal backstage areas. The chaperone(s) should know which young choir members should/should not have photographs taken of them. Choir members should not take cameras or mobile phones with cameras into dressing rooms where children change. Choir members should not share photographs/videos taken of children on social media, unless they are the child's parent/carer.

Under no circumstances should photographs be taken of any injuries incurred as a result of an accident or suspected abuse.

## **10. Review of Policy**

The Choir Director will ensure this policy is adhered to and will monitor its effectiveness. It will amend the policy from time to time in the light of experience and other developments in child safeguarding.

**September 2020**

## **Appendix 1 - CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

### **Responsibilities of Pop Voices**

At the outset of any production involving children the society will:

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the performance process
- Identify at the outset the person with designated responsibility for child protection
- Engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting (if necessary in consultation with the local education authority)
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case it needs to report a concern

### **Responsibilities of Parents/Carers**

The society believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and Pop Voices. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the choir and to share responsibility for the care of children.

- All parents will be given a copy of the society's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of the choir to take children home

### **Unsupervised Contact**

- Pop Voices will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children
- If possible there will always be two adults in the room when working with children
- If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimize risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area, or in a designated room with a door open
- If it is predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, he or she may be required to obtain a DBS check

### **Physical Contact**

- All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children
- Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity
- Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear

### **Managing Sensitive Information**

- The safeguarding policy will outline appropriate taking, usage and storage of photographs or images of children
- Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes

- Pop Voices' web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use
- The society will ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of its members, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such as criminal record disclosures.

### **Accidents**

- To avoid accidents, chaperones and children will be advised of "house rules" regarding health and safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds
- Children will be advised of the clothing and footwear appropriate to the work that will be undertaken
- If a child is injured while in the care of the society, a designated first-aider will administer first-aid and the injury will be recorded in the society's accident book
- This record will be countersigned by the person with responsibility for child protection
- If a child joins the choir with an obvious physical injury a record of this will be made in the accident book. This record will be countersigned by the person with responsibility for child protection. This record can be useful if a formal allegation is made later and will also be a record that the child did not sustain the injury while participating in the production

### **Criminal Record Disclosures**

- If Pop Voices believes it is in its best interests to obtain criminal record disclosures for chaperones or other personnel, it will inform the individual of the necessary procedures and the level of disclosure required. A Standard disclosure will apply for anyone with supervised access to children. An Enhanced disclosure will be required for anyone with unsupervised access

### **Chaperones**

- Chaperones will be appointed by the society for the care of children during the production process. By law the chaperone is acting in loco parentis and should exercise the care which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give to a child. The maximum number of children in the chaperone's care shall not exceed 12
- Potential chaperones will be required to supply photographic proof of identity (eg. passport, driving licence) and two references from individuals with knowledge of their previous work with children, unless already well known to the society. They will also be asked to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children
- Chaperones will be made aware of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Chaperones will not usually have unsupervised access to children in their care
- If unsupervised access is unavoidable, or if this is a requirement of the local authority, a criminal record disclosure will be sought
- Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the Choir Director. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily, the chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue

- If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform the Choir Director and not allow the child to continue
- Under the Dangerous Performances Act, no child of compulsory school age is permitted to do anything which may endanger life or limb. This could include working on wires or heavy lifting. Chaperones should tell the Choir Director to cease using children in this way and should contact the local authority
- During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the stage door and signing them into the building
- Children will be kept together at all times except when using separate dressing rooms
- Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times
- Children are not to leave performance venues unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents
- Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets
- Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms unless their parents are in attendance
- Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first-aid procedures in the venue, and will ensure that children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger
- Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by the society
- Chaperones should examine accident books each day. If an accident has occurred, the Choir Director is not allowed to use that child until a medically qualified opinion has been obtained (not just the word of the parent or child)
- Chaperones should have written arrangements for children after performances. If someone different is to collect the child, a telephone call should be made to the parent to confirm the arrangements
- Children should be signed out when leaving and a record made of the person collecting
- If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child or make arrangements to take them home

### **Suspicion of Abuse – Guidance of Society Members**

- If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of Pop Voices, please make this known to the safeguarding officers. If you suspect that the person with responsibility for child protection is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the Chairman
- Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed as well as your response, in case there is a follow-up in which you are involved
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of the society, chaperone, venue staff, etc, that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms, etc. and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production

### **Disclosure of Abuse**

If a child confides in you that abuse has taken place:

- Remain calm and in control but do not delay taking action
- Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer

- Don't promise to keep it a secret. Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the person with responsibility for child protection. Make it clear to the child that you will need to share this information with others. Make it clear that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help
- Reassure the child that 'they did the right thing' in telling someone
- Tell the child what you are going to do next
- Speak immediately to the person with responsibility for child protection. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually social services or the police
- As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was said, using the child's own words. Note the date, time, any names that were involved or mentioned, and who you gave the information to
- Make sure you sign and date your record

### **Recording**

- In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, the details of an allegation or reported incident will be recorded, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a statutory child protection agency
- An accurate note shall be made of the date and time of the incident or disclosure, the parties involved, what was said or done and by whom, any action taken to investigate the matter, any further action taken eg. suspension of an individual, where relevant the reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, and the name of the persons reporting and to whom it was reported
- The record will be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation

### **Rights & Confidentiality**

- If a complaint is made against a member of the society, he or she will be made aware of his rights under the society's disciplinary procedures
- No matter how you may feel about the accusation, both the alleged abuser and the child who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998. Remember also that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released
- In criminal law the Crown, or other prosecuting authority, has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty

### **September 2020**