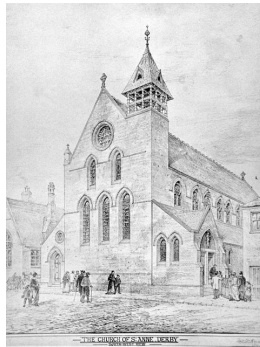


# St Anne's Church, Derby



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## Safeguarding Policy for the St Anne's Choristers

8 September 2023

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# A. INTRODUCTION

## Underlying philosophy

A1 This policy acknowledges the vulnerability of young people under the age of eighteen, and the risks of harm that may occur when appropriate steps are not taken to prevent it.

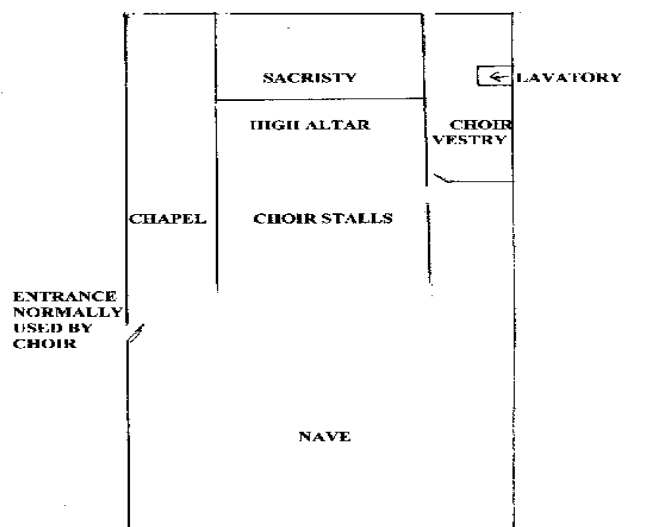
A2 A safeguarding policy must assume that the worst may happen and makes provision for that. Archbishop Justin Welby writes:

Safeguarding' means the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture in all our churches. In order to achieve this we need to do a lot of hard work. We will promote the welfare of children, young people and adults. We will work to prevent abuse from occurring. We will seek to protect those who are at risk of being abused and respond well to those who have been abused. We will take care to identify where a person may present a risk to others, and offer support to them whilst taking steps to mitigate such risks.

from the *Parish Safeguarding Handbook*

# B. POLICY

## B1. The geography of the church



St Anne's is a large open space and this is where the choir rehearses, either near the piano at the north-east end of the nave or else in the choir stalls.

Choir members mainly enter by a small door on the north wall which leads straight into the church. The choir robes, however, are in the choir vestry, which is also where refreshments may be served and where individual coaching might take place. The vestry is a separate room and an enclosed space. Beyond that is the toilet. Any safeguarding policy needs to take into consideration the fact that children will at some point be in the vestry.

## **B 2. Review**

The whole policy will be reviewed (and when considered appropriate updated) at least annually by the Priest-in-charge, the people in charge of the music (including the Choir Director) and the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

## **B 3. The Choir Director**

The Choir Director will be someone selected in line with safer recruitment principles, He or she will have up-to-date training in how to exercise responsibility for children within the Church. See the document *Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment* issued by the Church of England in 2016 and available online.

## **B 4. 'Designated Adults'**

At least two 'designated adults' need to be on duty. These are people selected in line with Safer Recruitment guidance. They will have up-to-date training in how to exercise responsibility for children within the Church. One will be the Choir Director (currently Elin Heron). The other may be a choir parent or someone else, but one such person additional to the Director needs to be present during every rehearsal and service, ready and available to respond to needs immediately as they arise. The accompanist (currently Tom Corfield) can fulfil this role, but owing to the demands of the music upon the accompanist it is desirable where possible for another person to take on the role of second designated adult.

Accompanists taking part in rehearsals and services must also have been selected and trained in accordance with the guidance of the Church of England.

'Designated adults' will include a balance of gender wherever possible.

## **B 5. Information**

Parents or guardians of every child will have completed a consent form giving their address and contact phone numbers, together with any other information (for example, medical information) which the church needs to know. This information will be kept in the church and readily available to the two (or more) people with responsibility for the children, but it will be stored privately and securely and will not be shared. In addition, both 'designated adults' will have contact numbers on their mobile phones for use in an emergency. Those phones will stay with their owners.

## **B 6. Children leaving the group**

When other individuals or groups are also in the building, potential risks need to be borne in mind. Supervision by a 'designated adult' may be necessary if

children have to leave a rehearsal or service for any reason (if, for example, they need a drink or need the toilet). There has to be flexibility here, but the key thing is that a 'designated adult' is keeping an eye on the situation.

### **B 7. Delivery and collection of the children to and from sessions**

This is an area of risk and the parents and the church must know the exact moment when they either become responsible for the safety and wellbeing of the child or hand that responsibility over.

Before a choir session one of the 'designated adults' needs to be near the north door of the church ready to receive children being delivered by car or arriving on foot or on a bicycle. At the end of a rehearsal or service a 'designated adult' will again be on duty at the north door of the church ensuring that children are picked up by a parent (or somebody else appointed to do this) or that they are safely on their way by foot or on a bicycle if that is the mode of transport agreed with the parents. It is the responsibility of the 'designated adult' to know about the arrangements made for each child. We need to know who is picking up each child, and if this changes we need to be told in advance.

