

ABERDEEN STRATHSPEY & REEL SOCIETY

Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy

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Policy Statement

Aberdeen Strathspey & Reel Society (ASRS) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and wellbeing of all children and young people who participate in Society activities.

The welfare of the child is paramount. Every child has the right to be safe, protected from harm and treated with dignity and respect.

The Society recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and is committed to creating an environment where children feel valued, listened to, respected and protected. The Society expects all members, volunteers, tutors, conductors, committee members, contractors and visitors to share this commitment.

This policy applies to all Society activities, including rehearsals, concerts, performances, competitions, social events, trips, residential events, transport arrangements organised by the Society, online activities and communications.

The Society recognises that positive self-esteem, confidence, supportive relationships and access to trusted adults help all children and young people, particularly those who may be vulnerable or experiencing difficulties. The Society will promote a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment in which children feel able to speak about worries, seek support and participate fully in Society activities.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required

Principles

The Society will:

- Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children.
- Promote a culture of openness, trust and respect.
- Treat all children fairly and without discrimination.
- Listen to children's views and take them seriously.
- The Society will work in partnership with parents, carers, volunteers and, where appropriate, relevant organisations and statutory agencies to safeguard and support children and young people
- Respond promptly and appropriately to all safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure concerns are managed confidentially and shared only on a need-to-know basis.
- Maintain robust safeguarding procedures.
- Ensure appropriate training and support for those working with children.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

Child or Young Person means anyone under the age of 18 years.

Safeguarding refers to actions taken to promote the wellbeing of children and protect them from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Child Protection refers to specific activities undertaken where a child is believed to be at risk of significant harm or abuse.

Responsibilities

All Adults

Every adult involved with the Society must:

- Read and follow this policy.
- Act in the best interests of children.
- Report concerns immediately.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries.
- Challenge poor practice where appropriate.
- Cooperate fully with safeguarding procedures.

Child Protection Co-ordinators (CPCs)

The CPCs are responsible for:

- Receiving safeguarding concerns.
- Maintaining secure safeguarding records.
- Seeking advice from statutory agencies.
- Making referrals when required.
- Support volunteers and members involved in safeguarding matters.
- Ensure safeguarding procedures are followed consistently.

Child Protection Lead

The Child Protection Lead will:

- Provide oversight of safeguarding arrangements.
- Support CPCs in fulfilling their responsibilities.
- Ensure policies remain current and effective.
- Report annually to the Committee regarding safeguarding compliance.

Committee

The Committee holds overall responsibility for ensuring that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place and adequately resourced.

The committee will ensure that appropriate safe-guarding arrangements will be in place for all off-site activities which may include, supervision. Risk assessments, emergency contact details.

The committee will ensure that Individuals undertaking roles with children will be subject to PVG membership. Disclosure Scotland guidance requires PVG membership for regulated roles with children (this may include any regular volunteer tutor, conductor, accompanist or sectional instructor) and organisations have duties in relation to safe recruitment and reporting harmful behaviour

The Committee will respect confidentiality and will not routinely receive details of individual child protection cases unless this is necessary to fulfil legal or governance responsibilities. However, the Society recognises that safeguarding concerns may require information to be shared without consent in order to protect a child from harm.

Safeguarding Training and Support

The Society will ensure that:

- Child Protection Co-ordinators receive safeguarding training appropriate to their responsibilities.
- Volunteers, tutors, conductors, accompanists, Committee members and other adults working with children receive safeguarding information and training appropriate to their role.
- Safeguarding induction is completed before an individual undertakes unsupervised responsibilities involving children.
- Refresher training and updates are provided whenever there are significant changes to legislation, guidance or Society procedures.
- Appropriate support is available to adults involved in safeguarding situations.

Confidentiality

All safeguarding concerns will be handled sensitively and on a need-to-know basis.

Adults must never:

- Promise confidentiality to a child or young person.
- Agree to keep information secret if it relates to a child's safety or wellbeing.

Children should be informed, in an age-appropriate way that information may need to be shared with people who can help keep them safe.

Information will only be shared with those who need it in order to safeguard and protect children.

