

Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir

Policy Statement for

Safeguarding Children, Young People & Vulnerable Adults.

The Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir is determined to ensure that every child and young or vulnerable person who take part in the organisation's activities should be able to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult involved in the choir.

Every Choir Member shall be responsible to ensure that minors (under 18's) or other vulnerable persons, that may be associated with any choir activities, are not subjected to any form of harm* or maltreatment; And if such an occurrence is witnessed or suspected it must be reported.

Contact details for the different referral agencies concerned are given below, but in any event it must be reported to the Choir Chairman, or Secretary for further action as appropriate.

(*Harm is used here to include any form of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, mal-treatment, bullying or neglect).

Monitoring:

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- changes in legislation and/or Government or Cornwall Council guidance
- as required by the Local Safeguarding Children Board or Adult Care, Health and Well-being Access Service
- as a result of any other significant change or event

What is Safeguarding?

Guidance given by Cornwall Council

(See: <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=31198>) Last updated: 17th April 2015

Everybody has the right to be safe no matter who they are or what their circumstances.

Safeguarding is about protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect.

We are all responsible for the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We must ensure that we are doing all we can to protect the most vulnerable members of our society.

If you see something, say something...

In order to protect people from abuse and harm it is important that everyone knows what to do if they suspect someone is being abused.

You may suspect that someone is being harmed or abused because:

- You have general concerns about someone's wellbeing
- You see or hear about something which could cause abuse
- Someone tells you something has happened or is happening to them which could be abuse

Safeguarding adults

If you are a vulnerable adult experiencing abuse or neglect or, if you have concerns that a vulnerable adult maybe, or is, experiencing abuse or neglect, contact:

Adult Care, Health and Well-being Access Service

Telephone: 0300 1234 131

Out of hours telephone: 01208 25 1300 (for emergencies only)

Email: adultcareandsupport@cornwall.gov.uk

Safeguarding children

If you are concerned about a child or, if you would like to report an incident of abuse or neglect, contact:

Multi Agency Referral Unit

Telephone: 0300 123 1116 Email: MultiAgencyReferralUnit@cornwall.gcsx.gov.uk

Out of hours telephone: 0300 1234 100 - the out of hours service runs from Monday to Thursday 5.15pm (4.45pm on Fridays) until 8.45am weekdays and for 24 hours on Saturday and Sunday.

INTRODUCTION:

While primarily intended to safeguard children, young or vulnerable adults, our policy is also meant to protect Choir Members – and others working with us including volunteers – from any false allegation of improper conduct in that regard. We cannot cover every possible eventuality in these guidelines, but hopefully they do cover most situations that you are actually likely to encounter.

Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir will endeavour to ensure that children, young and vulnerable adults are protected from harm. We will do this by:

1. Making sure our Choir Members and volunteers are carefully selected
2. Taking all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of any person in contact with Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir.
3. Not physically, emotionally or sexually abusing any child, young or vulnerable person in contact with Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir.
4. Taking all reasonable steps to prevent any Choir member, volunteer, persons working for us or member of the public from putting any person in a situation in which there is an unreasonable risk to their health and safety.
5. Taking all reasonable steps to prevent any Choir member, volunteer, persons working for us or member of the public from physically, emotionally or sexually abusing any person.
6. Reporting any evidence or reasonable suspicion that an act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse has been committed to a person whilst in contact with Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir.
7. Use of Email & Text, Social Media / Networking: The internet, mobile phones, online gaming, social networking and other interactive technologies have transformed the way we live, and offer exciting opportunities for clubs to communicate and engage with their members. But they also introduce a range of potential safeguarding risks. Communication by social networking with children, young persons and vulnerable adults should only be done with prior consent of their parent/ guardian or carer, who should always be copied into any messaging by these means.

Definitions of Abuse:

Physical injury:

Actual or likely deliberate physical injury, or wilful neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering.

Sexual abuse:

Actual or likely sexual exploitation. The involvement of any persons in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate the social taboos of family roles.

Emotional abuse: (including bullying) Note that All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment.

Actual or likely persistent or significant emotional ill treatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child, young or vulnerable adult.

