



Finchley Children's Music Group
www.fcmg.org.uk

Registered Charity No: 1160096

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Safeguarding Children and Young People during FCMG Activities Policy Statement

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The **Finchley Children's Music Group** comprises four choirs for young people aged 4 – 18 in north London. FCMG regularly works with leading professional choirs and orchestras in the UK's major concert halls and abroad and is recognised for its high vocal quality, musicianship and professionalism.
- 1.2 FCMG is a registered charity and is managed by a Board of trustees appointed by the members of the charity at its AGM. Trustees are largely drawn from parents of children and young people in the choirs, who are nominated for the skills and expertise they can bring to the governance and administration of the charity. There is also an operations committee to which the trustees delegate most of the routine aspects of managing rehearsals and events.
- 1.3 FCMG engages staff on a part-time freelance basis, including an Administrator, the Music Director, two other conductors and three accompanists.
- 1.4 FCMG is committed to promoting the well-being of children and young people through channelling their creative singing potential and ensuring that, while doing so, their welfare and safety is paramount.
- 1.5 FCMG acknowledges that it has a responsibility for the safety of children and young people under its temporary care and works closely with parents to ensure that the needs of all children and young people are taken into account. The care and possible risks to children and young people are considered in relation to the range of activities that take place. These include the recruitment of staff, the appointment of trustees and committee members, and all the operations of the choir including arrangements and provision for auditions, rehearsals, performances, residential workshops, travel and chaperoning, alongside health and safety compliance in the buildings used by FCMG.
- 1.6 It is recognised that adherence to FCMG's safeguarding policy is in the firm interests of all its stakeholders. The trustees strive to ensure that FCMG continues to enjoy a positive reputation and add value to the community, while ensuring that all children and young people are kept safe and that potential risks of harm are minimised.

2. Safeguarding principles

FCMG works to the following principles:

- The welfare of the child and young person is paramount;
- All children and young people, without exception, have the right to protection from abuse;
- Any suspicion or allegation of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;

- All staff, volunteers and others acting on behalf of FCMG have a duty of care to abide by this policy and to report concerns.

3. Procedures

- 3.1 All staff, volunteers and others acting on behalf of FCMG accept responsibility for the welfare of children and young people who come into contact with its activities and will report any concerns they may have about a child or somebody else's behaviour using the agreed procedures.
- 3.2 There is a designated trustee who can be consulted and take action following any expression of concern. This person has an understanding of child protection procedures and how to make appropriate referrals to child protection agencies in accordance with national and local government guidance.
- 3.3 The Chair of FCMG must be informed immediately of an expression of concern.
- 3.4 The designated person and the Chair must decide on the nature of the concern regarding a particular child/young person and agree a suitable course of action, which may include making a referral to the local child protection agency.
- 3.5 Information in relation to a concern must be recorded as soon as possible.
- 3.6 Every effort must be made for confidentiality to be maintained for all parties when an allegation has been made or a concern investigated.

4. FCMG – a behaviour code

- 4.1 FCMG promotes good practice through adopting the following behaviour code for all staff, volunteers and others acting on behalf of FCMG. The code includes that:
 - 4.2 All children and young people are kept informed of the schedule of activities and are given choice in how best they may contribute to the good of the choir, with communications being open and transparent at all times;
 - 4.3 Unsupervised/unobserved contact with an individual child or young person must be avoided wherever possible;
 - 4.4 It is important not to have physical contact with children and this should be avoided;
 - 4.5 It is good practice not to take children alone in a car on journeys, however short;
 - 4.6 Suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child, including in jest, must be avoided at all times as this could be misinterpreted;
 - 4.7 It is important to listen to anyone who may wish to make a disclosure and recognise that children and young people may have fears of not being believed;

- 4.8 All people involved with FCMG must recognise that those who abuse children can be of any age (including other children/young people), gender, ethnic background or social status, and it is important not to let personal preconceptions prevent appropriate action taking place;
- 4.9 Good practice includes valuing and respecting children as individuals. Adult modelling of appropriate conduct must exclude bullying, shouting, taunting, racism, religious discrimination, sexism or negative remarks regarding sexual orientation, abilities or disabilities.
- 4.10 A culture of mutual respect between children, young people and those who manage and represent FCMG is encouraged.
- 4.11 Children's contact details should be kept confidential and only used for the purposes of choir related activity and communications. No member of staff should contact children by social media.

