

Groby Sings
Child Protection Policy
August 2015

INTRODUCTION:

This document is the Child Protection Policy for Groby Sings, which will be followed by all members of the organisation and followed and promoted by those in the position of leadership within the organisation.

Parents/carers of children under 7 remain responsible for their children's welfare throughout all the work undertaken by the organisation.

We know that being a young person makes them vulnerable to abuse by adults. The purpose of this policy is to make sure that the actions of any adult in the context of the work carried out by the organisation are transparent and safeguard and promote the welfare of all young people.

If any parent or young person/child has any concerns about the conduct of any member of the organisation, this should be raised in the first instance with our designated child protection contacts (Ruth Matthews or Cliff Ashby).

Principles upon which the Child Protection Policy is based.

- The welfare of a child or young person will always be paramount.
- The welfare of families will be promoted.
- The rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their families will be respected and listened to.
- Those people in positions of responsibility within the organisation will work in accordance with the interests of children and young people and follow the policy outlined below.

This organisation will:

- Will ensure that only authorised people work with children and that all work with children is carried out within appropriate accountability structures.
- Obtain a DBS disclosure for all volunteers who work with children through Groby Sings.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children.
- Review the implementation of the child protection policy, procedures and practices at least annually.
- Work to create a culture of informed vigilance which takes children seriously.
- Pay particular attention to children with special needs and those from ethnic minorities to ensure their full integration and protection.
- Ensure that a health and safety policy and the appropriate procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed periodically.

- Act without delay on allegations or suspicions of abuse using the procedure below
- Respond without delay to any complaints received regarding children's work or the safeguarding of children.
- Ensure that all new volunteers who help with the crèche on a Monday afternoon, at the children's rehearsal on a Friday or at the concerts will have access to this policy so that they are aware of their responsibilities.
- Cooperate fully with investigations by statutory agencies and will not conduct its own investigations.

The recommended minimum staffing levels for the crèche will be maintained. These are as follows:

Age	Number of Leaders
0 to 2 years	1 leader to every 3 children
2 to 3 years	1 leader to every 4 children

If there are not enough adults to maintain these levels in the crèche, the parents of children in the crèche will be asked to help for that session.

Registration

A registration form will be completed for every child or young person who attends Groby Sings. The form will be updated annually and include the following:

- Name and address
- Date of birth
- Emergency contact details
- Medical information
- Any special needs including activities that the child or young person is unable to take part in
- Consent for photographs and videos

All personal details and registration forms will be stored securely, not used for any other purpose, and shredded or disposed of securely when out of date or no longer in use.

Support, supervision and training

[I can't see anything about training in this section. Would it be better to re-title it 'Supervision of children'? Cliff]

All those involved in working with children and young people will ensure that there is always more than one responsible adult available so that there is mutual supervision. Should one of the adults become ill or get called away, the other adult will call for additional help. In emergency situations where an individual cannot avoid working with children on his/her own because an unforeseen situation has arisen, he/she will inform another leader (or the Child Protection Coordinator) of the situation, if at all possible at the time it arises, and a note will be kept by the Child Protection Coordinator.

If a child needs taking to the toilet, an adult may take them but wait outside the door. If the child needs help with toileting, the parent or person with parental responsibility will be asked to help.

Health & Safety and First Aid

Health and Safety will be managed as part of all activities. Health and Safety issues observed by those working with children and young people should be reported to the Child Protection Coordinator or the person with responsibility for Health and Safety.

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Health and Safety and first aid

If there is an emergency involving injury to a child or young person:

- Stay calm
- Provide immediate first aid when needed
- Alert others to the need for help
- Ensure that somebody is supervising the other children or young people
- Call an ambulance if needed
- Contact the parents/guardians of the child or young person
- Provide an appropriate handover and information about the situation to the parents/guardians
- Consider whether there are implications for the Health & Safety policy and/or practices and report these to the Child Protection Coordinator.

Procedure to be followed in the case of an allegation or disclosure of abuse

Individuals within the organisation need to be alert to the potential abuse of children both within their families and also from other sources including abuse by members of that organisation.

The organisation should know how to recognise and act upon indicators of abuse or potential abuse involving children. There is an expected responsibility for all members of the organisation to respond to any suspected or actual abuse of a child in accordance with these procedures.

It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parents/carers about any concerns.

