

Cantate Youth Choir

Safeguarding policy (November 2023)



All parents/ carers, volunteers and staff are asked to read this document carefully.

The purpose of this policy is:

- a) To keep each child safe while she or he attends Cantate
- b) To provide a safe, trusted and secure environment which safeguards anyone who comes into contact with Cantate including choir members, staff, trustees and volunteers.
- c) To provide members staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to the protection of vulnerable people.

This policy applies to: all members, staff (whether employees or freelancers), volunteers and anyone working on behalf of Cantate or taking part in Cantate activities.

Commitment to safeguarding

Everybody has the right to be safe, no matter who they are or what their circumstances are. We will strive to provide a safe, trusted and secure environment which safeguards anyone who comes into contact with Cantate as an organisation.

Cantate believes that a child, young person or vulnerable adult, or for that matter, any person, should never experience abuse of any kind. We recognise that we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults. We are committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of all children, young people and vulnerable adults we come into contact with and to protecting them from harm.

Cantate understands that its safeguarding duties go beyond preventing physical abuse, and includes protecting people from harm generally including; neglect, emotional abuse, exploitation, radicalisation, bullying and the consequences of the misuse of personal data.

Cantate takes safeguarding extremely seriously and will do everything possible to keep children and young people safe, including minimising the risk of harm and taking action to tackle safety concerns.

Cantate will meet their commitment to safeguard children and anyone who comes into contact with the organisation, through the following means:

Awareness: Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are aware of the problem of child abuse and risks to children and others who come into contact with the organisation.

Prevention: Ensuring, through awareness and good practice, that staff and volunteers minimise the risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Reporting: Ensuring that staff and volunteers are clear what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children and others.

Responding: Ensuring that action is taken to support and protect children and others where concerns arise regarding possible abuse or risks.

Staff and volunteer recruitment and training practices: Undertake appropriate recruitment including ensuring satisfactory references are received for paid staff in advance of starting employment with the Choir. Ensuring that all staff, volunteers and Trustees that comes into direct contact with children and young people are DBS checked.

Ensure that key members of the team, such as; one member of music staff, one choir manager and two trustees have always either taken an online safeguarding course provided by Making Music, or received other training as appropriate. (Such as chaperone training.)

Promoting a culture of openness and safety: Providing an environment where safeguarding is openly discussed with choir members, volunteers and staff whilst promoting safeguarding as everyone's responsibility.

About this policy:

This policy applies to:

- All staff (whether employees or freelancers)
- All volunteers (including choir managers, trustees and other people who undertake tasks to support the work of Cantate)
- And anyone working (paid or volunteering) on behalf of Cantate or taking part in Cantate activities

The purpose of this policy is to provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to the protection of vulnerable people and anyone who comes into contact with the organisation.

This policy recognises vulnerable people as:

- Children up to the age of 16 or young people aged 16 to 18
- Adults aged over 18 as defined as vulnerable by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. This might include adults with a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including addiction to alcohol or drugs, or reduced physical or mental capacity.

Our potential involvement with vulnerable people might include, but is not limited to the following:

- Members of the three youth choirs who attend the regular rehearsals, fun sings, open signs and concerts
- Relatives and friends of the members who attend rehearsals and concerts in a volunteering capacity
- Audience members at public concerts

The policy aims to:

- Protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who are: Cantate choir members, receive services from, or volunteer for Cantate.
- Ensure that staff and volunteers working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are carefully recruited and understand and accept responsibility for the safeguarding of those vulnerable individuals that they are interacting with.
- Ensure the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults is a primary consideration when Cantate undertakes any activity, event or project.
- Provide a safe, trusted and secure environment that safeguards anyone who comes into contact with Cantate including choir members, staff, trustees and volunteers.

Named safeguarding person:

Tessa Storey and Josephine Cowley have responsibility for safeguarding issues in 2023-24. All queries and concerns relating to safeguarding should be referred to these trustees in the first instance.

Any project, events or other activities that will involve vulnerable people must be planned with the involvement of the named safeguarding person and in line with established procedures and the Cantate Safeguarding Guidelines (see below).

Safeguarding Guidelines:

A separate document “Cantate Safeguarding Guidelines” is attached and forms part of this policy. It outlines the best practice procedures that Cantate adopts in implementing this policy.

