



Child Protection Policy

Vivace Chorus is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. We recognise our responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. Vivace Chorus acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. Self-employed staff and volunteers will endeavour to work together to encourage the development of an ethos which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children, young people and adults.

Vivace Chorus recognises its duty of care under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, the Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014, the Children Act 1989 and 2004 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 (in Scotland Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003), and the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 guidelines.

For the purpose of this policy, a child/young person is under the age of 18 years, but the term "young person" is generally applied to those aged 16-17.

This policy applies to any child/young person who is invited to perform at a specific performance.

If a child/young person is invited to perform at a specific performance, and is part of another organisation e.g. a Youth Choir, it is the responsibility of Vivace Chorus to ensure that this policy and procedure is followed for that child.

Vivace Chorus believes that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender or gender identity, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- all members and employees of the organisation should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

Vivace Chorus will ensure that:

- all children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity

- the welfare of each child will always be put first
- a balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers the children to share in the decision-making process
- enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism
- bullying will not be accepted or condoned
- all adult members of the organisation provide a positive role model for dealing with other people
- action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour
- we will keep up to date with health & safety legislation
- we will keep informed of changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children
- we will undertake relevant development and training where required
- we will hold a register of every child involved with Vivace Chorus and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

Vivace Chorus has child protection procedures which accompany this policy. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the Vivace Chorus's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Health & Safety Policy, including risk assessments for concert venues.

Vivace Chorus has a dedicated Child Protection/Welfare Officer, who is responsible for ensuring that the child protection policy and procedures are adhered to. That person's name is Geraldine Allen and she can be contacted on 01483 564506.

In implementing this child protection policy Vivace Chorus will:

- communicate to all members, self-employed staff, volunteers and associates their legal and moral responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation
- communicate to all members, self-employed staff, volunteers and associates their responsibility to work to the standards that are detailed by the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership, and the need to work at all times towards maintaining high standards of practice in protection of children
- ensure that all members, self-employed staff, volunteers and associates understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a child or young person, or anyone's conduct towards a child/young person, to our named person for child protection
- ensure that our named person for child protection understands her responsibility to refer any child protection concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (i.e. Police and/or Children's Social Care)
- ensure that any procedures relating to the conduct of members, self-employed staff, volunteers and associates are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner

- facilitate opportunities for children and young people to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues in connection with their involvement with Vivace Chorus, and raise any complaints or concerns with a member of the Vivace Chorus committee
- facilitate involvement of parents or carers and to make child protection policies and procedures available to them.

This policy will be regularly monitored by the Vivace Chorus committee and will be subject to annual review.

Policy agreed by:	Vivace Chorus Committee
Date policy agreed:	March 2024
Author:	Michelle Mumford/Geraldine Allen
Date of next review:	March 2025

Vivace Chorus Safeguarding Procedures

1. Introduction

These procedures have been designed to ensure that the welfare and protection of any child and/or young person who rehearses and performs with Vivace Chorus. The procedures recognise that child protection can be a very difficult subject to deal with to the extent that it is sometimes easier to close your eyes to what is happening or believe that it is somebody else's problem to deal with.

Vivace Chorus is committed to the belief that protecting children and young people is everybody's responsibility and therefore the aim here is to provide guidelines that will enable all self-employed workers/members, associates and volunteers to act appropriately to any concerns that arise in respect of a child/young person.

Please also refer to the Vivace Chorus overarching Safeguarding Policy and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy for further information.

2. Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

See Appendix 1 for the detailed definitions of abuse under the heading of Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Neglect, Child Sexual Exploitation and Bullying.

3. Responsibilities of the Organisation

At the outset of any concert or event involving children, Vivace Chorus will:

- undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the concert process

- identify at the outset the person with designated responsibility for child protection
- engage in effective recruitment of chaperones and other individuals with responsibility for children, including appropriate vetting (if necessary in consultation with the local authority)
- ensure that children are supervised at all times
- know how to get in touch with the local authority social care services, in case it needs to report a concern.

Vivace Chorus will make any necessary applications for performance licences for a child or a 'Body of Persons' agreement in a thorough and timely manner. We will follow the performance licencing guidance set out by the National Network for Children in Employment & Entertainment (NNCEE) available at <https://www.nncee.org.uk>

4. Named Persons for Vivace Chorus

Vivace Chorus has an appointed individual who is responsible for dealing with any child protection concerns. In their absence, a deputy will always be available for workers/members to consult with.

The named persons for Child Protection within Name of Organisation are:

Named Person for Child Protection: Geraldine Allen
Telephone number: 07968 832786

Deputy Person for Child Protection: Becky Kerby
Email: membership@vivacechorus.org

The role and responsibilities of the named persons are:

- to ensure that everyone is aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they are concerned that a child/young person may be subject to abuse or neglect
- to ensure that any concerns about a child/young person are acted on, clearly recorded, referred on where necessary and, followed up to ensure the issues are addressed
- The Named Person will record any reported incidents in relation to a child/young person. These will be kept in a secure place.