However, you must not discuss your concerns with parents/carers in the following circumstances:

- where sexual abuse is suspected
- where organised or multiple abuse is suspected
- where fictitious illness by proxy (also known as Munchausen Syndrome by proxy) is suspected
- where contacting parents/carers would place a child, yourself or others at immediate risk.

Immediate Action to Ensure Safety

Immediate action may be necessary at any stage in involvement with children and families.

IN ALL CASES IT IS VITAL TO TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IS NEEDED TO SAFEGUARD THE CHILD/REN ie:

- If emergency medical attention is required this can be secured by calling an ambulance (dial 999) or taking a child to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department.
- If a child is in immediate danger the police should be contacted (dial 999) as they alone have the power to remove a child immediately if protection is necessary, via Police Protection Order.

What to do if children talk to you about abuse or neglect

It is recognised that a child may seek you out to share information about abuse or neglect, or talk spontaneously individually or in groups when you are present. In these situations you must:

- Listen carefully to the child. DO NOT directly question the child.
- Give the child time and attention.
- Allow the child to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make an accurate record of the information you have been given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child's presentation as well as what was said. Do not throw this away as it may later be needed as evidence.
- Use the child's own words where possible.
- Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.
- Reassure the child that:
you are glad they have told you;
they have not done anything wrong;
what you are going to do next.
- Explain that you will need to get help to keep the child safe.
- Do NOT ask the child to repeat his or her account of events to anyone.

Consulting about your concern

The purpose of consultation is to discuss your concerns in relation to a child and decide what action is necessary.

You may become concerned about a child who has not spoken to you, because of your observations of, or information about that child.

It is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused, or respond to a child wanting to talk to you. This practice can help clarify vague concerns and result in appropriate action.

If you are concerned about a child you must share your concerns. Initially you should talk to one of the people designated as responsible for child protection within your organisation. In this organisation this person is Ruth Matthews, tel: 0116 287 6179 or Cliff Ashby, tel: 0116 231 3061. If a concern is raised with one of these persons, they shall discuss with the other before a decision is made regarding next steps. If one of those people is implicated in the concerns you should discuss your concerns directly with Social Services.

You should consult externally with your local Social Services Department in the following circumstances:

- when you remain unsure after internal consultation as to whether child protection concerns exist
- when there is disagreement as to whether child protection concerns exist
- when you are unable to consult promptly or at all with your designated internal contact for child protection
- when the concerns relate to any member of the organising committee.

Consultation is not the same as making a referral but should enable a decision to be made as to whether a referral to Social Services or the Police should progress.

Making a referral

A referral involves giving Social Services or the Police information about concerns relating to an individual or family in order that enquiries can be undertaken by the appropriate agency followed by any necessary action.

In certain cases the level of concern will lead straight to a referral without external consultation being necessary.

IF YOUR CONCERN IS ABOUT ABUSE OR RISK OF ABUSE FROM SOMEONE NOT KNOWN TO THE CHILD OR CHILD'S FAMILY, YOU SHOULD MAKE A TELEPHONE REFERRAL DIRECTLY TO THE POLICE AND CONSULT WITH THE PARENTS.

If your concern is about abuse or risk of abuse from a family member or someone known to the children, you should make a telephone referral to your local Social Services Office.

Information required

Be prepared to give as much of the following information as possible (in emergency situations all of this information may not be available). Unavailability of some information should not stop you making a referral.

- Your name, telephone number, position and request the same of the person to whom you are speaking.
- Full name and address, telephone number of family, date of birth of child and siblings.
- Gender, ethnicity, first language, any special needs.
- Names, dates of birth and relationship of household members and any significant others.
- The names of professionals' known to be involved with the child/family eg: GP, Health Visitor, School.
- The nature of the concern; and foundation for them.
- An opinion on whether the child may need urgent action to make them safe.
- Your view of what appears to be the needs of the child and family.
- Whether the consent of a parent with parental responsibility has been given to the referral being made.

Action to be taken following the referral

- Ensure that you keep an accurate record of your concern(s) made at the time.
- Put your concerns in writing to Social Services following the referral (within 48 hours).
- Accurately record the action agreed or that no further action is to be taken and the reasons for this decision.

Confidentiality

The organisation should ensure that any records made in relation to a referral should be kept confidentially and in a secure place.