Policy review:

This policy will be reviewed and amended (if necessary) on an annual basis by the Cantate Committee. It will also be reviewed in response to changes in relevant legislation, good practice, or in response to an identified failing in effectiveness.

Cantate Safeguarding Guidelines

Introduction

This document forms part of the Cantate Safeguarding Policy.

- The policy applies to: All staff (whether employees or freelancers); All volunteers (including choir managers, trustees and other people who undertake tasks to support the work of Cantate); and anyone working (paid or volunteering) on behalf of Cantate or taking part in Cantate activities
- The purpose of this policy is to provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to the protection of vulnerable people and anyone who comes into contact with the organisation.
- This policy recognises vulnerable people as Children up to the age of 16 or young people aged 16 to 18 and adults aged over 18 as defined as vulnerable by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

This document includes:

- Recruitment practices around safeguarding
- Ground rules and ways for working regarding safeguarding of vulnerable people
- Procedures for raising safeguarding concerns and incidents of abuse
- Procedures for dealing with concerns and incident of abuse

Background information:

These guidelines are produced as a good practice document of procedures that Cantate implements to both prevent harm and to ensure that it creates a safe environment for all. The guidelines aim to help install a culture within Cantate that prioritises safeguarding and ensures that everyone feels able to report incidents or concerns and feels assured that all concerns will be handled sensitively and properly. The guidelines provide clarity on how concerns are to be handled and implements clear lines of responsibility.

1) Named Safeguarding Officer:

Cantate will ensure that at all times there is a Named Safeguarding Officer. This will be a Committee Trustee and ideally should be appointed at the Cantate's Annual General Meeting.

The name and contact details of the Cantate Named Safeguarding Officer will be available on Cantate's website.

Currently, **Tessa Storey and Josephine Cowley** are the Cantate Named Safeguarding Officers and have responsibility for safeguarding issues. All queries and concerns relating to safeguarding should be referred to both of these in the first instance.

Any project, events or other activities that will involve vulnerable people must be planned with the involvement of the named safeguarding person and in line with established procedures and the Cantate Safeguarding Guidelines.

2) Recruitment practices around safeguarding

Staff recruitment:

The appropriate levels of DBS checks will be required to be in place for all staff (whether employees or freelancers) before any work is undertaken.

Appropriate references will be required before any staff are appointed and start in post.

Volunteer recruitment:

Cantate values the support of all its volunteers.

Where volunteers will have direct access to children and young people, such as choir managers and chaperones for concerts and trustees, appropriate DBS checks will be undertaken prior to taking up the role that requires the direct access.

Cantate must ensure that any Trustee that is appointed is not barred from being a Trustee under the Charity Commission's rules.

However, many of the volunteer roles within Cantate will not have direct access to children and young people, such as administrative support or erecting staging. DBS checks will only be carried out where it is felt appropriate to do so.

3) DBS checks:

As Cantate is a youth choir, all staff and many volunteers will be required to hold appropriate DBS checks.

Cantate will ensure that it has at least one person who acts as a DBS coordinator and verifier, who will apply for DBS checks, verify paperwork and undertake regular checks to ensure that staff and volunteers have valid DBS checks in place.

The results of any DBS check will be used confidentially and in line with Cantate's privacy and equal opportunities policy.

A record of all Cantate staff and volunteers DBS certificate numbers and the date that it was awarded will be kept by Cantate. The Cantate Named Safeguarding Officer will ensure that the records are kept up to date and ensure that appropriate DBS checks are in place.

4) Safeguarding procedures relating to choir members and non-choir members

Choir Managers keep records of the children and young people in each choir.

Parental consent forms that state whether medication can be provided and enabling the choir managers to act in locus in medical emergencies.

Choir Managers have the contact details of parents / carers and other key information such as health information of each choir members during all activities that they attend as part of Cantate.

The Choir Managers are responsible for the welfare of all the choir members within their choir during all activities that they attend including rehearsals and concerts.

If a child wishes to take part in Cantate activities, written permission (email is fine) should be obtained from parents/guardians where appropriate, and before the activity takes place. Written permission should include: emergency contact details of any relevant pick-up arrangements – including permission for another adult to pick up the vulnerable person after the activity has finished

Choir Managers will be responsible for ensuring that they register each child or young adult into Cantate activities, that they are aware of the location of each child or young person throughout the activity and that they sign out each child or young person at the end of the activity. For Training and Junior Choirs the Choir Managers will ensure that they hand the child to a suitable adult.

