



Southwell Minster

THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF
THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Safeguarding policy for Southwell Minster Choristers

This document is a safeguarding policy that relates specifically to the choristers at Southwell Minster. Southwell Minster has its own overall set of safeguarding principles, policies and a clear reporting procedure. Southwell Minsters overarching safeguarding policies are set by the Church of England House of Bishops, which can be accessed as described below.

Safeguarding in the Church context

Within the Christian faith we believe that every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from being created in God's own image and likeness. We are called to value all people as bearing the image of God and recognise that we have a duty to protect all people from harm. Acknowledging this, it may seem unnecessary to underline God's judgement on abuse, but it is important to be clear about the seriousness needed here. Jesus said to his disciples, 'If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck, and you were drowned in the depth of the sea' (Matthew 18.6). This may seem a stark quote to include at the start of a chorister safeguarding policy, but it makes a clear statement for us about how central the protection of children must be to all Christian ministry. The act of Christian worship stands at the heart of what we do at Southwell Minster and the Cathedral Choir, especially the choristers, are an essential part of the traditional worship life of our historic Church of England Southwell Minster.

Southwell Minsters overarching safeguarding policies are those provided by the Church of England House of Bishops. All of the policies and procedures that govern safeguarding in the Church of England can be found at [Policy and practice guidance | The Church of England](#).

Southwell Minster now has an appointed Safeguarding Officer who is available to provide expert advice and support to Southwell Cathedral Chapter when this is needed.

Southwell Minster also has an agreement in place with the Diocese who provide additional support, training and advice.

Why is a specific policy needed to address safeguarding of choristers?

- i. The children in Southwell Minster Choir are educated at Southwell Minster School, Southwell. Safeguarding the choristers is jointly managed by the Minster safeguarding officer and the Lead for safeguarding at the school.
- ii. Southwell Minster commits to making formal links with the Head Teacher and safeguarding lead at Southwell Minster school. It is the role of the Rector Chori to establish professional relationships between Southwell Minster school, so that the child's role as a chorister can be understood in their school environment and the wellbeing of choristers in Southwell Minster can be supported by their school, as well as their parents.
- iii. Southwell Minster have developed this safeguarding policy with the support of safeguarding professionals, to ensure that it has regard to the '2018 Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance' and the additional guidance of the Secretary of State for Education regarding children in education. In this sense Southwell Minster sees itself very much in partnership with chorister parents and Southwell minster school to enable its management of the choir to be undertaken in a manner that promotes the welfare of every chorister and protects them from abuse of any kind.
- iv. Southwell Minster will respond without delay to any complaint or allegation of abuse. The Safeguarding Officer or the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, will provide information to the lead professional in any safeguarding or welfare matters. They will appropriately involve the child's parents, the child's school, Nottinghamshire Children's Services, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and Nottinghamshire Police, as is required by law in relation to the individual circumstances.
- v. By ensuring that this policy is understood by all staff, clergy, parents and choristers and shared with schools, Southwell Minster aims to ensure that it provides a safe environment for choristers and that choristers well-being is prioritised within Southwell Minster.
- i. **Professionals with Responsibility for Cathedral Safeguarding:** Southwell Minster has an appointed Safeguarding Officer, who provides professional safeguarding advice and would be the initial contact should there be a

safeguarding concern. They can be contacted safeguarding@southwell.anglican.org

- ii. The Cathedral's Strategic Safeguarding lead is the Chief Officer (CO) Nigel Spraggins, who has oversight and responsibility on behalf of Southwell Cathedral Chapter in relation to Southwell Minster safeguarding arrangements. The Strategic Lead and the Safeguarding Officer work closely together in all areas of safeguarding. nigel.spraggins@southwellminster.org.uk
- iii. The Rector Chori is the first point of contact for any concern in relation to the welfare of a chorister. He reports all safeguarding matters directly to the safeguarding officer, as is appropriate. However, the Safeguarding Officer or Canon Precentor can also be contacted initially if this is felt to be appropriate.
- iv. Where the concern relates to a member of staff or volunteer the Canon Precentor is a point of contact. He reports all safeguarding matters directly to the Safeguarding Officer or team, as appropriate.
- v. The Chorister Supervisor has day-to-day responsibility for the well-being of choristers whilst they are in the Cathedral, and she is supported by Assistant Director of Music, the appointed Organ Scholar, all other music department staff and the Safeguarding Officer.
- vi. All the above cathedral clergy, staff and officers receive regular safeguarding training to enable them to carry out their roles effectively.
- vii. Southwell Minster is also provided with professional safeguarding advice, training and coordination of its safeguarding function by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, their details can be found at [Home - Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham \(anglican.org\)](http://Home-DioceseofSouthwell&Nottingham(anglican.org)).

