

Safeguarding Policy

This Safeguarding Policy applies to East Riding County Choir (ERCC), all Choir members (including trustees), volunteers and all others invited to engage, perform or work with ERCC.

The East Riding County Choir believes that a child, young person or adult at risk should never experience abuse of any kind. We recognise that we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk. We are committed to safeguarding the well-being of all children, young people and the adults at risk that we come into contact with and to protecting them from harm.

The law requires any organisation involving children, young people or vulnerable adults to take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to vulnerable adults' and children's welfare are minimised, and where there are concerns, to share them with other local agencies.

The ERCC has developed this Safeguarding Policy to provide:

- protection for children and vulnerable adults with whom it has contact;
- guidance to ensure that the risks of harm to children and vulnerable adults' welfare are minimised;
- guidance for Responding to a Child or Vulnerable Adult making an Allegation of Abuse;
- guidance on procedures that should be adopted in the event that any adult suspects a child or vulnerable adult might be experiencing, or be at risk of experiencing harm.

ERCC recognises that it is not the role of our organisation to decide whether a child or vulnerable adult has been abused or not. This is the role of the Social Services department which has the legal responsibility, the NSPCC which has the powers to investigate child protection concerns under the Children Act or the Police.

Who are children or Vulnerable Adults?

In this context anyone up to the age of 18 is a child. An adult is defined in the Care Act 2014 as someone over 18 years old who has care and support needs, is experiencing or at risk of abuse as a result of their care and support needs or is unable to protect himself or herself against abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

ERCC does not advertise itself as an activity suitable for children or vulnerable adults. Most Choir members are independent adults and generally there are only one or two young people (under 18) out of a membership of 80 plus who rehearse and perform with the Choir. Choir rehearsals and performances are group activities, and there is no need for a member of the Choir to be alone with another member of any age. ERCC recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable adults with whom it works and comes into contact, and believes that everyone has the right to enjoy the activities of the Choir in a happy, safe and secure environment.

Membership: Should any child or close relative (under 18) of an adult member of ERCC participate in rehearsals or concerts with ERCC, the member must act as a responsible adult. Should any other child participate in any ERCC activities they must be accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult who remains responsible for them throughout rehearsals and performances.

When the ERCC organises an activity or event they will ensure:

- Planning is carried out in line with this policy and procedures
- The event is attended by an appropriate number of DBS checked adults – this will be a minimum of one but more when practically possible.
- Where practically possible the total number of adults in attendance (not necessarily DBS checked) compared with the total number of children will be in line with the ratio table below - as per Ofsted recommendations.

Child to adult ratio table

Child's age	Number of adults	Number of children
0-2	1	3
2-3	1	4
4-8	1	6
9-12	1	8
12-18	1	10

- The main contact has access to emergency contact details and other relevant details (e.g. information about picking up arrangements for vulnerable people).
- That if vulnerable people of different gender will be taking part in activities adults of different gender will be in attendance too.

Joint concerts with schools – ERCC 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.

Audiences and social events – ERCC are aware that children and vulnerable adults may attend their concerts as members of the audience, or attend social functions hosted by ERCC. It is the responsibility of the parent, guardian or carer to ensure adequate supervision. If a parent/guardian/carer is not personally attending an event this policy requires them to be satisfied that the child or vulnerable adult will be accompanied and adequately supervised by a responsible adult acting on their behalf at all times.

Privacy – Parents and guardians should be aware that photography, audio and video recordings are undertaken from time to time at concerts and rehearsals. The image and recordings are used both on and off line. 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.

Abuse – ERCC endeavours by the implementation of this safeguarding policy to protect and minimise the risks of abuse of children and vulnerable adults. ERCC notes the importance of being alert to signals of abuse and to the difficulty children or vulnerable adults may have in reporting it. Please see Appendix 2 which offers information about the various forms of abuse and Appendix 1 – Guidelines for Responding to a child or vulnerable adults making an Allegation of Abuse. Appendix 2 explains what you should do if you suspect abuse of a child or vulnerable adult has occurred.

Measure of implementation of this policy

- The ERCC have nominated Debbie Miller as the Designated Person in respect of Safeguarding. The designated person who is DBS checked, shall undertake appropriate training as required and will be identified to all Choir members as the principal person they should turn to if they have any concerns or queries. Contact details for the Designated person are on the website. Further details on the role of the Designated Person can be seen in Appendix 3
- Any concern regarding either, a child or a Choir member, employee or other adult must immediately be reported to the designated Person, or in her absence to the Chair of the Committee (Helen Miller).
- The level of DBS check required will be decided by the committee and in line with DBS rules regarding regulated activity. The results of any check to inform a decision will be used confidentially and in line with the ERCC equal opportunities policy.
- Choir members may choose to undertake: ‘Safeguarding Level 1 A shared responsibility’ to ensure they have the relevant experience to be equipped to deal with any situation.

