

ABERDEEN STRATHSPEY & REEL SOCIETY

Child Protection Policy

The aim of this policy is to safeguard and promote welfare, safety, health and guidance of the Society's young members by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive climate. The young members' welfare is of paramount importance.

The Society fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect and support children.

There are three main elements to this Child Protection Policy:

(a) Prevention:

(e.g. positive atmosphere at rehearsals, concerts and other events and activities organised by the Society, teaching and pastoral support where required).

(b) Protection:

(by following agreed procedures, ensuring employees/volunteers are appropriately recruited, trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Protection concerns).

(c) Support:

(for young members and employees/volunteers and for children who may have been or are at risk of being abused).

This policy applies in its entirety to all members of the Society. The elected Office Bearers and Committee members have an oversight of the general arrangements for Child Protection within the Society.

The Society recognises that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult help all children and especially those at risk of, or suffering from, any form of abuse.

The Society will therefore:

(a) Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and where adults listen to them. All those involved in teaching/rehearsing and accompanying young members have a special role to play in this context. All members of the Society should be committed to supporting a positive ethos.

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(b) Ensure that children know that there are adults in the Society whom they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty. These adults will usually be the conductors and/or accompanists, but young members should feel that they may approach any member of the Society for help.

(c) Ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents, volunteers and where appropriate members of other organisations or agencies.

Framework: Roles and Responsibilities

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. There are, however, key people within the Society who have specific responsibilities under Child Protection Procedures. The names of those carrying these responsibilities for the current year, the Child Protection Co-ordinators (CPCs) and a summary of good practice are listed on the ASRS Child Protection Summary of Good Practice Card.

The welfare of children is a corporate responsibility of the entire Society, working in partnership with parents, volunteers, public agencies, and the voluntary sector. Child protection is the responsibility of all adults, especially those working with children. To this end, employees of the Society, temporary employees, volunteers or visiting adults who do regulated work will be required to be members of the PVG (Protection of Vulnerable Groups) Scheme. It is a condition of employment/appointment for new employees/volunteers who do regulated work that they join the PVG scheme. For any potential new employees/volunteers who already have PVG Scheme membership, the Society will obtain a PVG Scheme update record. The Society will not offer regulated work, paid or unpaid, to any individual who is on the barred list for work with children. Possession of a criminal conviction will not necessarily debar an individual from employment with the Society, but if the Society becomes aware of any information or conviction relating to child protection issues, the individual's employment/appointment or potential employment/appointment will be at risk.

It is the role of the Child Protection Co-ordinators to ensure that Child Protection Procedures are followed within the Society, and to make relevant referrals to the appropriate agencies according to the circumstances. Additionally, it is their role to ensure that all employees/volunteers employed

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or appointed by the Society are aware of the organisation's internal procedures, to advise employees/volunteers and to offer support to them.

The responsibilities of the Child Protection Lead are to ensure that ASRS has an effective policy, that Child Protection Procedures are complied with, and to support the Child Protection Co-ordinators. The Child Protection Lead will be a trustee of the Society.

The responsibility of the Committee is to support the Child Protection Lead in ensuring that ASRS has an effective policy and that Child Protection Procedures are complied with. It is important that Committee members are not given details relating to specific child protection situations, to ensure that confidentiality is not breached.

Procedures

Where it is believed that a child is suffering from, or is at risk of, significant harm, the Child Protection Coordinators will:

- Inform the Child Protection Lead that there is a child protection issue
- Make a judgement and take this forward as appropriate
- Inform the Social Services and/or the police where appropriate
- Send a Report to the Children's Reporter if advised to do so
- Keep a written record, signed and dated, of the details of the case in a secure locked cabinet or secure electronic storage.

In some cases, the advice from Social Services may be to monitor the situation; the CPC will act on the advice of Social Services or the Police (often generated by a Police Scotland Concern Report).

Employees/Volunteers will be kept informed of Child Protection Procedures through induction and regular training.

Other adults in the Society will rarely work unsupervised by members of the Society/employees/volunteers. The Child Protection Lead will be informed by e-mail of any visiting adult who may have unsupervised contact with young members and will inform the CPC before his/her visit. Regular visitors to the Society will be required by the Society to obtain a PVG Certificate. An update of their PVG Scheme record will be sought. If visiting adults are to be unsupervised, the CPC or Child Protection Lead will also ensure that they are aware of the Society's policy and the CPC with whom they should raise concerns.

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The Society will endeavour to ensure all visitors to the Society are identifiable and that they are made aware of the Society's expectations of them.

To ensure safeguarding and protection of children on Society trips/excursions the Child Protection Lead will oversee the planning of all such trips including the Safeguarding and CP arrangements at any residential centre, which will then be checked by the CPC. Where no CPC is present on a trip/excursion the Committee will designate an appropriate adult who will have responsibility for Safeguarding and CP, with access to the CPC.

Training and Support

The Society will ensure that the Child Protection Co-ordinators receive training relevant to their role.

All employees/volunteers will have access to Child Protection training which is relevant and appropriate to their role. This will include training in procedures to follow, raising awareness of current legislation and guidance and appropriate record keeping. It is important that all employees/volunteers have access to appropriate training to enable them to react appropriately if an incident should occur.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. The only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child.

An employee/volunteer must never guarantee confidentiality to a young member nor should they agree with the young member to keep a secret as, where there is a child protection concern, it must be reported to the CPC, and may require further investigation by appropriate authorities.

Employees/volunteers will be informed of relevant aspects of a child protection issue on a 'need to know basis' only. Any information shared with employees/volunteers in this way must be held confidentially.

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Records and Monitoring

Notes will be made of any child protection concern raised and action taken where appropriate. These reports will be kept in a confidential file, in a secure area. In the same way, notes will be kept of any young member who is being monitored for child protection reasons. Only one confidential record will be kept on each issue. Organisations and authorities can work together to safeguard children only if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. This has been recognised in principle by the courts. Any disclosure of personal information to others, (including to the social services department), must always have regard to both common and statute law. The Society should seek legal advice if the situation is unclear in this regard.

Attendance at Children's Hearings

The CPC will attend any Hearing called in respect of a young member if invited to do so and will comply with any requirement of the Children's Panel in relation to such attendance.

Supporting Young members at Risk

Child Protection is when a child requires protection from child abuse or neglect. For a child to require protection, it is not required that child abuse or neglect has taken place, but rather a risk assessment has identified a likelihood or risk of significant harm from abuse or neglect.

The Society recognises that children who are abused or are at risk of abuse or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. The Society may be one of the few stable, secure and predictable elements in the lives of children at risk.