Prior to any concert, all parents / carers must sign a parental consent form and declare that their child is fit to perform.

Parental consent is requested for permission for photographs of children and young people to be taken and where appropriate to be used as part of Cantate's publicity including the website and / or social media.

At least one choir manager is First Aid trained. A First Aid box is available at all Cantate activities.

During rehearsals, concerts and activities staff and choir managers (all of whom are appropriately DBS checked) coordinate themselves to ensure that at all times there are at least two adults in any room where there are children and young people. Where appropriate, when additional volunteers are requested to attend, to ensure that the ratios of adults to children and young people are maintained at all times.

Behavioural policy:

Cantate aims to ensure that everybody involved in the organisation feels that it is a trusted and safe environment where they feel safe and free from harm. We are aware that sometimes the behaviour of individuals (such as choir members) may make other people feel uncomfortable and not safe. Cantate has a behaviour code of conduct that every new member is made aware of when they join via the "Joiners Pack". Every choir member, staff member and volunteer is expected to follow this behaviour code to ensure that everyone feels respected and in a trusted environment.

If staff or volunteers (such as choir managers or trustees) become aware of behaviour that is affecting other choir members, they will intervene sensitively and try to resolve the issue and prevent any further harm.

Often these incidences are one off and resolved quickly. However, if the issue persists, records will be kept of incidences. If it is felt appropriate, the issue will be raised with the Named Safeguarding Officer for a case review. If appropriate the choir member will be asked to attend an interview with their parent / carer to explain the issues. If the behaviour is felt to be serious and or persistent, the choir member will be asked to leave the choir.

Non-members:

As an open access choir Cantate regularly holds Fun Sings, Open rehearsals and other events that allow children and young people to participate in Cantate activities in order to allow the children to try the choir and get a flavour of what being a member of Cantate involves.

Children and young people are also encouraged to attend initial sessions before formally joining the choir.

Cantate also holds joint events with other choirs and with local schools or groups as part of its outreach work.

Before allowing a child or young person to attend a rehearsal or event, appropriate details regarding the child (including emergency contact details and health issues) must be received from the child's parents / carers.

5) Safeguarding Ground rules for organising events and activities

Cantate will ensure that planning for all its activities including rehearsals, events and concerts are carried out in line with this policy and these guidelines.

A risk Assessment and Health and Safety inspection will be undertaken by either a member of staff or a Cantate Trustee prior to the event. Any issues will be resolved / mitigated against prior to the event. The completed Risk Assessment will be circulated to all staff and volunteers prior to the event for all to note. Where appropriate dynamic risk assessments may need to be carried out and alternative mitigating measures put in place to reduce potential harm.

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that each event is attended by the appropriate number of DBS checked adults – this will be a minimum of two but often more will be required to ensure that the appropriate ratios are maintained at all times.

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:

Childs age	Number of adults	Number of children
4-8	1	6
9-12	1	8
12-18	1	10

There is a main contact for safeguarding on the day - this will be an individual who has been DBS checked. (This will probably be a Trustee at a concert, or one of the choir managers)

The main contact has access to emergency contact details and other relevant details (e.g. information about picking up arrangements children). (This will be the choir manager of the relevant choir, or their substitute)

As choir members are of both sexes, Cantate will ensure that adults in attendance at the events will reflect this as far as possible.

A child is not be left alone with an adult, unless that adult is DBS checked and carrying out regulated activity.

Two adults (one DBS checked) should be the last to leave a venue once the activity has finished and will be responsible for ensuring children get home safely.

At each event the audience will be warned not to upload photographs to social media both verbally and where possible in programmes.

Where practically possible a trained First Aider will attend each event.

6) Procedures for raising safeguarding concerns and incidents of abuse

Types of abuse

Cantate understands that there are many different types of abuse including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, bullying and radicalisation.