Policy Review – the policy and procedures will be reviewed annually at the first committee meeting following the AGM.

Adopted by the East Riding County Choir on 19th August 2024

Chair of East Riding County Choir: Helen Miller (07854967445)

Designated Person for Safeguarding: Debbie Miller (07395570069)

Appendix 1:

Guidelines for Responding to a Child or Vulnerable Adult making an Allegation of Abuse

If a child or vulnerable adult should talk to you of abuse:

- Stay calm, listen carefully to what is being said
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others-do not promise to keep secrets
- Allow the child or vulnerable adult to continue at his/her own pace
- Ask questions for clarification only, and, at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer
- Reassure the child or vulnerable adult that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared (see Appendix 4)

Do not say

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
 - I can't believe it!
- Are you sure that this is true?
- Why? Who? When? Where?
- Never make false promises

Appendix 2:

What to Do if You Suspect that Abuse may have Occurred

You must report the concerns immediately to the Designated Person who will obtain information, assess what to do next and take the appropriate action.

The East Riding County Choir Designated Person is **Debbie Miller (07395570069)**.

The Designated Person has been nominated by ERCC to refer allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities.

In the absence of the Designated Person the matter should be brought to the attention of the Chairman of the ERCC **Helen Miller (07854967445)**.

You should under no circumstances discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those nominated above.

Make notes as soon as possible (ideally within 1 hour of being told).

You should write down exactly what the child or vulnerable adult has said and what you said in reply and what was happening immediately before being told (i.e. the activity being delivered).

You should record the dates, times and when you made the record and ensure that the record is signed and dated.

You should report your discussion with the Designated Person as soon as possible.

If this person is implicated you need to report to the Chairman of the ERCC.

If both are implicated report the matter to East Riding Social Services on 01492 395500 (9am – 5pm) or 01492 393939 (After hours).

Note: Child Abuse. It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies. If for any reason you believe that the nominated persons have not responded appropriately to your concerns, then it is up to you to contact the child protection agencies directly.

Note: Abuse of Vulnerable Adults. To determine the appropriate action, it is important to consider:

- Does the vulnerable adult understand and accept the risk?
- Is the vulnerable adult able to make their own decisions and choice, and do they wish to do so?
- How serious is the abuse – with the starting point being the perception of the vulnerable adult.
- If the vulnerable adult expresses a wish for the concerns not to be pursued, this should be respected wherever possible, subject to considerations of safety and competence

Appendix 3:

What the Designated Person Will Do

The role of the Designated Person is to:

- obtain information from staff, volunteers, children or parents and carers who have child protection concerns or concerns about the welfare of a vulnerable adult, and to record this information.
- assess the information quickly and carefully and ask for further clarification as appropriate.
- make a referral to a statutory child protection agency or appropriate agency for vulnerable adults, or the police without delay
- if in any doubt about what to do, to seek advice from Social Services (see below for contact details).

It is NOT the Designated Person's role to investigate.

If a child or vulnerable adult has a symptom of physical injury or neglect, and the abuse may have been deliberate the Designated Person will:

- contact Social Services for advice
- seek emergency medical attention if it is necessary and inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.

The doctor will then initiate further action if necessary.

- inform the parents or carers only if advised by Social Services to do so.

If a child or vulnerable adult has a symptom of physical injury or neglect, but there is no sign that the abuse was deliberate, the Designated Person will:

- seek emergency medical attention if it is necessary and inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.

The doctor will then initiate further action if necessary.

- otherwise, speak with the parent/carer/guardian and suggest that medical help/attention is sought for the child.

- if appropriate, encourage the parent/carer to seek help from Social Services.

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse the Designated Person will:

- contact Social Services and speak to no one else about the matter

Appendix 4:

Contact Details and references

Debbie Miller (Designated Person responsible for Safeguarding): 07395570069

Helen Miller (Chair of East Riding County Choir): 07854967445

SAPH- East Riding Safeguarding children's hub: 01492 395500 during office hours, out of office hours- 01482 393939.

East Riding Safeguarding adults' team- 01482 396940

East Riding Safeguarding Adults Policy-

<http://www.ersab.org.uk/easysiteweb/getresource.axd?assetid=693072&type=0&servicetype=1>