Ensuring only safe and appropriate adults have contact with our choristers.

- i. The appointment of Lay Clerks to Southwell Minster Choir and the appointment of staff to Southwell Minster music department is, like appointments to the teaching staff at a school, conditional on the possession of a satisfactory DBS check at the enhanced level and the receipt of two references which satisfactorily addresses the question of the candidate's suitability for work with children. If a DBS check is delayed, candidates will not be permitted to take up their post until a satisfactory check is received. This protocol also applies to all Southwell Minster staff and volunteers whose roles involve them having contact

with the choristers or other children in the Southwell Minster setting or on behalf of Southwell Minster in the wider community.

- ii. Should a difficult or complicated recruitment judgement be called for, with the consent of the applicant to whom the information relates, the CO will share the confidential information from the DBS check outcome with the Safeguarding Officer. If necessary, a formal risk assessment process will be undertaken and Southwell Minster will make its final recruitment decisions based on its commitment to providing an atmosphere where children can grow and flourish, safe from harm and be surrounded by adults who are able to provide appropriate role models for the choristers within the Christian context of Southwell Cathedral.
- iii. All Cathedral clergy are appointed in line with the House of Bishops' guidance and are deemed 'fit persons' in relation to suitability to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- iv. Local clergy may preside at or assist with choral services only if they have current formal authorisation to exercise their ministry in the Diocese of Southwell by virtue of the Bishop's Licence or its equivalent, or the Bishop's Permission to Officiate, both of which are dependent on a satisfactory DBS check, at the enhanced level, relevant and up to date training and satisfactory diocesan checks of records relating to their personal and career histories.
- v. The use of parent chaperones or other volunteers will be decided upon, by the Rector Chori, alongside the Safeguarding Officer, as the need arises. Where a parent is asked formally by Southwell Minster to take on regular responsibility for supervising children other than their own, they will be asked to complete the same safer recruitment process as the other children's volunteers in Southwell Minster. Only Southwell Minster staff and volunteers that have been safely recruited to work unsupervised with children will ever be asked to assist with choir related pastoral duties.
- vi. Specific directives relevant to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children are included in the guidelines which are presented to Lay Clerks by Southwell Cathedral Chapter. These set out the parameters of appropriate conduct, contact and communication with choristers, within or outside official choir activities. They are intended to be of benefit to all parties. Where a Lay Clerk infringes these directives, the CO reserves the right to suspend them from all choir activities, giving full notice of the reason for suspension, with a right to reply. Good pastoral care is to be provided for all concerned but the safety of

children is the paramount consideration. If the infringement indicates that there are grounds for concern, advice will be sought, by the Safeguarding Officer and/or the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and from outside agencies in accordance with guidance from the Secretary of State for Education. The decision as to when and if to seek advice from statutory authorities rests with the Cathedral's Safeguarding Officer.

- vii. Chorister welfare is regularly discussed on the agenda of meetings of Southwell Cathedral Chapter and of the music department, providing among other things, a regular forum in which to reflect on and discuss practice in the light of experience.
- viii. This policy, along with the guidelines presented to Lay Clerks, is reviewed on an annual basis by the Safeguarding Officer in consultation with the music department. A copy of this policy is given to Lay Clerks within the context of a mandatory verbal induction. The Safeguarding Officer will, as part of Lay Clerks' induction, meet with them.