5. Definitions of Abuse

- 5.1 FCMG recognises that abuse and risks to children and young people can be complex and require careful, supportive and confidential handling. FCMG accepts that risk potential is on a continuum from basic health and safety issues relating to buildings and transport arrangements, to learning of abuse that occurred outside the organisation, and includes observing or hearing about abuse perpetrated during choir attendance. To assist FCMG to take appropriate action the trustees, committee, staff and volunteers accept the following broad definitions of the types of abuse that might occur.

It is recognised that the definitions may not include all examples of the specific concerns that might arise for a child/young person, but adults in the choir are expected to be aware of the likelihood that at least a small number of children and young people who join the FCMG choirs could have suffered or continue to suffer some form of abuse.

5.1.1 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may be the result of a deliberate act, but could also be caused through the omission or failure to act to protect. It may include fabricating the symptoms of ill-health, or deliberately causing ill-health to occur.

5.1.2 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a child, causing that

child to frequently feel frightened, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

5.1.3 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. It may involve physical contact, including rape or oral sex, or non-penetrative acts such as fondling. Boys and girls may be sexually abused by males and/or females, and by other young people. It also includes non-contact activities such as involving children in watching or taking part in the making of pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in inappropriate ways.

5.1.4 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or failing to ensure that a child gets appropriate medical care or treatment.

5.2 For the purposes of FCMG's safeguarding policy these definitions recognise the range of the types of abuse that might occur and that it might vary in levels of extremity and a child's exposure to different forms of abuse.

6. Recruitment Practices

6.1 FCMG promotes high standards and practices in the recruitment and selection of new staff to ensure that they are suitably qualified and fit to work with children and young people. In doing this the following aspects of recruitment are considered essential:

- A job description, including person specification, is available for all roles
- Recruitment is based on rigorous pre-agreed selection criteria
- Documentary evidence of qualifications is required
- A satisfactory enhanced, ongoing DBS check must be in place or be undertaken
- References must be formally followed up

6.2 Similar safeguards are in operation for volunteers, helpers and others acting on behalf of FCMG in keeping with their respective roles and responsibilities.

7. Responding appropriately to a child wishing to disclose abuse

It is recognised by FCMG that a child or young person may find it extremely difficult to tell an adult of abuse that either they or someone close to them is experiencing. All FCMG representatives must be alert to the signals of abuse and be prepared to raise concerns where they suspect that some form of abuse may have taken place or there are signs that a child or young person is displaying some form of distress through their behaviour. When a child or young person does wish to talk about an abuse the following good practice should be followed:

1. Always stay calm.
2. Listen carefully to what is said.
3. Find an opportunity to let the child/young person know that the information may need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets.
4. Reassure the child/young person that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it.
5. Allow the child/young person to continue at her/his own pace.
6. Do not ask the child/young person any questions.
7. Reassure the child/young person that they have done the right thing in telling you.
8. Tell them what you will do next, and with whom the information will be shared.
9. Record in writing what was said, using the child's own words, and note the date, time and any names mentioned. If it is an older child ask them to read it through and verify it is what they said.
10. Remember that you are not being asked to decide whether or not abuse has occurred.
11. Scan the notes and make them securely available to selected Trustees as appropriate
12. Arrange a minuted assessment meeting with selected Trustees as soon as practical, the nature of the complaint warranting the timeline for scheduling
13. Make the official minutes of the assessment securely available and include dates for ongoing review as appropriate

8. Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child 1981
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children

9. Updating and reviewing the Safeguarding Policy

FCMG will review this policy on an annual basis and seek guidance on how it may be improved. A designated person for child protection will be confirmed annually by the trustees in line with this policy.

*Approved by the trustees of FCMG
30 June 2017*

Finchley Children's Music Group

GUIDELINES FOR CHAPERONES AT EVENTS

- A lead chaperone will be nominated for each event who will delegate tasks to other chaperones and brief them of their responsibilities.
- Each chaperone should be responsible for no more than 10 children.
- Chaperones must dress smartly and appropriately - for concerts this is usually in black. If required to sit on stage with the children it is important to do so without drawing the attention of the audience.
- Where applicable, the lead chaperone must ensure that each child in their care is appropriately licensed and should take possession of these licences and make them available for inspection.
- The lead chaperone must have essential information on each singer available, including emergency contact details and any particular needs.
- All licensed chaperones must be familiar with and endeavour to fulfil the terms of the guidelines issued to them by their local authority (Entitled: "Duties of Matrons").

