



THE SAINT JOHN SINGERS SAFEGUARDING POLICY

This Safeguarding Policy applies to members, volunteers and all others invited to perform or work with the Saint John Singers ('SJS'). SJS is an all-adult choir which takes the place of cathedral choirs when their choirs are on holiday. The average number of cathedral visits in any one year is normally three to four. Prior to each cathedral visit, there are four rehearsals and in addition there are two one-day workshops each year. SJS is an unincorporated association run by a committee elected by the membership. (*This will be amended when we gain charitable status*) There are no employees. The Director of Music and organists who accompany SJS are self-employed. All members of SJS will be reminded regularly of the responsibility to protect and safeguard the interests of children, young people and vulnerable adults where they may become involved with SJS.

Legal Context

The law requires any organisation, where children, young people and/or vulnerable adults may be involved, to take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risk of harm to their welfare are minimised and, where there are concerns, to share them with other agencies. The relevant legal requirements arise from:

- The Children's Act 1989;
- The Human Rights Act 1998;
- The Protection of Children Act 1999;
- The Sexual Offences (Amendments) Act 2006;
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;

The relevant government guidance including: Safe from Harm 1993; Working Together to Safeguard Children 1999; Caring for the Young and Vulnerable 2000.

SJS recognises that it is not the role of our organisation to decide whether or not a child, young person or vulnerable adult has been abused. This is the role of the Social Services department who have legal responsibility or the NSPCC who have powers to investigate child protection concerns under the Children Act. SJS is, however, committed to undertake responsibility within its remit.

Who are Children or Vulnerable Adults?

In this context anyone up to the age of 19 is classified as a child; anyone who is over the age of 18 who is or who may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation, is classified as a vulnerable adult.

Contact which typically falls into the following categories

- on rare occasions young people may become members of SJS and attend its rehearsals and cathedrals

- young people may attend a workshop to which all singers are invited whether or not they are member of SJS
- children form part of the congregation where the choir sings services.

How the Saint John Singers Operate

In practice, all new members of the choir come as a result of personal contact or invitation and this is likely to mean that no children, young people or vulnerable adults will become full choir members. The most likely contact between choir members, children, young people or vulnerable adults is in the context of attendance at our training days or as a result of cathedral visits where they form part of the congregation.

SJS is committed to take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults are minimised. In summary:

- SJS recognises its duty of care towards children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- SJS upholds the right to protection from abuse of all children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- SJS undertakes that all suspicions or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- SJS accepts that all members have a duty of care to abide by this policy and to report concerns;

Implementation

- In the case of any cathedral services where SJS is joined by children's or community choirs, SJS will ask to see a copy of the organisation's Safeguarding policy prior to the event and will discuss arrangements with the children's choir leader. The responsibility for chaperoning will at all times lie with the staff of the relevant choir and not SJS;
- If a child chorister joins SJS then the parent will be responsible for chaperoning that child;
- Where choir members are invited to go into schools, hospitals or care homes for the elderly, or attend rehearsals with children's or community choirs they will be reminded that they should, at all times, abide by the safeguarding policies and procedures of that organisation as well as their own;
- Should the Director of Music invite a choral scholar or other singer who is under eighteen, to join the choir for a particular cathedral visit it will be his responsibility to inform the committee of SJS and for that scholar or singer to be chaperoned by their parent. All members will then be reminded of their responsibility for the welfare and safeguarding of a young person and of how to behave properly;
- If a person with a disability becomes a member of SJS, then all its members will undertake to enable this person to participate as fully as possible in all its activities, and, specifically, will accept responsibility to safeguard this person against significant harm and discrimination. Each case will be dealt with and assessed individually.
- SJS rehearsals and cathedral visits are group activities and there is no need for a member of SJS to be alone with another member of any age. SJS is therefore unlikely to be targeted by a person seeking opportunities to abuse children or vulnerable adults. Nevertheless, members of SJS will be reminded that, in addition to safeguarding others, they should not place themselves at risk of allegations, by avoiding being alone with any child at any time, especially in toilets and vestries.
- In the unlikely event of a child disclosing possible abuse to a member of SJS, members will be reminded of their duty to report to a responsible person, such as a school teacher or choir leader and also to the Safeguarding officer appointed by the committee of SJS. If it appears that the child's teacher or choir leader does not take the disclosure seriously, then in discussion with SJS's Safeguarding Officer. It may be necessary to contact the statutory Children's Services.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

It is likely that the Director of Music of SJS will have a DBS certificate through his or her employment. Members of SJS may have a DBS certificate through their work or through a variety of voluntary work. It is not expected that SJS will require all its members to have DBS checks.

If a new member of SJS is known to have a spent conviction for child abuse or is listed as a sex offender, this does not necessarily preclude that person from becoming a member of SJS which is an adult choir. He or she has a right to be a member if they have the musical skills acceptable to become a member. On cathedral visits where there is a likelihood of members coming into contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults, the Safeguarding Officer will undertake to ensure that this member of SJS is supervised at all times and, specifically, never left alone with any child. This will be through prior discussion and agreement with the individual concerned.

The Safeguarding Officer is Eila Savill who is a solicitor.

This policy was written and approved by the committee of SJS on 10 January 2024 and will be reviewed every three years.