**THREE VALLEYS GOSPEL CHOIR**

**CHILD AND ADULT AT RISK PROTECTION POLICY**

**March 2017 (Revised June 2019)**

**Policy Statement:** Three Valleys Gospel Choir (3VGC) believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or adult at risk to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and adults at risk.

**Definition of an Adult at Risk:**

* Someone over the age of 18 who has a need for care and support
* Someone who is experiencing or is at risk of neglect or abuse by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

**We recognise that:**

* The welfare of the child/ adult at risk is paramount.
* All children/ adults at risk regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

**The purpose of the policy is:**

* To provide protection for the children and adults at risk who are involved with the activities of 3VGC.
* To provide members with guidance on how to respond in the event that they suspect a child or adult at risk may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

This policy applies to all choir members, the committee, the musical director and all those involved in the activities of 3VGC.

**We will endeavour to safeguard children and adults at risk by:**

* Respecting, listening to and valuing them.
* Adopting child/ adult at risk protection guidelines through procedures and conduct.
* Sharing information (when appropriate) about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents, children and adults at risk appropriately.
* Reviewing our policy and practice annually.

**We must:**

* Treat all children and adults at risk with respect.
* Provide an example of good conduct at all times for others to follow.
* Ensure that whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and adults at risk.
* Respect a child or adult at risk’s right to personal privacy.
* Encourage children and adults to feel comfortable to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like.
* Give guidance and support to inexperienced members.
* Remember that our actions may be misinterpreted, for example, when making physical contact. Always ensure your actions are respectful and appropriate.
* Recognise that special caution is required when discussing sensitive issues with children or adults at risk.
* Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report any allegations or suspicions of abuse to the Designated Person.

**We must not:**

* Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or adults at risk.
* Make suggestive or derogatory remarks in front of children or adults at risk.

**Supervision and Safe Care:**

Adults at risk who have carers must be accompanied by their carer, who is responsible for their client’s welfare and safety.

Children under the age of 14 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to all choir sessions, events, practices, gigs and trips.

Parents should be made aware that if their child (aged 14 or over) is attending choir practice unaccompanied, constant supervision of their child cannot be guaranteed.

If under 18’s wish to take part in any choir residential trips, outings or gigs, parents must make a private arrangement with another adult, who will be the named carer for their child.

All choir members, children and adults, must conduct themselves in a safe manner at all times.

**Designated Person:**

The 3VGC Committee will elect a Designated Person and should be satisfied that they have chosen an appropriate candidate. The Designated Person should also be DBS checked.

**Our Designated Person is: Elaine Jackson**

The role of the designated person is to:

* Listen to any concerns raised and share and report information safely and appropriately.
* Give advice to members about safe and appropriate behaviour.
* If necessary, inform NSPCC Helpline or relevant agencies of concerns about individuals.
* Keep relevant people (on a ‘need to know’ basis) within the choir informed about any action taken and any further action required.
* Keep clear records of any information passed on to agencies or individuals.

**This revised policy was adopted by the 3VGC Committee on:** 13 June 2019