



# CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

## Additional Safeguarding Procedures Pertaining to the Music Department: Cathedral Choir Choristers

March 2025

This document will be reviewed, revised (as required) and approved as part of the Cathedral's safeguarding annual review process				
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V2	April 2020	EJN, GW	EJN, GW	April 2021
V2.2 (contacts update)	March 2021	SRH		April 2021
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V5 (DSL update)	Nov 2023	CCCS	CCCS, Chapter	Feb 2024
V6	Feb 2024	MD, SAW	Chapter	Feb 2025
V7	March 2025	LW	Chapter	March 2026

*The following guidance is to be agreed and approved by the Christ Church Cathedral School Senior Management Team and also the School's governors*

## Care and supervision of choristers in the choir setting

Though the School passes direct responsibility for the safety and well-being of the choristers to the Cathedral when the choir is handed over by the School member of staff every time the choir goes to the Cathedral, the School is ultimately responsible for the well-being of the pupils who are educated there. As a consequence the Choristers, even when in the Cathedral, are governed by the School's safeguarding policy. The Cathedral has its own safeguarding policy which is co-ordinated by the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer and which is reviewed by the Chapter annually (alongside the School's policy), but this is designed to take into account the specific conditions found by the choristers in the course of their duties outside the School. The Cathedral Safeguarding Policy is consistent with the School's Safeguarding Policy, available to view at <https://www.cccs.org.uk/policies-inspections/safeguarding>. When the pupils are handed back to the School on either a hand-over at the Parlour to a member of School staff or when they are returned to the School by Cathedral staff, they become the full responsibility of the School again.

The Cathedral staff include the Organist, the Assistant Organist, and Organ Scholars all of whom are trained in safeguarding and hold DBS certificates. The School's Designated Safeguarding Lead, Anna Fairhurst, and the Cathedral Precentor, the Reverend Philippa White, have responsibility for the safeguarding and welfare of the choristers respectively.

There are regular meetings between the Headmaster and Organist, and between the Headmaster and the Sub Dean, to discuss all aspects of the choir including their safety and welfare.

During choir tours and off-site concerts at least two members of School staff attend as chaperones; they have responsibility for the pupils whilst not singing and the organist has the responsibility during rehearsals and performance. The Organist, who is also a School Governor, has overall lead responsibility.

All School rules are expected to be complied with whether on site, in the Cathedral or on tour. All Cathedral staff as above, Canons, lay clerks, and vergers attend safeguarding training and are DBS checked. The responsibility for crisis management would lie with the Headmaster if in Oxford and the Organist if elsewhere. It is the responsibility of the Organist to draw up a risk assessment for all tours abroad to include the safeguarding and welfare of the choristers. This will be checked and approved by the Headmaster and Cathedral Safeguarding Officer.

Below is the section of the Christ Church Cathedral Safeguarding guidance pertaining to choristers.

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## 1. General Introduction

The Music Department has a responsibility to provide for the care and supervision of the choristers when they are engaged in choir duties and are present in the Cathedral. The Music Department adheres to the safeguarding policy of Christ Church Cathedral School where the choristers are pupils with which this policy is consistent. This policy and that of the Cathedral School have been adopted by the Dean and Canons of Christ Church.

In order to create an environment in which children are safe from harm and/or abuse while engaged in activities related to their role as choristers, the following steps are taken:

1. All members of the Music Department (the Organist, Sub-Organist, Organ Scholars and Lay Clerks) are subject to Enhanced Criminal Records checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service.
2. All members of the Music Department are familiar with the safeguarding children policies of the Cathedral School and the Cathedral and have a commitment to follow the guidelines and procedures where concerns are raised about a child's welfare.
3. A commitment to the overall welfare of the chorister is shared by all members of the Music Department.
4. Through close liaison between the School and the Music Department (in the form of regular weekly meetings between the Organist and the Headmaster and through the dual role played by other staff in Cathedral and School), there is a constant awareness of the overall demands created by the combination of study, singing and other activities in the choristers' timetable.

