



Southwell Cathedral

SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR CHORISTERS

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1. Introduction

Southwell Cathedral is committed to promoting the welfare and safeguarding of all children in its care. This policy sets out the specific safeguarding arrangements for choristers of Southwell Cathedral Choir, recognising the unique pastoral, musical and educational demands of chorister life.

The Cathedral seeks to ensure that all choristers are protected from harm, abuse and neglect and that their wellbeing is prioritised in every aspect of choir life.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy, Procedure & Guidance. Safeguarding contacts can be found in that policy. Safeguarding contacts and further resources are displayed prominently in cathedral buildings including the Song School.

2. Scope

This policy applies to **all choristers of Southwell Cathedral Choir**, regardless of the school they attend.

It applies to all Cathedral clergy, employees, musicians, volunteers and others who have contact with choristers through Cathedral or choir-related activities.

3. Safeguarding responsibilities and partnership working

Responsibility of the Music Department

The Music Department has responsibility for the care, supervision and safeguarding of choristers whenever they are engaged in choir duties or present in the Cathedral or at choir-related activities.

The Department is committed to adhering fully to the Cathedral's safeguarding policies and procedures, creating an environment in which children are safe from harm or abuse, and promoting the welfare of choristers as a shared responsibility across all music staff.

All members of the Music Department (including the Rector Chori, Assistant Director of Music, Chorister Supervisor, Organ Scholar and Lay Clerks) hold Enhanced DBS checks, receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role, and are familiar with and committed to following safeguarding procedures.

A shared commitment to the welfare of each chorister is expected of all Music Department staff.

Partnership with parents and schools

Southwell Cathedral recognises parents as primary carers and is committed to working in partnership with families to support chorister wellbeing.

Many choristers attend the Minster School, and the Cathedral maintains a **close and formal safeguarding partnership** with the Minster School. Where choristers attend other schools, the Cathedral will work appropriately with those schools' safeguarding leads as required.

Partnership arrangements include:

- Close liaison between the Rector Chori and the Minster School Safeguarding Lead, including regular meetings.
- Sharing of relevant safeguarding information, including special educational needs, disabilities and medical conditions where these may have safeguarding implications.
- Sharing safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Formal notification by email of staff appointments or departures affecting safeguarding, to ensure Single Central Registers remain up to date.
- Regular safeguarding communication between Cathedral and school staff.

Through these arrangements, there is a constant awareness of the cumulative demands on choristers arising from education, singing and other commitments.

4. Safeguarding leadership and key roles

Cathedral Safeguarding Officer (CSO): The CSO is the initial point of contact for safeguarding concerns and oversees all safeguarding procedures.

Rector Chori: The Rector Chori is the first point of contact for concerns relating to the welfare of choristers and reports safeguarding matters to the CSO as appropriate.

Chorister Supervisor: Has day-to-day responsibility for the wellbeing of choristers while they are in the Cathedral, supported by the Music Department and CSO.

Diocesan Safeguarding Team: Provides professional safeguarding advice, training and coordination.

All Cathedral clergy, employees and volunteers receive regular safeguarding training.

5. Safer Recruitment and suitability of adults

Staff and clergy

All Lay Clerks and Music Department employees are appointed subject to Enhanced DBS checks and two satisfactory references addressing suitability to work with children. No individual may take up post until all checks are complete.

All Cathedral clergy are appointed in accordance with House of Bishops' guidance and are deemed fit persons. Visiting clergy may only officiate if appropriately authorised and cleared through diocesan processes.

Where recruitment decisions are complex, DBS information may be shared (with consent) with the CSO, and a formal risk assessment undertaken. Decisions are guided by the Cathedral's commitment to safeguarding children.

Volunteers and parents

Use of parent chaperones or volunteers is determined by the Rector Chori in consultation with the CSO.

Volunteers with regular or unsupervised responsibility for children must undergo full Safer Recruitment.

Parents assisting occasionally (e.g. refreshments) do not require safer recruitment provided a Music Department employee is present at all times.

Only safely recruited adults may undertake pastoral supervision of choristers.

6. Chorister welfare and oversight

Chorister welfare is:

- A standing item on the agenda of Chapter and Music Department meetings.
- Reviewed annually by the CSO in consultation with the Music Department.

Lay Clerks receive safeguarding guidance defining appropriate conduct, communication and boundaries. Breaches may result in suspension pending investigation, with the child's safety always paramount.

7. Communication and information sharing

Strong communication underpins effective safeguarding.

Parents are required to:

- Communicate promptly any changes in home or school circumstances.
- Notify changes to collection arrangements in writing.
- Inform the CSO of relevant court orders or statutory interventions.