Communication is the key to good safeguarding arrangements

- i. The communication between Southwell Minster and the chorister parents needs to be excellent and the parameters for this are set out here and, in the agreement, signed by all parties at the commencement of a choristership and annually thereafter. It is essential that parents are encouraged and supported to communicate regularly with Southwell Minster and that any changes to a chorister's home circumstances or school circumstances are communicated in writing to the Rector Chori. This is important so that issues that may impact upon a chorister's wellbeing are understood by Southwell Minster at the earliest opportunity. It also ensures that Southwell Minster can work in partnership with parents to support the choristers.
- ii. It is essential to Southwell Minsters day-to-day safeguarding arrangements for choristers, that parents ensure they communicate clearly with Southwell Minster any changes to the collection arrangements for children. That the time and place of collections after services are communicated clearly and are decided upon by the Rector Chori so that the chorister's safety can be prioritised. It is to this end that copies of all correspondence to parents must be retained, up to date, and parents must co-operate with clear and explicit arrangements if on any given occasion they themselves are not going to be responsible for collecting their child.

- iii. It is imperative that the Safeguarding Officer is informed if a chorister is subject to any of the following Court Orders:
- Interim or Full Care Order
 - Special Guardianship Order
 - Child Arrangement Order
 - Supervision Orders
 - Prohibited Steps Order
 - Private Fostering Arrangements
 - Restraining or Non-molestation Orders, in relation to parents or close family members

In addition, if a chorister becomes subject to any local authority intervention in their home life such as a Team around the Child Plan, a Child in Need Plan or a Child Protection Plan, the Safeguarding Officer should be informed by the parent or by the chorister's school's safeguarding lead. All this information will be held confidentially by the safeguarding team and will only be shared with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, Rector Chori and the Strategic Lead for Safeguarding, to enable the planning for that chorister in the Southwell Minster context to take account of any complex circumstances. Southwell Cathedral Chapter takes the wellbeing of the choristers very seriously and wants to be actively involved in plans to promote the welfare of each child in its care.

- iv. The music department staff must make clear in advance all arrangements for rehearsals and performances and must have signed consent forms from all parents for social, photographic, video and tour arrangements.
- v. A clear record of who is allowed to collect children must be kept and must be available to the Chorister Supervisor daily.

1. Ensuring safe and appropriate transport of choristers.

- i. There are key points where choristers need to be transported to and from Southwell Minster and how this is undertaken at these times is agreed by the Southwell Cathedral Chapter as being their responsibility.
- ii. Southwell Cathedral Chapter will always ensure that appropriate and safe adults transport and chaperone the children. These adults could be:
- Parents who volunteer to assist with transporting their own child and another and where all chorister parents have consented for their children to be transported in a fellow parent's vehicle.
 - Members of Southwell Minster staff or volunteers who have been appropriately and safely recruited.

- Taxi companies who have been authorised for transporting children by the county council approved scheme and whose drivers can produce the badge awarded to approved drivers.

Where it is not possible for a person from the above list to be used to transport children, Southwell Minster will provide an appropriately recruited chaperone to escort any chorister on a journey made in relation to their chorister role.

- iii. Where staff, parents or volunteers are transporting children on behalf of Southwell Minster the music department will ensure that the driver holds a full UK driving licence and is transporting children in a car that holds a current MOT certificate and is comprehensively insured to cover the transporting of children on the behalf of Southwell Minster.
- iv. Where an approved adult is transporting a child on their own, they must ensure that the child sits in the rear of the vehicle.
- v. Seatbelts must be used on all journeys in cars and vehicles where seatbelts are required by law.
- vi. For all journeys undertaken on behalf of Southwell Minster, the driver should keep a log of the journey details including the date and the times of pickup and drop off.
- vii. The adult transporting the child should always ensure that the child is delivered to the adult responsible for the child at the location to which they are being delivered.
- viii. Where arrangements are made between parents it is not Southwell Cathedral Chapter's responsibility to monitor the individual travel arrangements.

2. Procedures in the Event of Complaint or Allegation of Abuse:

- i. Within Southwell Minster the handling of complaints and allegations relating to choristers is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Officer and/or the Diocese Safeguarding Team. The contact details of all those named in this policy can be found on Southwell Minster's website. These are additionally made known to chorister parents and choristers in their respective handbooks. It is The Rector Chori's responsibility to ensure this information is shared yearly, that all parents receive information about this policy and reviews, any staff changes, any local Child Protection updates and any changes to chorister welfare arrangements.

Parents whose children begin to sing in the Choir at some other time of the year receive these materials as soon as the Choristership starts.