Trips, Performances and Off-Site Activities

Appropriate safeguarding arrangements will be in place for all Society trips, performances, competitions, residential activities and other off-site events involving children.

The Society will ensure that:

- Appropriate risk assessments are completed.
- A named adult has safeguarding responsibility for the event.
- Emergency contact details are available.
- Appropriate supervision arrangements are in place.
- Transport arrangements are clear and communicated.
- Any relevant safeguarding arrangements at external venues are considered.

Where a Child Protection Co-ordinator is not present, the Committee will designate an appropriate adult who will have responsibility for safeguarding during the activity and access to advice from the Society's Child Protection Lead or Child Protection Co-ordinator.

Recognising Concerns

Abuse or harm may be:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglectful

Children may also experience:

- Online harm or exploitation
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child criminal exploitation
- Bullying
- Peer-on-peer abuse
- Domestic abuse within the household
- Trafficking
- Forced marriage
- Female genital mutilation

Concerns may arise through:

- Direct disclosure by a child
- Observation of injuries
- Changes in behaviour or wellbeing
- Information shared by another adult
- Concerning online interactions

Responding to a Concern

Any person receiving a concern or disclosure must:

DO

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully.
- Reassure the child they have done the right thing by speaking up.
- Explain that information may need to be shared to keep them safe.
- Record facts and the child's own words where possible.
- Report concerns immediately.

DO NOT

- Promise confidentiality.
- Ask leading questions.
- Investigate the matter yourself.
- Challenge the alleged perpetrator.
- Delay reporting while seeking additional evidence.

Reporting Procedure

Immediate Danger

If a child is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical assistance:

- **Contact emergency services (999) immediately.**
- **Inform a Child Protection Co-ordinator as soon as practicable.**

Non-Immediate Concern

Where there is a safeguarding concern:

1. Report immediately to a Child Protection Co-ordinator.
2. Record the concern using the Society Safeguarding Concern Form.
3. The CPC will consider the information and seek advice from Social Work, Police Scotland or other appropriate agencies where necessary.
4. All actions and decisions will be clearly documented.

Digital Safeguarding

The Society recognises that safeguarding responsibilities extend to digital and online environments.

Adults involved with the Society must:

- Use approved communication methods.
- Avoid private or secret communications with children.
- Ensure group communications include parents or carers where appropriate.
- Follow Society guidance on photography, video recording and social media.
- Report online safety concerns in the same manner as any other safeguarding concern.

Record Keeping

The Society will maintain secure records of all safeguarding concerns.

Records must:

- Be completed as soon as possible after the concern arises.
- Be factual, accurate, signed, dated and timed.
- Include the child's own words where possible.
- Clearly record observations, concerns and actions taken.
- Include details of information shared and with whom.
- Record advice received from statutory agencies and resulting decisions.
- Be stored securely with access restricted to authorised safeguarding personnel.
- Be retained and disposed of in accordance with relevant legal requirements.

Only one official safeguarding record should be maintained for each concern and unnecessary duplicate copies should not be created.

Concerns or Allegations Relating to Adults

Any concern, allegation or complaint relating to the conduct of a tutor, volunteer, accompanist, conductor, Committee member or other adult must be taken seriously.

The welfare of children will be the Society's primary concern.

The Society will:

- Follow safeguarding procedures immediately.
- Contact statutory agencies where appropriate.
- Preserve relevant records and information.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Avoid taking actions that could compromise an investigation.
- Consider temporary arrangements to reduce risk while enquiries are undertaken.

Visitors and External Adults

The Society will ensure that visitors and external adults involved in Society activities are identifiable and understand the Society's safeguarding expectations.

Any visitor who may have significant or unsupervised contact with children will be subject to appropriate safeguarding arrangements, including any required PVG Scheme membership or other safer recruitment measures.

Visitors will be informed how to raise safeguarding concerns and who the designated safeguarding contacts are.

Supporting Children and Young People

The Society recognises that children who experience abuse, neglect, exploitation or who witness violence may face significant challenges affecting their wellbeing and development.

The Society may provide an important source of stability, consistency and positive relationships within a child's life. Through supportive and respectful engagement, the Society aims to contribute positively to children's safety, confidence, wellbeing and participation.