

Whiddon Autumn Festival

Policy for the safeguarding and protection of children and adults



Introduction

The Care Act 2014 sets out a clear legal framework for safeguarding. Safeguarding is everybody's business and as such Whiddon Autumn Festival ('WAF') recognises the need to play its part in recognising and responding to concerns. WAF is committed to good practice which safeguards and protects participants, including children, from harm. WAF recognises its duty of care towards children and adults, and to see that everyone's right to protection from abuse is upheld. All suspicions or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. WAF understands that all team members – including trustees, volunteers, employees and musical practitioners – have a duty of care to abide by this policy and to report concerns. All team members are required to familiarise themselves with WAF's safeguarding policy.

Policy Aims

WAF is committed to a participant-centred approach.

- We put the wellbeing, safety, and dignity of every participant first.
- Professional relationships between team members are based upon mutual trust and respect, and must remain appropriate at all times.
- The feelings and concerns of any participant, teacher, parent, or carer are listened to and acted upon appropriately.
- We are committed to maintaining an attitude of 'it could happen here' and to supporting team members who raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults with whom we work.

Policy Statement

This policy has been approved by the Trustees and copies are provided for all WAF staff, singers, volunteers and partner organisations participating in projects involving children. The policy is available on the WAF website and is reviewed annually by the Trustees.

Last reviewed: **May 2026**

Next review due: **May 2027**

Roles and Responsibilities

- Alison Routh (trustee) is WAF's Safeguarding Lead.
- The Safeguarding Lead, with the support of the Learning & Engagement officer(s) and the Chair of Trustees, is responsible for ensuring the implementation and monitoring of WAF's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

- The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for considering (in consultation with other WAF team members) whether any incidents involving children and vulnerable adults should be reported to social care, the police or other relevant authority.
- The Safeguarding Lead, with the support of the Learning & Engagement officer(s), is responsible for ensuring appropriate DBS checks are carried out.
- The Safeguarding Lead and the Chair of Trustees are responsible for making decisions in relation to the suitability of individuals for work with children and vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding procedures for working with children

- In most circumstances employees will not be working alone with children.
- WAF team members should always use toilets specifically designated for their use.
- WAF team members should always change in a room specifically designated for their use.
- WAF team members must maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- WAF team members should not travel alone with children (for example by giving them a lift in a car).
- WAF's Safeguarding Lead and/or Learning & Engagement officer(s) must ensure that all necessary consents have been obtained before photos or video footage can be taken during the course of a project involving children (more info below).
- WAF team members are not authorised to take photos or video footage during the course of a project involving children, unless they have received authorisation from WAF's Safeguarding Lead or Learning & Engagement officer(s).
- Circumstances may arise where a child touches a member of the WAF team. This might occur when participants have learning difficulties or special educational needs or when young children used to hugging teachers in school are participating in a project. In these situations the team member should respond in a sensitive manner appropriate to the circumstances of the individual child and seek to minimise contact.
- All children should be treated with respect at all times, regardless of age, sex, gender, or ethnicity. Any child or young person in a project with WAF is a valued member of the entire team and as such is of equal importance to any other musician/performer.
- Shouting at children or displays of anger or irritation are never appropriate. If a child or young person is behaving inappropriately, WAF team members should seek support from a member of school staff, or another WAF team member.
- WAF team members should always give participants enthusiastic and constructive feedback.
- For every venue (rehearsal space/concert venue) provided by WAF and used by children in connection with WAF, WAF will ensure availability of a venue risk assessment for accompanying teachers and/or parents. Most likely, a risk assessment will already be available for hired venues, but even in these circumstances WAF will undertake a review of the risk assessment to make sure that it includes child-specific risks before making it available to teachers/parents.

Safeguarding procedures for working with adults

The Care Act 2014 sets out six principles that should underpin the safeguarding of adults. These principles should inform the ways in which WAF team members work with adults:

1. **Empowerment** - People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and give informed consent.
2. **Prevention** - It is better to take action before harm occurs.
3. **Proportionality** - The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
4. **Protection** - Support and representation for those in greatest need.
5. **Partnership** - Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
6. **Accountability** - Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

All participants should be treated with respect at all times, regardless of age, sex, gender, or ethnicity. Any participant in a project with WAF is a valued member of the entire team and as such is of equal importance to any other musician/performer. WAF team members should always give participants enthusiastic and constructive feedback.

