



Safeguarding for Parent Helpers

KJV Community Children's Choir

Registered Charity No: 1198653

September 2022

At KJV we believe that every child and young person who comes into contact with the choir has at all times and in all situations a right to feel safe and to be protected from any situation or practice that results in them being physically or psychologically damaged. Full details of our safeguarding and child protection practices can be found in the relevant policy on the website.

As a parent helper your role is invaluable. Children who feel unsafe at KJV or in other settings may look to you as an impartial friendly face and may attempt to disclose details of abuse to you. You also may spot gradual changes in child's behaviour which may give you cause for concern. This guide is to help you to understand what you should do in this situation.

No staff or parent helpers should communicate personally with anyone at KJV who is under 18 (and not a friend/family member) by email, phone or social media.

Types of abuse

Abuse comes in many forms, but broadly speaking it falls into four categories: physical, emotional, sexual and neglect. Often these are not obvious, and you need to pick up on physical, behavioural and verbal clues, especially if they are ongoing or develop over a period of time, to be able to identify a concern. Signs of abuse may include:

- Physical injury - many children are especially prone to accidents, those that have occurred due to normal play will tend to be on the bony parts of the body (e.g. shins, knees, elbows), and the front of the body. Injury due to abuse may often be hidden and concerns should be raised when a child cannot explain how they came to be injured.
- Detachment – a child who is usually engaged and happy at rehearsal but who becomes uninterested and withdrawn may be suffering from abuse, especially emotional or sexual. Many children will have an 'off' week, it is when this is ongoing or particularly pertinent that concern should be raised.
- Neglect - a child who frequently turns up hungry, tired or dirty may be suffering from neglect.

What to do when a child discloses something

As a parent helper, a child may see you as someone who is neutral, fair and kind and may choose to disclose something to you, about themselves or another, at KJV or elsewhere.

When a child attempts to disclose to you, **you must:**

- Stay calm and patient
- Listen carefully
- Reassure the child that they are doing the right thing in telling you and that it is not their fault
- Explain why you cannot keep what you are told to yourself and what you will do next (i.e. inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead)
- Ask the child whether there is anything else they want to say or anyone else they would like to speak to

You must not:

- Interpret what you have heard
- Ask loaded questions
- Express an opinion
- Criticise the perpetrator – the child may well still love them
- Promise to keep the information to yourself

How to raise a concern

If concerns are raised through noticing physical or behavioural changes in a child, or through disclosure of information, several steps must be taken in order to protect them. It should be remembered that you should report all serious concerns, no matter how small, as they might be pieces of a wider picture that the local authorities have of that child. To raise a concern at KJV:

- Write the information you have down in detail and as soon as possible
- Always be factual
- Include the dates and times
- Include any conversations with the child or other person using their own words, if possible
- Describe any visible marks or injuries, including their location. Use an outline body map if it is helpful
- Where opinion is expressed, it should be made clear that this is opinion
- Send this to Lyn, our Designated Safeguarding Lead, as soon as possible and she will take it on from there: lynette.alcantara@kjcvoir.org
- If Lyn is unavailable or it is not appropriate to send her your concern, pass it on to Lucy Wilson, our Trustee Advisor for safeguarding issues: lucy.wilson@kjcvoir.org