It is important to emphasise that the adults running the choir cannot be responsible for the safety of choir members travelling to and from the church or other venue,

### **B 8. Sub-groups and individual coaching**

Wherever possible having an adult working alone with a person under eighteen will be avoided.

### **B 9. Social Media**

Adults will not 'friend' children on social media. If adults use social media in matters to do with the choir it is their responsibility to use it appropriately. No member of the choir will make comments about any other member on social media. Children should not post pictures of the choir on social media and adults should only do so with written consent from all parents concerned. (See section C3 and Parish Safeguarding Handbook).

### **B 10. Additionally these things need to happen:**

- i. The diocesan poster 'What to do if there is a safeguarding concern' will be on display in the church.
- ii. A copy of **A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHORISTERS** will be on display in the choir vestry. A copy will be given to each child singing in the choir and will be signed and dated by the child and the parent.
- iii. The choir will be told who the 'designated adults' are.
- iv. There will be a First Aid box in the vestry.
- v. Safety of children will be regularly on the agenda of meetings, formal and informal. Good communication is essential to a safe environment.

Parents will have completed and signed consent forms and they will have been given a copy of A SAFEGUARDING GUIDE FOR PARENTS.

## **C. GUIDANCE FOR ‘DESIGNATED ADULTS’**

The following guidance relies on section 11.1 in the *Parish Safeguarding Handbook*.

### **C 1. In general**

1. Treat everyone with respect and dignity. Bullying, harassment, intimidation and discrimination will not be tolerated.
2. Always work within sight of another ‘designated adult’
3. Ensure that children know who they can talk to about a personal concern. This might be one of the ‘designated adults’ or the Parish Safeguarding Officer or the Priest-in-charge.
4. If a child needs support, listen to what is being said and respond sympathetically. Even with other adults around, it is better to offer verbal sympathy and avoid physical contact.
5. Do not permit any abusive peer activities such as initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying.
6. Do not smoke or drink alcohol in the presence of children and young people, except in the context of an organised parish event.
7. All social occasions must be formally arranged and approved. Parents or guardians should be kept informed of any such occasions.
8. Record and report any concerns about the wellbeing of a child, young person or adult, or any concerns about the behaviour of any adult (including church officers and responsible adults). Sign and date the record.

### **C 2. In service or rehearsal**

1. Be on the lookout for bullying or any other abusive peer activities (such as initiation ceremonies).
2. Do not show favouritism.
3. Do not use any form of physical punishment.
4. Be vigilant and ready to challenge politely anyone in the vicinity of the choir who does not have a good reason to be there.
5. Children will be able to use the toilet independently, but may need assistance in finding their way. Toilet breaks will be organised for young children.
6. First Aid needs to be administered by someone with current qualifications. When giving First Aid, ensure that other people are around.
7. Ensure that any visitors to rehearsals are accompanied by someone known to the choir who is aware of the safeguarding rules of the choir. Strangers should not be unsupervised.

### **C 3. Photographing children**

This may only happen with the written consent of the parents of every child being photographed. For this reason parents and guardians will not take photographs during rehearsals or services unless the Director has expressly confirmed that all involved have given the appropriate consents..

#### **C 4. Physical contact**

If any physical contact is required in music teaching, parents need to be aware of this before it takes place and told exactly what it will entail.

Any other physical contact should be avoided, because of the danger of misunderstanding.

#### **C 5. Lifts**

Do not give lifts to children. In medical emergencies a parent or guardian must be contacted if at all possible and must then take responsibility for the child. In any such situation, the circumstances and your decision should be recorded and shared with another 'designated adult the same day.

#### **C 6. Absences**

It is important that safe arrangements are made when one of the 'designated adults' is away. There may need to be another such person in the church, ready to step in when required. If it is not possible to arrange cover, a session may need to be cancelled or postponed. Holidays or sickness should not be allowed to compromise the safeguarding arrangements.

**Safeguarding is taken very seriously by the church and is based on the need to reduce harm and the risk of harm to all children and young people. We are all aware of the damage that has been done to young people in the past, often in a church context.**

## **D. A SAFEGUARDING GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND THOSE WITH PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY**

### **D 1 General**

The welfare of choristers is extremely important to the church community. *The Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook 2022* is available on line.

In keeping with the 'Principles of the House of Bishops' Policy for Safeguarding Children', St Anne's promises that choristers will be treated with respect and with vigilance to their welfare at all times.

You will have filled in and returned a consent form with your address and contact details and with any other information (for example, medical information) which the church needs to know.

In what follows the term 'designated adult' means someone selected in line with Safer Recruitment principles. He or she will have up-to-date training in how to exercise responsibility for children within the church.

## **D 2 Dropping off and collection arrangements**

At least two 'designated adults' will be in the church from 20 minutes before the start of a rehearsal or service. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure their child arrives on time and to collect their child at the end of the rehearsal or service. If you wish your child to make his or her own way home, please make this clear on the consent form. If the parent is picking up the child they are welcome to wait in the church. Please ensure you are prompt for collection at the end of a service or rehearsal and that you let us know if someone different is picking up your child.