Dealing with a disclosure

If a child discloses that s/he has been abused, the member of staff / volunteer should:

- Listen carefully to what the child says without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is being said
- Allow the child to talk freely without prying too much in to the details – risking evidence contamination in a criminal investigation
- Reassure the child but do not make promises which it may not be possible to keep
- Do not promise confidentiality – it may well be necessary to inform the relevant authorities (including but not limited to Social Services and the Police)
- Reassure the child that it is not his or her fault
- Stress that it is right to speak up about their issues
- Do not criticise the perpetrator – the child may well still love him or her
- Explain what you have to do next
- Ensure that the child's immediate safety by liaising with the Safeguarding Lead
- Thank him or her for confiding in you and reassure them that action will be taken

Record keeping

When abuse is disclosed or suspected the member of staff / volunteer should:

- Make brief notes as soon as possible giving quotes if they can be recalled
- Dates and times should be recorded
- Notes should be factual and precise
- These notes must not be destroyed, even if a more detailed report is later written as they may be needed in court

- Draw a diagram to indicate any marks or injuries observed
- All Safeguarding files are marked “Strictly Confidential” and are kept separate from other Choir records.
- Paper copy should be given to Tessa Storey or Josie Cowley immediately. If they are not on site, an email should be sent to Tessastorey@gmail.com or josiecowley84@gmail.com with the title SAFEGUARDING CONCERN and marked as highest priority.

Witnessing an incident:

If any member, staff or volunteer in Cantate witnesses, suspects or is informed of a witnessed or suspected case of abuse they should immediately report it to the Named Safeguarding Officer; Tessa Storey or Josephine Cowley.

If the Named Safeguarding Officer (s) is/are not available, or are involved in or connected to, the abuse, it should be reported to a DBS checked adult: At time of revision of this policy: (Lucy Joy Morris, Graham Instrall, Charlie Penn, Elizabeth Proudfoot, Claire Pelly, Eleanor Oldershaw, Tim, Oldershaw, Janine Parker, Joanne Willis).

If an individual wishes to report an incident of abuse against themselves they should report it to the Named Safeguarding Officer or an individual they trust.

Procedures for dealing with concerns and incidents of abuse

The Named person (or person reported in their absence) will first make a decision based on the immediacy of the concern and the following two factors:

- 1) If the vulnerable person is in immediate danger or needs emergency medical attention – call the police and/or ambulance service.
- 2) If the person at the centre of the allegation is working with vulnerable persons at the current time – remove them, in a sensitive manner, from direct contact with vulnerable people and follow the procedures below.

If none of the above applies the Named Safeguarding Officers will:

- Make a note of the concerns reported to them.
- Speak with committee members to decide how to handle the reported abuse. Excluding any committee members who of involved in the incident.
- Escalate the report by either:
 - Raising concerns with the police – for serious or possible criminal offences.
 - Requesting an assessment by the local authority social care department about whether a vulnerable person is in need of protection.
 - An internal investigation – for less serious incidents where they feel internal mediation will be successful.
- Where cases are escalated the committee will cooperate with the police or local authority in dealing with the reported incident.
- Where an internal investigation takes place the committee will:

- Inform all parties involved of the reported abuse as soon as possible.
- Inform the family/guardians of the person reported as being abused of the incident.
- Arrange separate meetings with both parties within 10 days of the reported incident.
- A joint meeting may be arranged if appropriate.
 - Both parties should be given the chance to bring a friend or representative to the meeting.
 - Meetings will be attended by the named safeguarding officer and at least one other committee member.
 - All parties will also be invited to submit a written statement in advance of the meeting.
- Once meetings have taken place the committee will decide on next steps and communicate them to all parties in writing within 5 days. They will be either:
 - Escalate the incident to the relevant authority.
 - Further investigation – with established procedures and timelines to work towards a resolution.
 - A decision or resolution. Resolution and disciplinary action
- If abuse is found to have taken place any final resolution or decision will be taken in the best interest of the person who has suffered the abuse and the best interests Cantate
 - Any disciplinary action will be taken in line with the Cantate constitution.

Resolution and disciplinary action

- If abuse is found to have taken place any final resolution or decision will be taken in the best interest of the person who has suffered the abuse and the best interests Cantate
- Any disciplinary action will be taken in line with the Cantate constitution.

Revised by Josie Cowley and circulated to the Trustees in November 2023

Adopted November 2023

To be reviewed November 2024

Elizabeth Proudfoot

27/11/2023