## **2. Procedures to be followed by all members of the Music Department**

All members of the Music Department are in regular contact with children, and may be in a position to detect early symptoms of possible abuse at any time. In voicing concern, staff should not feel that they are necessarily starting formal procedures. The criterion should be that they have grounds for reasonable suspicion.

Allegations of abuse against any adults holding positions of responsibility in the Cathedral or in the Cathedral School will be treated very seriously.

Members of the Music Department should report any concerns to the Organist, who should in turn report these to the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (Anna Fairhurst) (or in the instance of a complaint against the Organist, they should report directly to the School's DSL (Anna Fairhurst) or the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer, Lisa Wilkins.

Every member of the Music Department has an obligation to report any concerns he/she may have concerning the welfare of a chorister, including any disclosures that may be made by a child.

### **2.1 Suspicion of Abuse/Disclosures by Children of Abuse**

The procedures to be followed are set out in detail in the Child Protection Policy and Procedures of the Cathedral School. These include the observance of strict confidentiality, the keeping of notes on remarks made by children and those with parental responsibility, and, where necessary, the involvement of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board or the police.

All adults who come into regular contact with children should be aware of their vulnerability and do their best to avoid misunderstanding.

## **3. The care and supervision of choristers in the Cathedral**

### **3.1 The Daily Timetable**

The demands made on the time of the choristers are considerable and this should be borne in mind at all times. Where it is felt that a chorister is having trouble coping with the exigencies of his timetable the Organist may consult the Deputy Head (Academic), the Housemaster or the Headmaster regarding possible strategies which might be followed to make the workload more bearable.

During a normal week, the choristers rehearse for an hour each weekday morning, and for 45 minutes before each Evensong on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. The singing timetable for a normal week is outlined below:

Monday	7:55-8:40 am Rehearsal (Chapter Parlour)
Wednesday	7.55-8.55 am Rehearsal (Chapter Parlour)
Tue, Thurs, Fri	7.55 – 8.55 am Rehearsal (Chapter Parlour) 5.00 – 5.45 pm Rehearsal (Cathedral) 5.45 pm Chorister snack (Priory Room) 6.05 – c.6.50 pm EVENSONG 7.00pm Supper
Saturday	8:30-9:30 am Rehearsal (Chapter Parlour) 4:45 – 5.45 pm Rehearsal (Cathedral) 5.45 pm Chorister snack (Priory Room) 6.05 – c.6.50 pm EVENSONG 7.00 pm Supper
Sunday	10am-10.45 Rehearsal (Chapter Parlour) 10.45am Break, drink & snack (Priory Room) 11.00 am-12:15pm EUCHARIST 1.00pm Lunch 5.00 – 5.45 pm Rehearsal (Cathedral) 6.05 pm EVENSONG 7.00 pm Supper

The average week consists of approximately 10 1/2 hours of rehearsal and approximately 6 3/4 hours of services per week, totalling 17 1/4 hours. The maximum commitment recommended by the Choir Schools' Association is 22 hours, and the Headmaster and the Organist work together to ensure that the boys' commitments never exceed levels regarded as acceptable nationally.

### 3.2 Supervision in the Cathedral

The choristers are escorted from the School to the Chapter Parlour for all rehearsals and performances by a member of staff from the Cathedral School. At the end of Evensong, they are escorted from the Cathedral to the School by a member of the Cathedral music staff. This involves walking across the road at St Aldates. The escort wears a high-visibility jacket and carries a 'lollipop' sign, and receives training from the Cathedral School in escorting children and stopping traffic.

The choristers are never left unsupervised anywhere in the Cathedral.

When an individual chorister is left alone with a member of the Music Department in the Cathedral for solo preparation, an organ lesson etc. another adult in the building will always be notified. This is likely to be the person taking the main rehearsal but if it is at another time, the vergers would be the obvious choice.

