



WATFORD PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Overview

Watford Philharmonic Society is a registered charity (No 272393) whose mission is to promote the art of music by the study and public performance of choral and orchestral works of the highest quality.

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate our commitment to protecting from abuse children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom we have any involvement and to provide an outline of the principles that guide our approach to safeguarding. Society members are generally independent adults.

Officers and other committee members are elected to serve on the committee and are trustees of the Society. Others may be co-opted onto the committee from time to time. Rehearsals are run by our Director of Music and professional accompanist, both of whom have service contracts with the Society.

The Society will maintain a list of DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked adults and a named person will be responsible for safeguarding matters, to whom all queries and concerns should be referred in the first instance. Currently, the named person is Audrey Adams, the Society's Secretary. Audrey be contacted: secretary@watfordphilharmonic.co.uk

This policy applies to employees, members, volunteers, and all others invited to perform or work with us.

Legal Context

The law requires any organisation involved with young people and/or vulnerable adults to take all reasonable measures to ensure that risk of abuse or harm to their welfare is minimised and, where there are concerns, to share them with other local agencies. Specific legal requirements arise from:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- The Sexual Offences (Amendments) Act 2006

We recognise that it is not our role to decide whether a child or vulnerable adult has been harmed or abused. This is the role of the relevant Social Services department (who have legal responsibility) or the NSPCC (who have powers to investigate child protection concerns under the Children Act). Our responsibility is limited to ensuring that children and vulnerable adults come to no harm whilst in our care.

In this context anyone up to the age of 18 is classified as a child; anyone over 18 years of age who is or who may be unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation is considered to be a vulnerable adult.

Practicalities

The Society does not advertise itself as an activity suitable for children or vulnerable adults to join as members.

However, contact with children falling into any of the following categories may occur:

- Young people becoming temporary members of the choir or orchestra and attending rehearsals and other activities.
- Children taking part in a concert, typically as part of a youth or school choir or as soloists.
- Children forming part of the audience at public performances.

Membership

Membership is open to people aged 18 and above who can demonstrate an appropriate level of musical ability.

Rehearsals and other activities will be conducted in an open environment to avoid private or unobserved situations. Adult members and employees (other than a parent or guardian) should ensure that they are not alone with a young person.

Concerts involving children

In concerts or where an established group is invited to participate in a Society event, responsibility for safeguarding remains with the visiting group. The total number of adults in attendance (not necessarily DBS checked) compared with the total number of children will be in line with Ofsted recommendations as set out in the ratio table below. The Society acknowledges its general duty of care in these circumstances.

Parents and guardians should be aware that occasional photography, audio and video recording may be undertaken at concerts and rehearsals. The images and recordings may be stored digitally and used both on and offline, including on the Internet. These provide valuable tools to promote the work of the Society to a wider audience and form part of the historical record of its work. Permission will be sought prior to using any images of children captured in this way.

Where a young person under the age of 18 is invited to perform as a soloist in one of our concerts, the same provisions will apply.

Child to adult ratio table

Age of child	Number of adults	Number of children
0-2	1	3
2-3	1	4
4-8	1	6
9-12	1	8
12-18	1	10

Children in audiences

Whilst children and vulnerable adults are generally welcome to attend performances and other events organised by the Society, they must be accompanied by a parent, guardian or carer and supervised at all times. If a parent/guardian/carer is not personally attending an event, they must be satisfied that their child/vulnerable adult will be accompanied and adequately supervised by a responsible adult acting on their behalf. The Society cannot be held responsible in any way for looking after children/vulnerable adults.

Responding to concerns and incidents of abuse

The person responsible for safeguarding matters (or in their absence, a member of the committee) will first make a decision based on the immediacy of the concern in consideration of the following factors:

1. If the vulnerable person is in immediate danger or needs emergency medical attention, call the police and/or ambulance service.
2. If the person at the centre of an allegation is working with the vulnerable person/persons at the time of a complaint or incident, remove them as sensitively as possible from direct contact with the vulnerable person/persons and follow the procedures below.

In any event, the person responsible for safeguarding matters will:

- Make a note of the concerns observed or reported.
- Speak with other committee members to decide how to handle the incident. Exclude any committee members involved in it.
- For less serious incidents, set up an internal investigation using mediation if appropriate. More serious incidents may need to be referred to the police or to a local authority social services department.
- Setting up an internal investigation should include:
 - Informing all parties involved of the reported abuse as soon as possible.
 - Informing parents, guardians or carers.
 - Arranging separate meetings with both parties within 10 days of the reported incident. A joint meeting may be arranged if appropriate.
 - Meetings will be attended by the named safeguarding officer and at least one other committee member.
 - All parties will also be invited to submit a written statement in advance of the meeting.
 - Both parties should be given the chance to bring a friend or representative to the meeting.
 - A record of the meeting will be made by the person responsible for safeguarding matters.
- Once meetings have taken place, the committee will decide on next steps, taking advice if necessary, and communicate them to all parties in writing within 5 days. Such next steps may involve:
 - Escalating the incident to the relevant authority.
 - Further investigation, agreeing procedures and timelines to work towards a resolution.
 - A decision or resolution.

Resolution and disciplinary action

- If abuse is found to have taken place, any final resolution or decision will be taken in the best interests of the person who has suffered the abuse and the best interests the Society.
- Any disciplinary action will be taken in line with the Society’s constitution.

Review

This Policy will be **reviewed annually** by the Society’s management committee and adjustments made in accordance with changes in legislation or recommendations. Members of the Society will be advised of any such changes.

Policy originated:	Next review:	Signed off by:
July 2023	July 2024	
	July 2025	

NOTE

This Policy Statement is based on guidelines provided by Making Music (the National Federation of Music Societies) www.makingmusic.org.uk of which Watford Philharmonic Society is a member. Additional advice and guidance is available from the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children). <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/charity-trustees>