

Appendix 1 – Merton College Choristers' Choir Safeguarding Policy Merton College, Oxford

CONTACT DETAILS:

For contact details for the College's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and others, see below and on the last page of this policy.

Background:

In 2016 Merton College began to admit girls into its Choral Foundation. The Girl Choristers consists of 24 girl choristers and up to 10 probationers usually in school years 4-11. The girls attend a number of different schools in Oxford and the surrounding area. The College has produced this Child Safeguarding Policy for the Choir which has regard to the guidance of the Secretary of State for Education. By this policy the College aims to ensure that it provides a safe environment for the Girl Choristers and safeguards their well-being, in particular by protecting them from abuse of any kind. The College also has a separate ['Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures'](#).

The College will respond without delay to any complaint or allegation of abuse, if appropriate by referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Children's Social Care, and the Police.

Commitments:

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy the College is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

Preventative Measures:

The College's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the Domestic Bursar, Mr Tim Lightfoot (tel 01865 276939, tim.lightfoot@merton.ox.ac.uk) who has the leadership responsibility for the College's safeguarding arrangements. The College's Designated Officer for Safeguarding Children with regard to the Girl Choristers (DOSC for the Choir), who has the responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the College's safeguarding arrangements for the Choir, is the Chapel & Choir Manager, Ms Elizabeth Casey (tel 01865 616724, elizabeth.casey@merton.ox.ac.uk). The DOSC for the Choir is available to speak to parents or Girl Choristers about safeguarding. In the absence of the DSL, the DOSC for the Choir acts as deputy, in consultation with the DOSC for the College.

1. The provisions for special recruitment and training procedures and for the conduct of DBS checks are applied to staff working with children. This includes those who work with the Girl Choristers, such as the Chaplain, Associate Chaplain, Director of Music, Organ Scholars, Verger, Chapel Administrator, visiting teachers and any students engaged to supervise the Girl Choristers. The Governing Body and the Domestic Bursar review the application of these provisions with the Chaplain and Director of Music from time to time, to take account of any changed arrangements in College, new risks and new legislation.
2. If a DBS check is delayed, staff and volunteers have no unsupervised contact with Girl Choristers until a satisfactory check is received. Local clergy may be appointed to preside at or assist with choral services only if they have current formal authorisation to exercise their ministry in the Diocese of Oxford by virtue of the Bishop's Licence or its equivalent, or the Bishop's Permission to Officiate, both of which are dependent on a satisfactory DBS check at the Enhanced level and Diocesan records of personal and career history.
3. Specific directives relevant to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children are included in the guidelines which are included in the College Choir Handbook. These set out the parameters of appropriate conduct, contact and communication with Girl Choristers, within or outside official Choir activities. They are intended to be of benefit to all parties.
4. Girl Chorister welfare has a permanent place on the agenda of all meetings of the Chapel and Patronage Committee, providing among other things a regular forum in which to reflect on and discuss practice in the light of experience.
5. This policy is reviewed on an annual basis, at the Trinity Term meeting of the Chapel and Patronage Committee. After review by the Chapel Committee, it should be sent for consideration by the Statutes and Bylaws Committee and approved annually by the Trustees of the College (i.e., the Governing Body). A copy of the policy is given to Organ Scholars in the context of a mandatory verbal induction, and to the Associate Chaplain, Verger, the Girl Choristers' Singing Teacher, and Girl Choristers' parents or guardians. Organ Scholars who give music tuition to children also receive a copy of the Oxford University Safeguarding Code of Practice, and a copy of Part One of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2016). They are required to confirm that they have read at least Part One of the latter guidance.

Procedures in the Event of Complaint or Allegation of Abuse:

1. Within the College, the handling of complaints and allegations relating to Girl Choristers is the responsibility of the Domestic Bursar as the College's DSL (see contact details above and on the last page of this policy). This is made known to Girl Choristers' parents or guardians and to Girl Choristers at the time of their entry to the Choir. The Chapel Administrator sends all parents the revised Girl Choristers' Handbook, every September, containing information about Child Protection. Parents or guardians of Girl Choristers who begin to sing in the Choir at some other time of the year receive these materials as soon as the Choristership starts.
2. Parents or guardians, Girl Choristers or others who have any concerns at any time relating to the safety of Girl Choristers should contact the College's DOSC for the choir (or the DSL in the absence of the DOSC) without delay, who will liaise with the College's DSL (see contact details above and on the last page of this policy). They may also contact the College's DSL directly. Notices are placed at child-eye-level height in the Choir Room in the College informing Girl Choristers who they should speak to if anything or anyone worries them or makes them feel unsafe.

Children will probably wish to speak to their parents first about anything or anyone that is worrying them or making them feel unsafe. If you are a child or young person reading this and you are worried about your safety in the College or in the Choir, please do not hesitate to speak to your parents. But if for any reason you would rather speak to someone outside of your family, you can speak to Elizabeth Casey (Lizzie, the Chapel Office and Choir Manager), Jen Crompton (the Verger), Mr Nicholas (the Director of Music), Father Simon (the Chaplain), or Father Lyndon (the Associate Chaplain). Their contact details are given on the last page of this policy.