IF YOU SUSPECT A COLLEAGUE OR RECEIVE AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE

We hope that you will never encounter any situation of vulnerable adult abuse while you are with Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir. However, you must know what to do if you discover an incident of abuse, suspect a colleague of abuse or receive an allegation of abuse.

a.) If you suspect a fellow member

It is your duty to report your suspicions to the Chairman or Secretary of Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir. It is not your responsibility to investigate your suspicions. Nor should you concern yourself with looking for evidence of abuse. This requires expertise you are not expected to have; your role is to respond appropriately.

b.) If an allegation is made to you about a fellow member

It is not your responsibility to investigate any allegation. Nor should you concern yourself with looking for evidence of abuse. This requires expertise you are not expected to have. Your role is to respond appropriately and to report what you have been told to the Chairman or Secretary of Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir.

c). **If disclosure is made to you** about abuse not involving Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir or volunteers. It is not your responsibility to investigate any disclosure. Nor should you concern yourself with looking for evidence of abuse. This requires expertise you are not expected to have. Your role is to respond appropriately and to report what you have been told to the referral agency. You should also inform the Chairman or Secretary RPMVC.

d). If a disclosure or allegation is being made to you:

- ◆ Listen carefully and sensitively, stay calm, and offer understanding and reassurance.
- ◆ Check your understanding of the situation, without being investigative.
- ◆ Record what you have been told.
- ◆ Alert the Chairman or Secretary of the Choir at the earliest opportunity within 24 hours.

e). If you become suspicious about the behaviour of a fellow member or someone associated with Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir, steps b, c and d above also apply.

f). If you think the situation is sufficiently serious and urgent: Contact the appropriate referral agency given at page one, or, failing that the Police. Don't let anxiety that you might have jumped to a wrong conclusion deter you from reporting any genuine worries that you have. Procedures put in place will be used to follow up any such report, and we will not hold it against you should a well-intentioned but mistaken report be made.

g). If an allegation of abuse is made against you

If an allegation is made directly to you, you should advise the Chairman or Secretary of Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir, even if you think it is trivial. If we receive an allegation against you, we will inform you.

- All allegations of misconduct will be subject to standard disciplinary procedures.
- You are entitled to the moral and practical support of your senior colleagues if an unwarranted allegation of misconduct is made against you. As long as your behaviour is in line with the policy and these guidelines, we cannot envisage any allegation of misconduct being justified.
- Any allegation will be scrupulously investigated, with due regard for confidentiality. In itself this should not be interpreted as indicating culpability. It is part of our duty to protect people working with us from any unfounded allegation.
- If your behaviour contravenes this policy and guidelines, it will be treated as gross misconduct.

If you have concerns about how an allegation against yourself or anyone else is being dealt with, you should inform a fellow member at the most senior level you think appropriate.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults: Guidance

For the purpose of this policy and guidelines (irrespective of the age of consent for consensual sexual contact), the term 'vulnerable adults' are people who are, or may be, in need of community care services because of mental disability or other disability, age or illness, and who are, or who may be, unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

These guidelines apply to:

- Any situation involving vulnerable adults, whether or not accompanied by adults. Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir also recognises that vulnerable people of any age will benefit from similar safeguards.
- All Choir members and volunteers working for Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir. In the case of volunteers it is incumbent upon the organiser of the event to ensure that they are made aware of these guidelines.

GENERAL DUTIES of all Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir members and volunteers in regard to the safety and welfare of vulnerable people:

- take all reasonable steps to protect vulnerable adults from hazards;
- to take appropriate action if an accident occurs;
- to take all reasonable steps to prevent abuse of vulnerable adults in contact with Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir;
- to report any incident or suspicion of abuse.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR for all Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir members and volunteers

People working with Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir must always observe the following requirements where vulnerable people are concerned. You should always:

- @ Uphold the spirit and specific provisions of the Statement of Policy and these Guidelines.
- @ Do your best to behave in an open and friendly manner, but avoid being over familiar in word or action.

If so far as possible, avoid situations in which you are alone with vulnerable people. If necessary, move to a place where you can both be seen by other colleagues or other adults. Try to avoid any physical contact or behaviour that could be unwelcome or misconstrued. Where you have to rely on your own judgment, always treat the vulnerable adult's welfare as paramount.

