



## Child Protection Policy

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***NB Please note that the term staff is used throughout this document as a generic term to represent any representative of VIVACE SINGERS including all voluntary helpers.***

### ***Statement of Intent***

Vivace Singers believe that making music together has very great cultural, intellectual and social benefits, not least amongst young people. It is the right of every child and young person to have access to this experience within a safe and caring environment.

Vivace Singers fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection.

### ***Implementation***

Details of any convictions for criminal offences against children, including any spent convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 must be declared and a CRB certificate provided if requested.

At least one member of staff will have received first-aid training.

Our policy applies to all staff working with children. There are three main elements to our policy:

- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Supporting children who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

We ask all staff to inform a member of the Directorate of Vivace Singers if any signs of outward abuse are noted. The staff will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults whom they can approach if they are worried.



We will:

- Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to a member of Directorate of Vivace Singers.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the staff for child protection.
- Notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of an individual who is on the child protection register.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately. These records should include any allegations of abuse and any disclosures of abuse. **It is not the role of the staff to investigate.** This role lies jointly with the Children's Services and the Police.
  - If a child tells you they are being harmed and wants to talk to you, give them time and space, listen to them carefully and in private if possible;
  - Do not question the child and do not put words into his/her mouth;
  - Reassure the child and tell them they are not to blame in any way;
  - Write down exactly what you have seen or heard; use the child's own words. Write down what you have said as well;
  - Do not promise to keep anything a child tells you a secret;
  - Tell the child that you are going to do your best to help them and that you must, therefore, if necessary, report the matter to the Child Protection Officer.
- All referrals should be made with the knowledge that during any subsequent investigation, the source (i.e Vivace Singers) will be made known to the family. Other staff may need to be alerted to concerns about a child, possibly in order to monitor the concerns of to gather further evidence prior to a referral being made. **Information should only be shared on a strict need to know basis.**
- If a referral is made to Children's Services this must be followed up in writing **within 2 working days**. The referral will include:
  - The reason for the concern;
  - What was said or witnessed;



- Dates and times of incidents;
- Parents / family circumstances;
- Whether parents are aware of referral.
- Similarly, if any of the following incidents occur, report them immediately to another member of staff and make a written note of the event ensuring that the parents/guardian are also informed of the incident:
  - If accidental injury occurs;
  - If the child seems distressed in any manner;
  - If a child or disabled young person appears to be sexually aroused by your actions;
  - If a child or disabled young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.
- Ensure all records are kept securely, and in locked locations.
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff. The member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform a member of the Directorate of Vivace Singers or if the Director is subject to allegations, another Director. Any allegations against the Director should be discussed with a Child Protection Co-Ordinator in line with current procedures for managing allegations against staff. (These will be readily available from the local LEA)

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The staff will endeavour to support the individual through:

- The promotion of a positive, supportive and secure environment which gives individuals a sense of being valued.
- The staff will ensure that the individual knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the individual such as social services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, education welfare service and educational psychology service.

We recognise that staff working for us who have become involved with a child who has suffered, or is at risk of suffering harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such staff by providing the opportunity to talk through their anxieties with a Director of Vivace Singers and seek further support as appropriate.



## **Guidelines for Use of Photographic Filming**

Parental permission for this must be gained prior to an event. Photographs or film footage of young people, disabled or vulnerable adults must not be taken.

### **Good practice**

All staff will follow common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within the activity:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g., avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment).
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally, with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with pupils (e.g., it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision making process.
- Making the activity fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly. Care is needed as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people should always be consulted and their agreement obtained. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- Keeping up-to-date with technical skills, qualifications and personal development.
- Ensuring that if mixed groups are taken away/are resident on campus, they should always be accompanied by a male and a female member of staff. (N.B. However, same gender abuse can also occur).
- Ensuring that in residential situations, adults should not enter a child's room or invite children into their rooms.
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.



## **Guidance for staff – what is child abuse?**

### **Physical abuse**

Where someone injures or harms a child, this includes:

- Hitting;
- Shaking;
- Throwing;
- Scalding;
- Drowning;
- Suffocating.

### **Sexual abuse**

Where someone forces or entices a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, this can also include involving children in looking at pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

### **Emotional abuse**

Where someone persistently treats a child in ways that severely affects their emotional development, this includes:

- Making a child feel frightened or in danger;
- Making the child feel insecure;
- Or feel worthless or unloved.

### **Neglect**

Where adults fail to meet a child's basic needs, which can damage their health and development, this includes:

- Failing to provide food;
- Failing to provide shelter;
- Failing to provide clothing;
- Failing to provide medical care;
- Failing to provide protection from harm;
- Leaving the child alone;
- Not sending the child to school.



### ***Some questions to keep in mind***

- Is the ethos of Vivace Singers one in which all children and young people are valued, respected, listened to and taken seriously?
- Are all staff clear about the child protection policy?
- Do we have support systems available to children who are at particular risk or who have disclosed abuse?
- Do we have support available for staff dealing with a child protection case?
- Do we have support available for staff who are subject to allegations?
- Is Vivace Singers proactive in establishing positive links with other relevant agencies, particularly the Children's Services Division?