

# The Cinema Organ Society ('COS') (the 'Society')

## Safeguarding Policy

This policy applies to all COS officers, members or non-members working for the Society on a voluntary or paid basis ('workers'), and other members.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- protect children and vulnerable adults who are COS members, attend Society events, and/or work for the Society on a voluntary or paid basis;
- provide COS officers, workers and other members with the overarching principles that guide the Society's approach to safeguarding.

For the purpose of this Policy:

- A **child** is defined as a person under the age of 18.
- A **vulnerable adult** is defined as a person aged 18 or over who is, or may be:
  - in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness; and/or
  - unable to take care of him/herself, and/or protect him/herself against harm or exploitation.

The COS believes that children and vulnerable adults should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults and to keep them safe. We are committed to operating in a way that protects them.

### Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children and vulnerable adults, including:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Care Act 2014
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults

### We recognise that:

- the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount, as enshrined in the legislation summarised above;
- all children and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- some children and vulnerable adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues; and
- working in partnership with children and vulnerable adults, parents/guardians, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

## **Safeguarding Policy (cont'd)**

**We will seek to keep children and vulnerable adults safe by:**

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them;
- adopting practices for the protection of children and vulnerable adults through a Code of Conduct (see page 2) and Procedures (see page 4) for COS officers and workers;
- providing effective management for COS officers and workers through supervision and support;
- recruiting COS officers and workers safely, ensuring any necessary checks are made;
- sharing information about the protection of children and vulnerable adults, and good practice, with children, vulnerable adults, parents/guardians, carers, and COS officers, workers and other members; and
- sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents/guardians, carers, children and vulnerable adults appropriately.

**We will review our policy and good practice annually.**

**This policy was last reviewed on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2019.**

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# COS Safeguarding Code of Conduct

All COS officers and workers are expected to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and vulnerable adults with whom they come into contact in connection with COS activities.

The behaviour of a COS officer or worker may give rise to allegations being made against them. Allegations may be genuine or misplaced, and may arise from differing perceptions of the same event.

COS officers and workers need clear advice about what constitutes illegal behaviour and what might be considered misconduct, as well as practical guidance about which behaviours constitute safe practice and which should be avoided. This Code of Conduct aims to assist COS officers and workers in monitoring their own standards and practice by raising awareness of illegal, unsafe and unwise behaviour.

## Underpinning Principles

- COS officers and workers:
  - are responsible for their own actions and behaviour, and should avoid any conduct which may lead a reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions;
  - should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way; and
  - should promptly seek advice from a COS Safeguarding Officer on any incident which gives, or may give, rise to concern.
- Records should be kept of any incident and the decision(s) made/action(s) agreed.
- All COS officers and workers should know the names of the Society's National Safeguarding Co-ordinator and their Local Safeguarding Officer, be familiar with the COS Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct and Process, and understand their responsibilities.
- Breaches of the law could result in criminal prosecution.

## Duty of Care

- COS officers and workers:
  - are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority, manage risk, use resources, and protect children and vulnerable adults from discrimination and avoidable harm; and
  - have a duty to keep children and vulnerable adults safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm.

## Exercise of Judgement

- No guidance can provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour.
- There may be occasions when COS officers and workers have to make decisions or take action in the best interest of the child or vulnerable adult, where no guidance has been provided.

## Power and Positions of Trust

- As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, COS officer and workers may be in a position of trust in relation to a child or vulnerable adult with whom they come into contact in connection with COS activities.
- There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable people, and COS officers and workers have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

## Propriety and Behaviour

- COS officers and workers should adopt the highest standards of personal conduct in their dealings with children and vulnerable adults, in order to maintain the confidence and respect of children, vulnerable adults, parents/guardians, carers, COS officers, workers and other members, and the general public.