The Chapter Parlour is very occasionally used for sectional rehearsals or solo preparation. In these instances, the organist taking the rehearsal will always inform another member of staff.

### 3.3 Illness in the Cathedral

If a chorister is taken ill during a service and has to leave the Choir Stalls, if the duty member of School staff is present, they will assist him and escort him back to the School where he will be looked after by matron. In the absence of School staff, the duty vergers will assist the chorister and phone the School and ask for the Matron on duty to collect the child and escort him back to the School, if necessary.

If a chorister is taken ill during a rehearsal, he will be escorted back to the School by another member of the Music Department where one is present. If no adult other than the Duty Organist is present to escort the child, the organist taking the rehearsal will telephone the School in order that someone may come to collect the child.

Vergers are trained in first aid. The emergency services and Porter's Lodge will be notified where necessary.

### **3.4 Vocal Health**

If a chorister feels uncomfortable singing, or has throat problems that he believes will affect his singing, he should present himself to the duty Matron prior to attending choir practice. The duty Matron will record boys as 'With Care' for medical reasons or, if she considers it necessary, will place the boys 'Off Singing'. The 'With Care' system exists to make the organist on duty aware of a small (or potential) problem, leaving the boy able to decide how much he feels able to contribute to the rehearsal under the watchful eye of the Duty Organist. In turn, the Duty Organist may choose to put a boy off singing if he feels that his contribution to the rehearsal is being hampered by a vocal or health problem. Records are kept of health complaints and issues of concern on a vocal level, and where it is felt that a boy is consistently struggling or unable to fulfil his role as a chorister further investigations will be made, involving consultation with parents and (where necessary) medical specialists. Where other issues, personal or emotional, may affect the ability of a boy to fulfil his duties as a chorister, the Housemaster will inform the Organist and discussions will take place between the relevant parties in order to consider possible solutions.

Should a chorister's voice change before the conclusion of his School career, the Director of Music will consult the Headmaster in order to decide at which point the boy should cease his participation in the daily routine of the choir. The School will make arrangements with his parents regarding boarding and it may be possible for the child in question to continue his associations with the Cathedral through involvement in the choir, by singing in the back line, page turning, etc. The boy's vocal health must be of paramount importance and no boy will be expected to sing if he finds it uncomfortable to do so. At all times it is important for adults to remember the emotional difficulties often encountered by boys as they experience this physical change, and to act with the greatest possible sensitivity to the individual's needs.

Choristers whose voices change during their time at the Cathedral may move to the back row to sing other parts. This presents few additional safeguarding requirements - both Lay and Academical Clerks have DBS clearance, and have undertaken relevant safeguarding training proscribed by CofE. Although Deputy Lay Clerks do not have either of these, their contact time with the children is very little, and there are always other adults present when they are singing.

Normally, changed voice choristers would not sing at any events or services when the trebles were not present. However, should such an occasion arise, the Cathedral school would be requested to provide a chaperone.

### **3.5 Lavatories**

Public toilets and semi-public toilets are situated in the Cloisters and Priory Room, respectively. Boys may use the toilets in the Priory Room at any time during rehearsals with the permission of the member of staff conducting the rehearsal, and accompanied by a senior chorister.

Because of the lack of private facilities, the boys are encouraged to use the toilets in School before coming to the Cathedral.

### **3.6 Events**

Throughout the year the choristers are asked to participate in a number of concerts, recording sessions and special events, both in and outside the Cathedral. The Organist seeks approval for such events from the Headmaster and the Dean and Chapter. If this is given, it is not necessary to seek parental approval as the School acts 'in loco parentis' during term-time. The goodwill of parents is sought at all times, however, and should a parent have any queries regarding the arrangements for external events (of which they will always be notified by the Organist), they should feel free to contact the Headmaster or the PA to the Organist.

When the choristers are required to travel to a venue other than the Cathedral or the Cathedral School for a rehearsal, concert or special event, they will be accompanied by chaperones from the Cathedral Music Department and School.

