



SAFEGUARDING POLICY - Towcester Choral Society (TCS) (incorporating Ground Rules, ways of working and procedures)

1. Introduction and scope

Towcester Choral Society (TCS) believes that any 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 adults at risk we come into contact with and to protecting them from harm.

- This policy applies to members, contractors, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of TCS or taking part in TCS activities.
- This policy defines vulnerable people as:
 - Children up to the age of 16
 - Young people aged 16-18
 - Adults aged over 18 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 an addiction to alcohol or drugs, or reduced physical or mental capacity. This policy also recognises risk is determined by the activity an adult is taking part in and not solely on the personal characteristics or circumstances of the adult, as such any adult can be at risk, and the risk can be temporary.
- The purpose of this policy is to provide the overarching principles that guide TCS' approach to the protection of vulnerable people. This policy aims to:
 - Protect vulnerable people who are members of, receive services from, or volunteer for TCS
 - Ensure members and volunteers working with vulnerable people are carefully recruited, and understand and accept responsibility for the safeguarding of those vulnerable people they are interacting with
 - Ensure that safeguarding of vulnerable people is a primary consideration when TCS undertakes any activity, event or project.

2. How TCS might work with vulnerable people

- TCS does not undertake events where TCS has responsibility for the safeguarding of children. Where we participate in events involving children (whether as performers,

audience members, or in any other capacity) the responsibility for safeguarding the children will always lie with others e.g. teachers, parents / guardians. During the planning of the event this allocation of responsibility will be made clear to the person(s) responsible for the welfare of the children so that there is no doubt on this matter.

- TCS membership is open to those over 16 years of age. We run rehearsals for members and put on concerts for the general public. Our involvement with vulnerable people might include, but is not limited to:
 - Members who attend rehearsals and concerts
 - Relatives and friends of members who attend rehearsals and concerts as a volunteer
 - Audience members at public concerts

3. Named safeguarding officer

- The current Chair is the named TCS safeguarding officer with responsibility for safeguarding issues. All queries and concerns relating to safeguarding should be referred to the named safeguarding officer in the first instance.
- Any projects, events or other activities that will involve vulnerable people must be planned with the involvement of the safeguarding officer and in line with established ground rules, ways of working and procedures.

4. Recruitment

- If a member or volunteer will be working with vulnerable people as part of TCS activities the appropriate level of background check (DBS) will be requested before that work is undertaken.
- The level of background check required will be decided by the committee and in line with DBS rules regarding regulated activity. The results of any background check will be used confidentially and in line with the TCS equal opportunities policy.

5. Ground rules and ways of working

- When TCS organises an activity or event where they will be responsible for vulnerable people they will ensure:
 - Planning is carried out in line with the Safeguarding policy and procedures.
 - The event is attended by an appropriate number of background-checked adults – this will be a minimum of one but more when practical.
 - There is a main contact for safeguarding on the day - this will be an individual who has been background-checked.
 - 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 adults of different gender will be in attendance too.
 - A vulnerable person is not left alone with an adult, unless that adult is background-checked.

- Two adults (one background-checked) should be the last to leave a venue once the activity has finished and will be responsible for ensuring vulnerable people have suitable arrangements to get home safely.
- Parent/guardian permission
 - If a vulnerable person wishes to take part in TCS activities written / email permission should be obtained from parent/guardian where appropriate, and before the activity takes place. Written permission should include emergency contact and details of any relevant pick-up arrangements – including permission for any other adult to pick up the vulnerable person after the activity has finished

6. Procedure for raising safeguarding concerns and incidents of abuse

- If any TCS member or volunteer witnesses, suspects or is informed of a witnessed or suspected case of abuse they should immediately report it to the TCS named safeguarding officer.
- If the TCS named safeguarding officer is not available, or is involved in or connected to the abuse, it should be reported to another member of the TCS committee or a DBS checked adult.
- If an individual wishes to report an incident of abuse against themselves they should report it to the TCS named safeguarding officer or another individual they trust.

7. Procedures for dealing with concerns and incidents of abuse

- The TCS named safeguarding officer (or other person reported to in their absence) will make a decision based on the immediacy of the concern / incident and the following two factors:
 - If the vulnerable person is in immediate danger or needs emergency medical attention – call the police and/or ambulance service.
 - 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 neither of the above two factors applies the TCS named safeguarding officer will:
 - Make a written note of the concern / incident reported to them, ideally immediately.
 - Discuss with other committee members how to handle the reported concern / incident, excluding any committee members who were involved in the reported incident.
 - Deal with the report by:
 - Reporting to the police – for serious or possible criminal offences, or;
 - Requesting an assessment by the local authority social care department about whether a vulnerable person is in need of protection, or;
 - Holding an internal investigation – for the least serious reports.

- The TCS committee will cooperate fully with the police or local authority in dealing with any reported concern.
- Where a TCS internal investigation takes place the committee will:
 - Inform all parties involved of the reported abuse as soon as possible.
 - Inform the parents/guardians of the person reported as having been abused.
 - Arrange separate meetings with each party involved. A joint meeting may be arranged if appropriate.
 - Both parties should be given the opportunity to bring a friend or other representative to the meeting.
 - Meetings will be attended by the TCS 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 (normally within 5 days). They will be either:
 - To report the incident to the relevant authority.
 - To carry out further investigation – with defined steps and timelines to work towards a resolution.
 - To provide a decision or resolution.

8. Resolution and disciplinary action

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

There are currently no committee members who are DBS checked; this will be reviewed as necessary.