PROTECTING VULNERABLE ADULTS FROM HAZARDS OR RASH BEHAVIOUR

We recognise that whilst it is impossible to ensure that no vulnerable adult ever comes to harm, what we collectively, and you as an individual, must do is take all reasonable steps to protect them from likely risks arising from the nature or condition of particular sites or events. This means allowing for factors such as the following, especially when vulnerable adults are unaccompanied by adults:-

- A number of vulnerable adults choose to explore or play games. This means that we have got to do our best to anticipate adventurous behaviour and assess the risks involved.
- Vulnerable adults have less experience of danger than adults. They can be unaware or heedless of dangers you can clearly recognise. Even when aware of danger, they may act through bravado.

You must also take all reasonable steps to ensure that no other member of the Choir, volunteer, or member of the public compromises the health and safety of any vulnerable adult in contact with Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir. For example, someone might overlook the likelihood of vulnerable adults being at an event, or suggest an activity that is inherently risky.

This means intervening directly to prevent this, or reporting the situation to someone with more authority to intervene.

In dealing with the person, bear in mind that the situation is more likely to arise through enthusiasm or thoughtlessness than wilful negligence.

WHAT TO DO IF AN ACCIDENT HAPPENS

Depending on your judgment of the situation, go to the scene immediately if possible and/or summon First Aid assistance and/or contact the emergency services.

- With vulnerable adults it can be hard to tell whether they have been injured or whether an injury is serious. If you have any doubt about this, you should err on the side of caution and contact the emergency services.
- Even if a vulnerable adult is accompanied and you think an accident is not being treated seriously enough, get medical assistance on your own initiative if necessary.
- The normal accident recording and reporting procedure applies.

FIRST AID

Unless there is good reason, First Aid should not be administered without permission. A vulnerable adult cannot give consent; you will need to get permission either from the carer or accompanying adult. If neither is on site, get their phone number, if possible.

- If at all possible, treatment should only be given by a trained First Aider or Appointed Person.
- Provided this does not in itself put the vulnerable adult at risk, always try to administer First Aid within sight and sound of other adults.
- Always tell the vulnerable adult exactly what you are doing and why.
- Unless it is irrelevant, ask the vulnerable adult if they use medication (e.g. for asthma, diabetes, and epilepsy) or have any allergies. Unless it is a first occurrence, a carer should know of any such conditions.
- For minor injuries, it is all right to use a non fluffy cloth or sticking plaster, but you may not offer any medication, including antiseptics or pills of any kind. If you have any doubts about helping someone to use their own medication, phone National Health Service Direct on 0845 4647 or the emergency services
- Any treatment should be as little as necessary without threatening the vulnerable adult's well being.

IF A VULNERABLE ADULT NEEDS A DOCTOR OR HOSPITAL

Call the emergency services. It is nearly always best to stay on site with them and wait for the ambulance. You should only risk taking the vulnerable adult yourself if the emergency services ask you to do so because of exceptional circumstances - and take someone with you as an escort.

CONCLUSION AND REPORTING CONCERNS

If you see something which you consider unusual or which gives rise to concern, or if you find yourself in a situation which you later realise may have been potentially compromising, you should report it immediately to the Chairman

or Secretary of Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir or to the contact issued by Cornwall Council (below). Please be sure to do this in confidence, and ideally this should be done in person, and one to one.

Contact details for Safeguarding adults issued by Cornwall Council

Adult Care, Health and Well-being Access Service

Telephone: 0300 1234 131

Out of hours telephone: 01208 25 1300 (for emergencies only)

Safeguarding Children: Guidance

Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young persons and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice. The policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, gender, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic background, all children involved with Choir Activities:-

- have a positive and enjoyable experience of the activity in a safe and child centred environment
- are protected from abuse whilst participating in any activity provided by the Choir or outside of the activity.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) applies to anyone under the age of 18. However, Article 1 states that this is the case unless majority is attained earlier under the law applicable to the child.

For the purpose of this policy and guidelines a "child" is anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital, in prison or in a Young Offenders' Institution does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection.