If you think you are going to be late dropping your child off, please inform the Choir Director so that he or she knows that your child is safe. The contact phone number is: 07551 393 283

If there is no answer, please send a text message, because it may not be possible to answer a phone during a service or rehearsal.

If you are going to be late to pick up your child, please let your child and the Choir Director know and ask the child to wait until you get to the church. Two adults (one of them a 'designated adult') will wait with your child until you arrive.

If somebody else is going to be picking up your child, please let us know who this is in advance.

Lifts will not be given by members of staff or 'designated adults'.

## **D 3 Families attending**

Parents and families are welcome at any service or practice. In fact, you are warmly encouraged to attend services where a family member is singing. We are all part of the one church community

## **D 4 Illness**

If a child is ill during a rehearsal or service, parents will be contacted, which is why we request your emergency contact details.

## **D 5 Photographs**

No photographs of children will be taken without the consent of parents.

## **D 6 Social Media**

In addition to the safety advice which applies generally, we ask that choristers (and parents) please follow these guidelines:

1. Choristers and their parents or guardians are not permitted to record or upload material from the choir. Videos of choir activities are not allowed, for a variety of reasons.
2. Avoid talking about individual people online or making comments.
3. In line with safeguarding practice, choristers are not allowed under any circumstances to 'friend' adults from the church online. The responsibility for this rests with the adults concerned.

Further guidance can be found in *The Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook 2022*.

## **D 7 Ongoing safeguarding**

There will be a named individual to whom children can turn with any personal concern and your child will know who this is. It might be one of the 'designated adults' or the Parish Safeguarding Officer or the Vicar. The church will also regularly monitor safeguarding matters in consultation with the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

The choir will always have a minimum of two designated adults with responsibility for the children and a gender balance will be maintained where possible.

Safeguarding arrangements will be in place for all services, rehearsals or other sessions.

## **D 8 Complaints**

We hope that membership of the church choir will be a wholly positive experience for everyone, but if a difficulty should arise:

1. In the first instance, have a conversation with the Choir Director Elin Heron 07551 393 283 or the Priest-in-charge, Fr Giles Orton, 07768 827101 and this should bring the quickest and easiest resolution. Please report any problems or voice any complaints as soon as possible. It is probably best to arrange a separate meeting outside of choir attendances so that the matter can be given full attention.
2. Safeguarding matters which cannot be resolved by speaking with either the Choir Director or the Priest-in-charge can be referred to the Parish



Safeguarding Officer Helena Walker 07531 036 170 or the Derby  
Diocesan Safeguarding Team 01332 388 678

Any formal complaint will be handled by the Church's complaints process.  
The Church will:

1. Respond without delay to any information which suggests that a child or an adult has been harmed or may be harmed. This is in line with the Diocesan and Church of England safeguarding policies. Church officials will work together with external agencies if any investigation is necessary.
2. Seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.
3. Seek to offer informed pastoral care to anyone who has suffered abuse.

### **D 9 Health and Safety**

The church works hard to fulfil its obligations in respect to health and safety. Risk assessments are conducted for all areas of the building which are used by children. In the event of a choir tour or a choir visit St Anne's conducts a specific risk assessment and ensures that all adults accompanying the tour understand how to mitigate any of the risks identified. All

Outside choir events (such as choir visits or choir tours) will be risk-assessed separately. You will be asked to drop your child at the event and pick them up afterwards. More details will be given at the time, but there will be a minimum of two 'designated adults' at every event

### **D 10 Communication**

Outside of choir sessions, nobody from St Anne's will communicate directly with child choristers. All communication, whether by phone, text, email, letter or other means will be done via parents or guardians.

## **E. A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHORISTERS:**

### **Guidance for choristers under the age of eighteen**

*This will be signed by each child and his or her parent or guardian.  
It will be read to the choir and parents or guardians annually, with an opportunity for brief discussion.*

**On joining the choir I will try my best to:**

- ✓ Treat everyone with respect and dignity.
- ✓ Behave in a way that helps everyone to give of their best.
- ✓ Be calm in church.
- ✓ Keep my property safe and respect the property of others.

**I will try my best not to:**

- ✘ Hurt anybody, either with words or actions.

**Mobile phones:**

- ✘ I will not use my mobile phone in a practice or a service.

**Social Media:**

On social media I will remember these things:

- ✘ I must not record or upload videos of choir activities.
- ✘ I must not talk about other people online or make negative comments about them.
- ✘ No adult from the church will 'friend' me online.

**A golden rule in the church:**

If someone is behaving in a way that makes me uncomfortable, I must tell someone.

The people in the church who have responsibility for me and the other choristers are:

The particular person I can go to with any worries or concerns is:  
Elin Heron, Choir Director 07551 393 283  
Fr Giles Orton, Priest-in -charge 07768 827101  
Helena Walker – Parish Safeguarding Officer – 07531 036 170  
Derby Diocese Safeguarding Team 01332 388 678