## **COS Safeguarding Code of Conduct (*cont'd*)**

### **Infatuations and Unwanted Attention**

- A child or vulnerable adult who is in regular contact with a COS officer or worker may develop an infatuation with, or show unwanted attention to, that officer or worker.
- Such situations should be:
  - reported promptly to a COS Safeguarding Officer or other senior COS officer so that appropriate action can be taken; and
  - managed sensitively, maintaining the dignity of all concerned and bearing in mind the high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted, resulting in allegations being made against the officer or worker.

### **Social Contact and Friendships**

- COS officers and workers should avoid developing social contact/friendships outside the COS, either in person or via social media, with children and vulnerable adults with whom they come in to contact in connection with COS activities.

### **Physical Contact**

- COS officers and workers should avoid physical contact with children and vulnerable adults with whom they come in to contact in connection with COS activities.
- Unavoidable physical contact should be strictly in response to the child's or vulnerable adult's needs at the time, of limited duration, and appropriate to the child's or vulnerable adult's age, disability, gender, racial heritage and religious belief.

### **One-to-One Situations**

- COS officers and workers should avoid situations where they are alone with children and vulnerable adults with whom they come in to contact in connection with COS activities.
  - Ideally a child should be supervised by a parent/guardian and a vulnerable adult by a carer, but if this is not possible, any interaction with the child or vulnerable adult must be in sight of at least one other COS officer.
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## COS Safeguarding Process

The COS has appointed, or will appoint, a National Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Local Safeguarding Officers for each of its three Districts.

- An additional Safeguarding Officer may, where appropriate, be appointed temporarily to oversee a specific COS project or activity in which a child or vulnerable adult is, or may be, involved.
- The Society will investigate the need for its Safeguarding Officers to undergo Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, formerly known as Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, and will arrange such checks if appropriate.

Safeguarding Officers and the National Coordinator:

- must be COS members;
- may not be Designated Officers (i.e. the Chairman, General Secretary, Treasurer and District Secretaries);
- are the first point of contact for COS officers and workers who, based on their own observations and/or concerns expressed to them by another person, are concerned about the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult who is a member of the COS, attends Society events and/or works for the Society on a voluntary or paid basis;
- support COS officers in deciding, when a concern is expressed about a child's or vulnerable adult's welfare, whether action needs to be taken, including (where appropriate) escalation to relevant authorities;
- are responsible for ensuring that the COS Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct and Process are kept up to date;
- ensure that records are kept of any incidents and the decision(s) made/action(s) agreed; and
- will undertake online training on their roles and responsibilities, the cost of which will be borne by the COS.

If a concern is expressed by any person about the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult who is a member of the COS, attends Society events and/or works for the Society on a voluntary or paid basis:

- the matter should be reported promptly to the Local Safeguarding Officer or National Safeguarding Coordinator as appropriate; and
- the Safeguarding Officer or Co-ordinator should investigate the situation, consulting with other COS officers as appropriate, to determine to the best of his/her ability whether the concern:
  1. is unfounded;
  2. arises from poor practice or a breach of the COS Safeguarding Code of Conduct by a COS officer or worker; or
  3. is a possible instance of abuse or a criminal offence by a COS officer or worker which needs to be escalated to relevant authorities, e.g. the Children's Social Work Services, the Local Safeguarding Children Board, the Local Authority Designated Officer and/or the Police.

In the case of (2):

- Where the poor practice or breach of the Code of Conduct is minor, the Safeguarding Officer should alert the COS officer or worker concerned, remind him/her of the COS Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct, and provide advice on how to avoid a recurrence of the incident.
- Material malpractice or breaches should be promptly referred to the National Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the COS Chairman and General Secretary, who will decide whether or not disciplinary action should be taken, e.g. dismissal of the COS officer or worker.

In the case of (3):

- The Safeguarding Officer should promptly advise the National Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the COS Chairman and General Secretary before escalating to relevant authorities.

In all cases, records should be kept of the incident and the decision(s) made/action(s) agreed.