Whilst much of the material contained within this document is 'common sense', in today's climate, and particularly in the world in which we live, it is felt necessary to spell out in detail what our guidelines and procedures are where safeguarding children is concerned. We apologise if you believe we are telling you what you already know, however it is essential that we are all clear about what is expected and permitted where contact with children is concerned, so that we can ensure that the children are safe from harm at all time. Whilst we cannot guarantee that 'best practice' will totally prevent risk, it does help us to minimise it. We should remember that our child protection policy is designed for our own protection: false allegations from children against adults are increasing in number nationally, and adherence to these guidelines should help to minimise this risk as well.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

At no time is it appropriate for a child to travel in a car with one adult, there should always be two adults present, ideally one male and one female. The child should travel in the back of the car, with the adults in the front, and the child should always be secured with appropriate seatbelts or restraint. If you are giving lifts to children other than your own, please ensure that your insurance is appropriate, standard insurance may not be sufficient.

APPROPRIATE CONTACT

It is not appropriate to make physical contact with any of the children, with the exception of giving a child a congratulatory pat on the back if appropriate, and obviously shaking hands. Please be aware that everyone has a 'personal space' and this is especially relevant to children as they go through many changes in their lives.

Getting too close to a child, for whatever reason, will invade their personal space, and consequently may make them feel uncomfortable. This guideline needs to be especially strictly adhered to by all.

FIRST AID

If a child requires first aid and you are the only adult in close proximity; please ensure that the child is comforted without unnecessary physical contact being made. If a parent is close to hand, please ask them to administer any necessary first aid, however, at all times it is very desirable that at least two adults are present.

If a child feels sick during any performance, the child in question should be allowed to go out to the toilet. However, it is not appropriate for the adult accompanying them to follow them into the toilet; they should remain outside and at an acceptable distance, whilst offering words of comfort and encouragement.

IF A CHILD NEEDS A DOCTOR OR HOSPITAL.

Call the emergency services. It is nearly always best to stay on site with them and wait for the ambulance. You should only risk taking the child yourself if the emergency services ask you to do so because of exceptional circumstances – and take someone with you as an escort.

COMFORTING A DISTRESSED CHILD

If a child is distressed, it is appropriate to sit next to them, and lightly place a hand on their shoulder, but this should be done in the presence of at least one additional adult. Please be sure not to sit too close, being aware of the child's personal space.

LANGUAGE

At no time is it appropriate to use general swear words, or sexual swear words in front of children. Also, innuendo should never be employed, even in conversation between the gentlemen of the choir, in the presence of the children. Language should always be encouraging.

DISCIPLINE

It is only appropriate for the person(s) running a Concert, an Event and/or Competition to administer appropriate discipline to the children and this should only be verbal. It must at no time be humiliating or derogatory, and should be done to ensure a child's safety. Put-downs or any other verbally negative comments should never be used, as these also humiliate the child.

INTERACTION WITH THE CHILDREN

It is important that the children feel an important and integral part of the choir, and so normal interaction with the children is appropriate, however this does not include unnecessary knowledge of their personal or family situation. General chat with the children by the adults is fine.

FAVOURITISM

No favouritism should be shown, all children should be treated exactly equally, and all should have similar and appropriate opportunities and treatment, regardless of their abilities.

CONFIDENCES

If a child asks to speak to you about a matter in confidence, never guarantee that confidence, as it may be important that you report the matter to someone else. If possible and appropriate, ensure another adult is present, and if the child still wants to speak to you one to one, ask the other adult to sit or stand some way away, but still in eyesight and earshot of the conversation.

BULLYING

Bullying is never acceptable. It takes many forms, and is often done surreptitiously.

A FEW DON'TS!

Never be in a room alone with a child, however if for some reason this happens, i.e. a child goes out sick during a performance, ensure that the door is kept open.

If a child is left alone because their parents or guardians are not available, make sure that another adult stays behind with you. If all the other adults have gone, always wait outside with the child, so that you are in a public place.

If a child's parents/guardians fail to collect them, i.e. because of a broken down car, never agree to give the child a lift home, unless there are two adults in your car. If you are alone, try to contact one of the other parents and ask if they can run the child home.

CONCLUSION AND REPORTING CONCERNS

If you see something which you consider unusual or which gives rise to concern, or if you find yourself in a situation which you later realise may have been potentially compromising, you should report it immediately to the Chairman or Secretary of Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir or to the contact issued by Cornwall Council (below). Please be sure to do this in confidence, and ideally this should be done in person, and one to one.

Contact details for Safeguarding children issued by Cornwall Council

Multi Agency Referral Unit Telephone: 0300 123 1116. Email: MultiAgencyReferralUnit@cornwall.gcsx.gov.uk

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