When the Cathedral Music Department is involved in arranging for an individual chorister to perform in an external concert or event, the practicalities concerning chaperoning, flexibility of choir commitments, coaching and supervision etc. will be made by the Music Department in consultation with the School and the parents of the boy in question.

Travel to concerts outside Oxford is by coach. In most cases toilet facilities are requested and the coach company's drivers have DBS clearance.

Two members of staff from Christ Church Cathedral School accompany the choristers to the concert and in addition the Organist and the Sub-Organist (if he is performing in the concert) are designated chaperones.

The provision of a hot meal is a standard requirement within the contract for each concert. In the rare case of overnight accommodation being required, hotel rooms are booked and two chaperones from Christ Church Cathedral School accompany the choristers. Their room is on the same floor and within easy reach of the boys' rooms.

The Cathedral undertakes a risk assessment prior to each external engagement which will be approved by the Headmaster.

### 3.7 Tours

Tours which involve extended travelling and overnight stays happen on an occasional basis, and, although the boys' involvement forms part of the chorister contract, explicit parental consent is requested in these circumstances.

Upon a tour being organised, detailed arrangements, guidelines and procedures will be issued and risk assessments prepared. These will include references to provision of adequate medical care, adult supervision, awareness of dietary requirements, hotel arrangements, emergency contact details etc.

For overseas tours, a licence is obtained for each tour through the City of Westminster Magistrates' Court under the requirements of Young Persons Employment Abroad (The Children (Performances) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 1998).

The application goes before a District Judge and its purpose is to satisfy 'that the children are going out of the United Kingdom in order to fulfil the particular engagement...that the proper provision has been made to secure the health, kind treatment, and adequate supervision of the children whilst abroad and their return to the United Kingdom at the expiration or revocation of the licence; and that a copy of contract of employment or other document, showing the terms and conditions of employment, has been furnished to the parents of the children'.

In addition to the application form (which specifies travel and accommodation details) the following documentation is required:

1. A schedule giving the full names of each child and the names and addresses of their parents.
2. A copy of the contract regarding the performances on the tour
3. A copy of the birth certificate
4. A medical certificate of the fitness of each child
5. A consent in writing signed by both parents/guardians of each child
6. A consent in writing from the Headmaster
7. A copy of the Notice to Police

A copy of the application together with the Notice to Police is sent to the Thames Valley Police Disclosure Unit for screening and authorisation prior to the application going before the Judge.

The Organist is required to report to a designated UK Embassy or Consulate whilst on the tour. Both the Police and the Magistrates' Court are contacted upon return to the UK and in addition the Magistrates' Court is given a schedule of rehearsals, performances, rest and meal times on concert days.

Travel insurance is taken out for each boy on the tour and a summary of the policy is circulated to the parents. The full policy is available for inspection if necessary.

The Choristers are always accommodated in hotels. The Chaperones' rooms are always on the same floor and within easy reach of the boys' rooms. There are also measures designed to ensure the safety of the pupils written into contracts with hotels.

At least two members of Christ Church Cathedral staff accompany the boys on all tours as chaperones. In addition the Organist and the Sub-Organist (if they are on the tour) are designated chaperones. Typical adult to boys ratios are 1:8 for those aged eight years and below and 1:10 for those over eight years of age.

The Cathedral undertakes a risk assessment prior to each tour which is then approved by the Headmaster.

Christ Church Cathedral's Cathedral Safeguarding Officer is Lisa Wilkins and Associate Safeguarding Officers are Matthew Dickins and Zachary Guiliano. If you have a safeguarding concern, contact the Police on 999 if there is a risk of immediate harm, otherwise please email [lisa.wilkins@chch.ox.ac.uk](mailto:lisa.wilkins@chch.ox.ac.uk), [matthew.dickins@chch.ox.ac.uk](mailto:matthew.dickins@chch.ox.ac.uk) or [zachary.guiliano@chch.ox.ac.uk](mailto:zachary.guiliano@chch.ox.ac.uk).