Anyone approaching any of these members of staff may be assured that their concerns will be taken seriously and they will not be subjected to any detriment due to making their concerns known. However, where the safety of children is in question, only limited assurances of confidentiality can be given as the matter must be addressed at once through the proper channels.

3. Any member of staff receiving concerns about the safety of Girl Choristers will listen and take notes, making no promises of absolute confidentiality, and refer the matter at once to the Domestic Bursar, who is the College's DSL (see contact details above and on the last page of this policy).
4. On receiving information or a complaint or allegation from parents, a child, or a member of staff, the DSL will take detailed notes of any complaint or allegation brought to him, listening carefully to all that is said, making no

promise of absolute confidentiality. (Where handwritten notes are typed up later, the original contemporaneous notes will be retained.) The matter will thereafter be dealt with by the DSL (for the College) in accordance with the procedures and time limits set out in the latest guidance issued by the Secretary of State. This is currently to be found in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (July 2015). This is available to the public on-line. The senior management of the College will be kept informed, in confidence, unless for some reason this would place a child at increased risk of harm.

5. The LADO will be informed within one working day of all allegations that an adult within the College has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he may pose a risk of harm to children.

The advice of the LADO will be followed appropriately.

6. Careful notes will be kept of information and advice received, decisions made and the reasoning behind them. In normal circumstances this will be done in full partnership with the Chorister's parents, unless for some reason this would place the child at increased risk of harm.

7. As soon as the LADO advises the DSL for the College that a matter should be referred to Children's Social Care or the Police, the DSL for the College will convene a group including the Warden and the Chaplain with full reference to Diocesan officers, Governing Body and legal authorities as applicable, in order to keep them fully informed.

8. The College will collaborate fully with the statutory agencies concerned with child protection.

9. The College is committed to offering support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.

10. The College will care for and monitor any member of the College community who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.

Next review: Trinity Term 2025

Contact Information

The College's DSL

Mr Tim Lightfoot
Domestic Bursar
tim.lightfoot@merton.ox.ac.uk
01865 276939

The College's DOSC for the Choir

Ms Elizabeth Casey
Chapel & Choir Manager
elizabeth.casey@merton.ox.ac.uk
01865 616724

The Chapel & Choir Manager

Ms Elizabeth Casey
elizabeth.casey@merton.ox.ac.uk
01865 616724

The Verger

Mx Jen Crompton
jennifer.crompton@merton.ox.ac.uk
01865 286293
07884 586299

The Director of Music

Mr Benjamin Nicholas
benjamin.nicholas@merton.ox.ac.uk
01865 286297

The Chaplain

The Revd Canon Justin White
justin.white@merton.ox.ac.uk
01865 276365

The Acting Chaplain

The Revd Lyndon Webb
lyndon.webb@merton.ox.ac.uk
01865 276297

Oxfordshire Children's Social Care
MASH

0345 050 7666 (office hours)
0800 833408 (out of hours)

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Board LADO

Ms Alison Beasley
Local Authority Designated Officer
01865 810603

NSPCC Helpline

0800 800 5000 (24 hours)

'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2016) can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Merton College Girl Chorister Live Streaming Policy

Merton College Girl Choristers webcast services to an audio/visual livestreaming service. This entails recording the services with microphones and cameras installed in the Chapel, and streaming this to YouTube (where our pre-recorded footage is also published). Wednesday Evensong services will be regularly livestreamed. Monday Vespers & Rehearsals will not be livestreamed.

We take Chorister safeguarding and data protection very seriously, and so we have created the following policies to ensure child welfare is at the forefront of this development, and we welcome you to read them and be in touch if you have any concerns. Girl **Choristers are never be identified by name on screen.**

The Livestream Station

- Use of the Livestream Station must be booked in with a member of the Chapel Team.
- No personal profiles should be created on or logged into on the Livestream station. Livestream technicians must not log into their personal social media, email accounts, or similar on the Livestream Station.

Livestreaming the Girl Choristers

- Onscreen titles and stream information must not include identifying information such as names or ages of under 18s.
- All livestream technicians working regularly with Girl Choristers' footage must be DBS checked. If the Livestream Station is being used by a non-DBS checked technician (e.g. the engineers from About Sound), they must be supervised by a DBS checked staff member whenever Girl Choristers are part of the recording.

Saving and Editing Files:

- The livestream computer to which files are saved is password protected. Only trained and DBS checked livestream technicians and the Chapel Team can livestream Girl Choristers. If an external party requires access, a Chapel Team member will supervise this.
- No personal external hard drives or storage devices are to be brought to the Sacristy except under explicit supervision by the Chapel Team for a reason agreed by the team in advance (e.g. a Girl Chorister requesting footage for a scholarship application may bring a USB drive to download footage of herself). GDPR guidelines must be respected.
- All editing and use of footage must take place in the Sacristy at the Livestream Station. No footage may be transferred to a personal computer.

Safeguarding

If you have any concerns at all about the welfare or safety of a child, report them immediately to the College's DOSC (Designated Officer for Safeguarding Children) for the Choir, Lizzie Casey (+44 (0)1865 616724; elizabeth.casey@merton.ox.ac.uk). They may also contact the College's DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) directly: Mr Tim Lightfoot, Domestic Bursar (+44 (0)1865 276939; tim.lightfoot@merton.ox.ac.uk).