Information in relation to child protection concerns should be shared on a "need to know" basis. However, the sharing of information is vital to child protection and, therefore, the issue of confidentiality is secondary to a child's need for protection.

If in doubt, consult.

Recognition of Abuse or Neglect

Abuse or neglect of a child is caused by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting: by those known to them or more rarely by a stranger.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms, or, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as, fabricated illness by proxy or Munchausen Syndrome by proxy.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (eg rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. This may include non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Use of Social Media, email and texting

All those involved in working with children and young people will exercise care in the use of social media and respect the principles set out below. Communication by electronic means or by texting will not be used with children under the age of 11. All communication in these forms will be via their parents or adults with parental responsibility. It is also preferable that communication by electronic means should also be via parents or adults with responsibility for those aged 11 and over (our youth choir). The rest of the principles relate to communication with children and young people aged 11 and over. The key point is that communication should be in a context of transparency and accountability.

- Electronic communication and texting should only be used for reasons relating to Groby Sings and not for general socialising purposes.
- Other leaders should be aware of the situations in which these means of communication are being used.

- Leaders, workers and volunteers should not invite children or young people from Groby Sings to their personal social networking page but may respond to requests where appropriate, as long as the child or young person is 13 or over.
- Where possible, group pages should be used on social media for communicating.
- Care should be exercised in posting to Facebook, twitter etc as comments made on the spur of the moment may not always come out as intended and can be passed on extremely quickly around a large audience.
- Communication by electronic means or texting with children or young people should never take place during school hours and should be kept within the hours of 9am – 9pm.
- Where possible, email and messaging should take place to and within groups rather than individuals.
- Leaders, workers and volunteers should give very careful consideration as to whether it is necessary to give personal mobile phone numbers to children and young people.
- Webcams will not be used where internet chat or Skype is used for one to one conversations.
- Records of communications will be kept just as they would be for written communication. If a worker's mobile phone does not allow text messages to be saved then a written record should be kept.

Use Of Photographs And Images

The taking and publishing of photographs of children is usually enjoyed by children and parents and can bring good publicity, but there are some important issues to note. Issues are the same for still photographs, videos and films, and regardless of the particular technology used. For convenience they are all referred to as images.

Images count as personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998. It is therefore important that the consent of the parents/guardians/carers is obtained for the taking and use of images.

Youth/children's leaders and those taking photographs need to bear in mind that parents and carers may have good reasons for refusing consent, for example:

- if individual children are identified, it would be possible for paedophiles to use the images to target prospective victims;
- some children may have been subject to disputed custody matters, local authority care, or adoption, and their
- whereabouts should not be too widely known; parents and carers of the affected children will know this and will appropriately withhold consent without necessarily giving the reason;

- photographs taken using digital cameras can be manipulated for child pornography, which is a growing problem on the internet

Advice and good practice guide for the taking and using of images

- Consider using models or illustrations instead of photographs if you are promoting an activity.
- Obtain parental permission before taking images of their child taking part in weekly rehearsals at Groby Sings, or at the performances.
- It is the leader's responsibility to see that children are not included in photographs if consent has not been given.
- Avoid the use of both first name and surname of individuals in a group photograph.
- If the child is fully named in print, avoid using their photograph.
- If a photograph is used, avoid fully naming the child.
- After taking photographs, ask for parental permission to use an image of their child if you wish to use it for promotional purposes. This ensures that parents are aware of the way the image of their child is representing the organisation or activity.
- Consider also asking for the child's permission to use their image.

Guidelines for the use of photographers (e.g. for a local newspaper) at events

- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content.
- Issue the photographer with identification, which must be worn at all times.
- Inform children and parents that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs.
- Do not allow unsupervised access to children or one-to-one photo sessions at events.

Photographs at a public event

It is necessary to exercise common sense in the application of these guidelines in the case of a general photograph of a public event, such as a performance, where no individual or group of people is the focus. It would not be practicable to obtain the prior consent of everyone concerned, nor is this required by data protection law. It is still appropriate to consider carefully where and how such photographs are displayed.

Parents attending an activity, if you give them permission, are allowed to take visual images as long as they are only for their own private use e.g. for a family album. This information can be communicated to them by the circular or invitation to the activity before it takes place, or by Helen at the start of each concert.

The Internet and Websites

Apply an increased level of consideration to the images of children and young people on a website. Once it has been decided which visual images to use for these purposes parental consent should be obtained for use in this context.