The CSO must be informed if a chorister is subject to or the subject of:

- Care Orders, Child Arrangement Orders, Special Guardianship Orders.
- Supervision Orders, Prohibited Steps Orders.
- Private Fostering Arrangements.
- Restraining or non-molestation orders.
- Child in Need, Child Protection or Team Around the Child plans.

Information is held confidentially and shared only on a need-to-know basis with safeguarding professionals.

8. Transport arrangements

Southwell Cathedral accepts responsibility for chorister transport where this is arranged by the Cathedral.

Approved drivers include parents transporting their own child and other choristers with parental consent, safely recruited Cathedral staff or volunteers and council-approved taxi drivers.

Drivers must hold a full UK driving licence, have appropriate insurance and must drive a roadworthy vehicle.

Children must sit in the rear seat and wear seatbelts. Journey logs must be kept. The receiving responsible adult must be present at drop-off.

Private arrangements between parents are outside Cathedral responsibility.

9. Outreach, visits and tours

- Safeguarding arrangements for tours and extended visits will follow Cathedral policy and statutory guidance.
- DBS checks, risk assessments and parental consent are required.
- Outreach staff and drivers must be appropriately vetted.
- The Cathedral Safeguarding Officer must receive termly updates.

See Appendix for the Cathedral Choir Touring Policy.

10. Responding to concerns, complaints and allegations

All safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately to the CSO. Concerns will be listened to seriously, recorded carefully and referred without delay to appropriate authorities.

Where required, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be informed within one working day.

Parents, choristers and others may also contact the Chapter Lead for Safeguarding directly.

Children are informed clearly (including through signage at child height) who they can speak to if worried.

No one will be penalised for raising concerns.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where safety is at risk.

11. Statutory and diocesan compliance

This policy is informed by:

- *Working Together to Safeguard Children.*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education.*
- Church of England *Promoting a Safer Church* framework.

Southwell Cathedral cooperates fully with statutory agencies.

Appendix: Cathedral Choir Touring Policy

This policy applies to all choristers and adult members of the Cathedral Choir touring party and must be followed at all times while on tour.

1. Alcohol

Choristers must not consume alcohol under any circumstances.

Adult tour members may consume alcohol subject to the following conditions:

- No alcohol may be consumed by any adult who is on chaperone duty or otherwise responsible for the supervision of choristers.
- Alcohol must not be consumed by any adult in the presence of choristers.

If any adult choir member is found to be under the influence of alcohol during a rehearsal, service or concert, appropriate action will be taken by the Rector Chori.

2. Smoking and vaping

Choristers must not possess or use tobacco products or vaping devices at any time.

Adult tour members may smoke or vape only when not in the presence of choristers.

3. Photography, video and social media

The Assistant Director of Music is the designated person responsible for taking photographs and videos of tour activities for use on official choir or Cathedral social media accounts.

No tour member may post photographs or videos on personal social media accounts that include or identify choristers.

Tour members may share official choir or Cathedral social media posts.

Tour members may post personal photographs or videos provided choristers are not identifiable in any way.

All social media activity relating to the tour must recognise that tour members are representing Southwell Cathedral at all times.

4. Phones and electronic devices

Choristers may bring phones and electronic devices on tour at their own risk.

Choristers must immediately comply if a member of staff instructs them to put away a phone or electronic device.

Phones and electronic devices must not be used during rehearsals, services or concerts.

All phones and electronic devices must be surrendered overnight and will be securely held by chaperones.

Phones and electronic devices may only be used by their owner and must not be shared.

5. Accommodation and rooming arrangements

Choristers will be accommodated in twin rooms, in same-sex pairs.

Choristers must not enter any room other than their own assigned room.

Boy choristers must not enter girls' rooms.

Girl choristers must not enter boys' rooms.

A curfew of 11.00pm applies to all choristers.

Boy choristers and girl choristers will be accommodated on separate floors, supervised by the relevant chaperones.

All other adult tour members will be accommodated on different floors.

6. Behaviour and sanctions

Choristers are expected to behave appropriately at all times and to follow instructions given by staff and chaperones.

In cases of poor behaviour, failure to follow rules, or disrespectful behaviour towards staff or other tour members, the following sanctions may be applied, in increasing order of seriousness:

- A verbal warning from the Rector Chori, with a record made in the behaviour log.
- Exclusion from an event (for example, a concert).
- Parents being required to make arrangements, at their own expense, to remove their child from the tour.

Depending on the seriousness of the incident, sanctions may be applied without following the above sequence.