5. Stages to follow if you are worried about a child

Suspicion of abuse

If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of Vivace Chorus, please make this known to the person with responsibility for child protection. If you suspect that the person with responsibility for child protection is the source of the problem, you should make your concerns known to the local authority designated officer (LADO).

Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed as well as your response, in case there is follow-up in which you are involved.

If a serious allegation is made against any member of Vivace Chorus or its associates - chaperone, venue staff etc, action will be taken to ensure the individual does not have further contact with the child until an investigation is concluded and any appropriate action taken. The individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms etc and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production.

Disclosure of abuse

If a child confides in you that abuse has taken place:

- Remain calm and in control but do not delay taking action.
- Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Don't promise to keep it a secret. Use the first opportunity you have to share the information with the person with responsibility for child protection. Make it clear to the child that you will need to share this information with others. Make it clear that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help.
- Reassure the child that "they did the right thing" in telling someone.
- Tell the child what you are going to do next.
- Speak immediately to the person with responsibility for child protection. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually Children's Social care or the Police.
- Never investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where a child makes a disclosure.
- As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was said, using the child's own words. Note the date, time, any names that were involved or mentioned, and who you gave the information to. Make sure you sign and date your record.

Who to tell and what to tell them

If you have concerns about the wellbeing or safety of a child in your care you have a duty to report it to the Vivace Chorus named person above who will report to the child employment manager. If you are unable to contact them you should contact Surrey County Council Children's Services. The telephone number is shown on the 'useful contacts' page at the end of this document.

Recording of information

In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, the details of an allegation or reported incident will be recorded, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a statutory child protection agency.

An accurate note shall be made of the date and time of the incident or disclosure, the parties involved, what was said or done and by whom, any action taken to investigate the matter, any further action taken e.g. suspension of an individual, where relevant the reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency, and the name of the persons reporting and to whom it was reported.

The record will be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation.

6. Creating a Safe Organisation

The following section provides clear guidelines for Vivace Chorus to be aware of and follow:

Photographs and images of children

There are risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on web sites and in other publications such as concert programmes. Photographs can be used as a means of identifying children when they are accompanied with personal information, for example, "this is X who goes to such-and-such a school and who likes playing football". This information can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to start to 'groom' that child for abuse. Secondly the content of the photo can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. There is evidence of this adapted material finding its way on to child abuse sites.

If Vivace Chorus wishes to include photographs of children and young people on our website, programmes and/or other material, we will assess the potential risks to the child when making decisions about the type of images we propose to use and the way they are used. We will seek involvement from the child and their parents and get consent before we use any images. Use of names of individuals in a photograph will be carefully considered and we will avoid the use of any additional information that might help locate the child. We will only use images of children in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. Parental permission to use an image of, or include information about, a child or young person will always be sought in advance.

Parents or other members of the audience are not permitted to photograph or video a Vivace Chorus event/concert if there are children performing. The use of cameras or mobile phones with camera or filming capability in dressing rooms and other inappropriate environments is expressly forbidden by anyone.

E-Safety

Most children will use mobile phones and computers. They are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. However, we know that some men, women and young people will use these technologies to harm

children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. Vivace Chorus will not communicate with children via their phone – all such communications will be via their parents.

Cyber-bullying by children, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying.

Parents

Vivace Chorus believes it is important that there is a partnership between parents and the organisation. Parents are encouraged to be involved in Vivace Chorus events which involve their children, and to share responsibility for the care of children.

All parents will be given a copy of Vivace Chorus's Child Protection Policy and procedures.

All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after rehearsals or performances. Vivace Chorus has a responsibility to ensure suitable arrangements are in place to take children home.

Unsupervised Contact

Vivace Chorus will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children. If possible there will always be two adults in the room when working with children.

If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimise risk. For example, activities will be carried out in a public area or in a designated room with a door open.

If it is predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, he or she may be required to obtain a criminal record disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

All children will be chaperoned at all times.

Gifts made to the children

Gifts of any sort, including sweets and chocolates given to the children must be made via the chaperone and with consent of the parents. Chaperones will be mindful of any allergies/food intolerances in the group before accepting gifts for the children. Favouritism of any child(ren) is not appropriate. All gifts should be made to all the children rather than any specific child(ren).

Physical Contact

All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.

Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity.

Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any necessary physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

Managing sensitive information

Vivace Chorus's Data Protection policy and Child Protection policy will apply to the taking, using and storage of photographs or images of children.

Permission will be sought from the parents for use of photographic material featuring children for promotional or other purposes.

Vivace Chorus's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.

Vivace Chorus will work in line with its Data Protection policy to ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of its members, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such as criminal record disclosures.