Media

Photographs or video footage of children participating in WAF projects will not be taken unless appropriate written consent has first been obtained from either parents, carers or from the children's school. Where photographs and video footage is taken, care will be taken to ensure that the use of such material does not put any child at risk. Material should not be linked online to the full names of any participants (this does not count professional musicians employed/engaged by WAF) or any other personal information.

Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

WAF requires all team members working in an education capacity to undergo a DBS check. WAF will facilitate the appropriate checks for all team members including paying the necessary application fee. However, where a team member already has an enhanced DBS check for the appropriate workforce from a previous employer or organisation and has already subscribed to the DBS update service, no further DBS check will be required. Where a team member has not subscribed to the DBS update service, a fresh DBS check will need to be undertaken in respect of their work with WAF. All DBS checks must be renewed every three years.

Situations Where it is Impractical to Obtain an Enhanced DBS Check

In exceptional circumstances where there are valid reasons why it has not been possible to obtain an enhanced DBS check in time for a project, the Safeguarding Lead may, in consultation with any others involved in a project, decide that a team member should be permitted to take part in a particular

project. Where a team member without an enhanced DBS check is permitted to take part in a project, their work with children should be supervised at all times by a team member with an enhanced DBS check, preferably the Learning & Engagement officer(s) or the Safeguarding Lead.

Assessing Information Disclosed as a Result of a DBS Check

In the event of a DBS check disclosing information relevant to the individual's suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults, the certificate information will be retained until a decision regarding the individual's suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults has been determined. Responsibility for decisions concerning an individual's suitability to work with children rests with the Safeguarding Lead and Chair of Trustees.

Teachers and Parents Accompanying Children

WAF assumes that all teachers, parents and other adults accompanying children have been recruited according to practices laid down by select criteria in place at their schools including DBS checks, documentary evidence of qualifications and references followed through in writing.

Disclosures of Abuse and Reporting Procedures

It is possible that during a project a child or vulnerable adult might make a disclosure of abuse or of information that might be an indicator of possible abuse. It is important that WAF team members know how to respond appropriately to such disclosures. WAF team members should follow the following guidelines:

1. Stay calm.
2. Listen carefully to what is said and show that you are taking it seriously.
3. Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep it secret.
4. Tell the person that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it.
5. Allow them to continue at their own pace.
6. Ask questions for clarification only. Avoid asking leading questions.
7. Reassure them 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. When working in a school, this will be the teacher responsible for the group or the school's designated safeguarding lead. When working in other venues it will be either a member of the group's staff or WAF's Safeguarding Lead.
9. Make no judgement about what you have heard.
10. Record what was said in writing as soon as possible. Use their words, note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that you sign and date the record. If possible, it should be placed in an envelope and sealed. When in a school, the designated Safeguarding Lead will then take this record.

11. If you witness an incident of abuse or potential abuse in the course of your work for the WAF you should alert the Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.
12. Remember that whilst you may have been the first person someone has chosen to disclose abuse to, it is not your responsibility to decide whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for professional agencies following a referral from the school or from WAF's Safeguarding Lead.

Remember the four Rs: Recognise, Respond, Refer, Record.

Signs of abuse and neglect

Abuse can take many forms; physical, psychological, sexual, neglect, discriminatory, organisational, and financial. Abuse also includes domestic abuse, Modern Slavery and self-neglect. Exploitation is noted as a common theme. Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person(s). Examples of abuse are:

- Hitting, slapping, rough handling.
- Giving medication incorrectly.
- Deprivation of warmth, food, clothing, healthcare, etc.
- Any kind of sexual activity to which the person has not consented or cannot consent.
- Misuse or theft of money or property.
- Shouting, swearing.
- Neglect of medical or physical need.
- Discrimination or harassment.

Abuse can happen anywhere by anyone but is usually perpetrated by someone known to the victim. Some kinds of abuse are a criminal offence.

Abuse might come to light by:

- Someone disclosing abuse.
- Witnessing an event happening.
- Noticing changes in behaviour.
- Noticing physical indicators of abuse.

The NSPCC website has useful information regarding different types of child abuse and possible signs and symptoms of abuse. <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/>

**Safeguarding allegation against a member of the WAF team
(trustees, volunteers, employees and musical practitioners)**

Any expression of concern regarding a WAF team member must immediately be reported to the WAF Safeguarding Lead who will in turn report to the Chair of Trustees and in conference with them decide on the most suitable course of action. The reported problem will be immediately logged. Confidentiality for all parties will be maintained at every stage of such an event. Please see below for named persons and contact details.

Alison Routh, Safeguarding Lead
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John Crowley, Chair of Trustees
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George Cook, Learning & Engagement officer
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Whiddon Autumn Festival

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