- ii. Parents, choristers or others who have any concerns at any time relating to the safety of choristers should contact the Safeguarding Officer and the Rector Chori without delay, who will liaise with each other. Parents, choristers and others may also contact The Strategic Lead for Safeguarding directly. Notices are placed at child-eye-level height in the Song School and the other areas where the children rehearse informing choristers who they should speak to if anything or anyone worries them or makes them feel unsafe.
- iii. Children will probably wish to speak to their parents first about anything or anyone that is worrying them or making them feel unsafe. If you are a child or young person reading this and you are worried about your safety at school, in Southwell Minster or in the choir, please do not hesitate to speak to your parents. But if for any reason you would rather speak to someone outside of your family, you can speak to the staff in the music department, the Safeguarding Officer or Chorister Supervisor. Their contact details are given on the last page of this policy. If you have worries at home either as a parent or as a chorister, the music department staff will always make time to talk with you and will try to help you as much as they can.

Anyone approaching any of Southwell Minster members of staff may be certain that any concerns will be taken seriously, and they will not find themselves in any trouble for making their concerns known. Southwell Minster staff will also seek to support and protect children if there are difficulties at home or at school. However, where the safety of children is in question, whether this is in Southwell Minster, in the school or at home it is not always possible for information to be kept completely in confidence. Any member of staff receiving concerns about the safety of choristers will listen and take notes, making no promises of absolute confidentiality, and refer the matter **at once** to the Safeguarding Officer. The Safeguarding Officer will always work sensitively to make sure children and their families feel safe and listened to. They will always inform and involve the statutory authorities where this is required.

- iv. On receiving information or a complaint or allegation from parents, a child, or a member of staff, the Safeguarding Officer will gather any evidence and notes relating to the complaint or allegation brought to them, listening carefully to all that is said, making no promise of absolute confidentiality. (Where handwritten notes are typed up later, the original contemporaneous notes will be retained.) The matter will be dealt with by the Safeguarding Officer or Diocese Safeguarding Team, in conjunction where necessary with a chorister's school's safeguarding lead in accordance with the procedures and time limits set out in the latest

guidance issued by the Secretary of State. This is currently to be found in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2022) and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2022.' These documents are available to the public on-line. The senior management of the chorister's school will be kept informed by the Safeguarding Officer, in confidence, unless for some reason this would place a child at increased risk of harm.

- v. The (LADO) Local Authority Designated Officer (where appropriate) will be informed within one working day of all allegations that an adult within Southwell Minster has:
- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
 - Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
 - Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he may pose a risk of harm to children.

The advice of the LADO will be followed appropriately.

- vi. Careful notes will be kept of information and advice received, decisions made and the reasoning behind them. In normal circumstances this will be done in full partnership with the chorister's parents, unless for some reason this would place the child at increased risk of harm.
- vii. The relationship between Southwell Minster and The Minster School in regard to safeguarding will be one of full and equal partnership, founded on a presumption of openness and joint decision-making. A process for regular communication will be established with the school to allow for the exchange of information and the maintenance of a good working relationship. The overarching principle of this policy is for the Southwell Cathedral Chapter always to act in the best interests of the child. Where there are Safeguarding concerns relating to Southwell Minster, they will always take responsibility for contact with a chorister's parents and will initiate the process by which advice is sought from the LADO and/or matters are referred to Children's Social Care or the Police.
- viii. As soon as the Safeguarding Officer informs the LADO or feels that a matter should be referred to Children's Services or the Police, they will convene a core group to include the Strategic Lead for Safeguarding and the Dean or Dean's representative with full reference to Diocesan officers and legal authorities as applicable, in order to keep them fully informed. Southwell Minster in all its safeguarding work follows the approved practice guidance issued by the House

of Bishops and the Cathedral Chapter has adopted in its entirety the Church of England's Safeguarding Policy Framework – Promoting a Safer Church 2017.

- ix. Southwell Cathedral Chapter will cooperate fully with the statutory agencies concerned with the safeguarding of the vulnerable.

Penny Turner: Cathedral Safeguarding Officer: LL: **01636 817200**, M: **07827 018873**

Vicky Thorpe: Cathedral Safeguarding Co-Ordinator: M: **07929 195314**

Nigel Spraggins: Chief Officer: Minster Cathedral: LL: **01636 817285**

Paul Provost: Rector Chori: Minster Song School: LL: **01636 817281**

Richard Frith: Precentor: Minster Cathedral: LL: **01636 817292**

Signed:



Date:

18/8/2023

Dean Nicola

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