Rights & Confidentiality

If a concern, complaint or allegation is made against a member of Vivace Chorus, this will be referred to statutory agencies (e.g. the Police) as appropriate. If a statutory agency later confirms they do not propose to investigate, we may still undertake our own internal investigation. If any member or associate of Vivace Chorus is found to have abused or caused harm to a vulnerable person, their membership/association will be revoked.

No matter how you may feel about the accusation, both the alleged abuser and the child who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality under Data Protection legislation. Remember also that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released.

Accidents

To avoid accidents, chaperones and children will be advised of "house rules" regarding health and safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds. Children will be advised of the clothing and footwear appropriate to the work that will be undertaken.

If a child is injured while in the care of Vivace Chorus, a designated first-aider will administer first aid and the injury will be recorded in Vivace Chorus's (or

the event location's) accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for child protection.

If a child joins a rehearsal/concert with an obvious physical injury a record of this will be made in the accident book. This record will be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for child protection. This record can be useful if a formal allegation is made later, and will also be a record that the child did not sustain the injury while participating in the concert.

7. Chaperones

Chaperones registered with their local authority will be appointed by Vivace Chorus for the care of children during the concert process. The chaperone is acting in loco-parentis and should exercise the care which a good parent might be reasonably expected to give to a child. The maximum number of children in the chaperone's care shall comply with the NCSC guidelines.

Potential chaperones will be required to obtain a chaperone registration from their local authority and to supply this registration to Vivace Chorus once the local authority has approved them as a chaperone.

Chaperones will be made aware of Vivace Chorus's Child Protection Policy and Procedures and all other Vivace policies.

Chaperones may have unsupervised access to children in their care, consequently a DBS check will be sought as a requirement of the local authority, before they grant approval for the chaperone.

Where chaperones are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the Vivace Chorus Chairman or other committee member. If changes cannot be made satisfactorily the chaperone should consider not allowing the child to continue.

If a chaperone considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, the chaperone must inform Vivace Chorus and not allow the child to continue.

Under the Dangerous Performances Act, no child of compulsory school age is permitted to do anything which may endanger life or limb. This could include working on wires or heavy lifting. Chaperones should tell Vivace Chorus to stop involving children in dangerous performances, and should contact the local authority.

During performances, chaperones will be responsible for meeting children at the stage door and signing them into the building.

Children will be kept together at all times except when using separate dressing rooms.

Chaperones will be aware of where the children are at all times.

Children are not to leave the place of performance unsupervised by chaperones unless in the company of their parents.

Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the toilets.

Children will not be allowed to enter the adult dressing rooms. Chaperones should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures in the venue, and will ensure that children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger.

Chaperones should ensure that any accidents are reported to and recorded by Vivace Chorus.

Chaperones should examine accident books each day. If an accident has occurred, Vivace Chorus is not allowed to use that child until a medically qualified opinion has been obtained (not just the word of the parent or child).

Chaperones should have written arrangements for children after performances. If someone different is to collect the child, a telephone call should be made to the parent to confirm the arrangements.

Children should be signed out when leaving and a record made of the person collecting.

If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the chaperone to stay with that child until arrangements have been made to take the child home.

8. Children/Young People performing as part of another organisation

From time to time, Vivace Chorus may perform with children performing as part of another organisation, e.g. a children's choir, or orchestra. During any rehearsals with Vivace Chorus and during the performance it is the responsibility of Vivace Chorus to ensure that this procedure is applied to those children.

Vivace Chorus will ensure that any such organisation has its own policy and procedures. The designated safeguarding officers will work together to identify risk and address it; however, it is the responsibility of the organisation to ensure the safety of their members under their procedures.

9. Disseminating/Reviewing Policies and Procedures

This Policy and procedure will be reviewed annually by the Committee of Vivace Chorus and the Nominated Welfare Officer. It will be publicly available on the Vivace Chorus website.

Appendix 1: Definitions

Physical Abuse: Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, and burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate. It may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying) causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect: Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or a carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, (including exclusion from home or abandonment) failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers) or the failure to ensure access to the appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsive to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Bullying: Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else – such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone.

It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Bullying that happens online, using social networks and mobile phones, is often called cyber bullying. A child can feel like there's no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night.

Child Sexual Exploitation: Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, drugs, alcohol, accommodation or gifts as a result of them performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can also occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet or mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. Child sexual exploitation is a hidden crime. Young people often trust their abuser and don't understand that they're being abused. They may depend on their abuser or be too scared to tell anyone what's happening. Children who work in entertainment may be sexually exploited in return for offers of TV, film or modelling/ photographic work and roles in professional stage productions.

Appendix 2 Useful Contacts

If you are concerned about a child, you can get advice from Children's Services via the Surrey Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA):

Phone: 0300 470 9100 (Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm)

Out of hours phone: 01483 517898 to speak to the emergency duty team.

If you need advice on chaperones, applying for a performance licence, or any aspect of this procedure, you can contact the Child Employment office as follows:

Child Employment office 01483 517838

Child Employment Manager 01483 518464 or 07971 664861