TRAVEL & ATTENDANCE ARRANGEMENTS

1. Chaperones are responsible for all children from the time parents leave them until they are collected.
2. Children will usually travel to events as a group, unless the venue is local and parents are asked to make their own travel arrangements. Where children are travelling to or from an event independently from the group the parent must inform the lead chaperone in advance.
3. Lead chaperone will direct the taking of a register of children at strategic times, especially before arriving at or departing the gathering point or venue.
4. The chaperone team should have spare uniform, music, first aid and any other equipment appropriate for the event
5. No child under 16 years should be left unattended at the venue. Children between 14-16 years who wish to leave the venue during break times, may do so in small groups provided written permission has been given by a parent and permission has been given at the time by the lead chaperone. No child under 14 years may leave the venue without a chaperone.
6. If return times are substantially altered, encourage all singers to contact parents as early as possible. Where a singer is unable to contact their parents, then chaperones will attempt to call / text.
7. If a parent fails to collect their child within 20 minutes of the agreed time and the lead chaperone is unable to contact the parents, a designated chaperone or parent who knows the child should take them home with them and the lead chaperone will continue to try to contact the parents. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed and the situation recorded. The lead chaperone will keep in touch with the chaperone with the child - if parents cannot be contacted within a further 40 minutes, the lead chaperone or DSL should contact the police to refer the situation to Children's Social Services for support.

AT THE VENUE

1. Before going into the venue, singers should line up in an orderly and quiet way and be reminded of the FCMG expectations - positive, smiley and professional.
2. On arrival at the venue, the lead chaperone should contact the event organiser and ascertain the venue requirements for getting in, 'green room', toilets, performance space.
3. Clarify arrangements for timing and location of rehearsals/performance, particularly if any arrangements have changed
4. Confirm fire evacuation procedures, first aid procedures and any other venue specific risks or issues

HEALTH & SAFETY / SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

1. The chaperone is in loco parentis as the adult responsible for the care and welfare of the child. Their primary requirement is to ensure the safety and well-being of the child.
2. All chaperones should be aware of the fire evacuation procedures and exits, locations of first aid points, toilets, water supplies and location of lead chaperone.
3. The lead chaperone is responsible for ensuring that the risk assessment is appropriate and that the venue does not present any unacceptable hazards or dangers at that time.
4. No child under the age of 16 should be unattended at any point.
5. Chaperones should be aware of the designated working times for the day and ensure that these are adhered to.
6. The chaperone team will ensure that there are adequate and frequent breaks for water, food, rest, toilet, exercise and recreation.
7. Chaperones need to be observant and watchful during both rehearsals and concerts to ensure that they are quickly aware if a child becomes ill, faint or dizzy. They must be removed from the rehearsal / performance immediately and appropriate medical assistance should be sought. Parents should be informed if further intervention is required. The child must not be left unaccompanied.
8. All instances of illness (however slight) or where a chaperone has had to administer basic first aid should be recorded and reported to parents when they collect the child.

ATTITUDES & PRESENTATION

1. Chaperones should remind singers that they are representing FCMG and are all individually responsible for promoting its excellent reputation.
2. FCMG expects positive and professional attitudes from all singers at all times and chaperones will encourage singers to embody this
3. All instructions should be given firmly and politely, modelling the excellent behaviours that we expect from the singers.
4. Make sure that children are in the right places at the right times. This includes escorting children to and from rehearsals and the performance and noting their entrances and exits on to the stage.
5. Chaperones are responsible for the line-up on stage and in the relevant waiting area / seating prior to performing. The lead chaperone will agree this with the conductor and the chaperones team will then coordinate the singers. If possible, singers should practise standing and sitting and the order and route in which they will file on and off stage.
6. Check that children are wearing correct uniform and be smartly presented - the choir is engaged as a *children's choir* and so must look like one:
 - Hair should be back off the face
 - All hair ties and socks must be black
 - All shoes must be polished
 - Nails must be free of coloured nail varnish
 - Make-up must be minimal
 - Remove and keep safe all earrings, watches and jewellery during the performance
7. Where a child has arrived for a performance with any unsuitable or missing uniform item, this should be reported to the lead chaperone who will ensure that parents are informed and encouraged to remedy as soon as possible.
8. All members of the choir (chaperones and singers) are responsible for ensuring that venues and transport (coaches) are left neat and tidy as they were found.