SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The purpose and scope of this policy statement

Voices for Life works with children as part of its activities. These include

- visiting schools to deliver the music, singing and wellbeing programme.
- Voices for Life Children's Choirs
- Performances and events.

Voices for Life will also adhere to the Safeguarding Policy of the participating schools and request that a member of school staff is always present during Voices for life workshops.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children and young people who receive services from Voices for Life from harm.
- to provide VFL Workers and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

This policy statement applies to anyone working on behalf of Voices for Life, the board of trustees, VFL workers, volunteers, sessional workers and students.

Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from nspcc.org.uk/child protection

Supporting documents

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents.

- Safer recruitment
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures
- Photography and Filming Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- Code of Behaviour

We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind.
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount and in all the decisions we take all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs of other issues.
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing, listening and respecting them.
- appointing a nominated child protection/safeguarding lead and/or a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding.
- developing child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures which reflect best practice.
- providing effective management for VFL workers and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures.

- recruiting VFL workers and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- recording and storing information professionally and securely
- sharing our safeguarding policy with users of the Voices for Life services via our website.
- using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately. This includes concerns relating to online activity, inappropriate communication, or the misuse of images of children.
- creating and maintaining an environment where bullying is not tolerated and responding appropriately to any concerns that arise.
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, VFL workers and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.

Contact details:

Nominated child protection lead:

Name: Tessa Armstrong and Dave Goucher (Trustee Safeguarding lead)/Jo Bird (Trustee Deputy Designated Safeguarding lead)
Email: executive Director@voicesforlife.org.uk (Tessa)
safeguarding@voicesforlife.org.uk (Jo and Dave)

Local Authorities:

VFL is currently working within the policies of South Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Somerset and Bath & Northeast Somerset Local Authorities and Academy Trusts. Contact details for each Local Authority are:

South Gloucestershire

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Tel: 01454 868508

Wiltshire

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Tel: 0300 4560108 using Option 3 then Option 4.

Somerset

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Tel: 0300 133 22 44.

Bath & Northeast Somerset.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Tel: 01225 396810.

Alternatively, you can call ChildLine for advice on 0800 1111 or e-mail them by visiting www.childline.org.uk.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

Date adopted: 17th June 2026

Next review due: June 2027

Approved by: Board of Trustees

Appendix: Definitions of Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by others.

Physical abuse

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or making fun of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment.

Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration or non-penetrative acts. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter; protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision; or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.