

Sansara Choir: Anti-Bullying Policy

20.11.22

Encouraging positive behaviour:

Sansara Choir ("The Choir") encourages positive behaviour by:

- staff acting as positive role models
- praising appropriate behaviour

Bullying

Bullying can have a destructive and harmful impact on the lives of children and vulnerable adults. It not only affects those being bullied but also those who bully and those who stand by without intervening or seeking help. It can lead to feelings of self-doubt, lack of confidence, low self-esteem, depression and sometimes even suicide. It can also affect the ability of a child or vulnerable adult to enjoy, achieve and to be healthy, both physically and emotionally. A bully who is not questioned for their behaviour learns that he/she/they can get away with violence, aggressions and threats and that this sort of behaviour gets them what they want.

The Choir does not tolerate bullying of any sort, irrespective of gender, race, ability, special needs, size or age and considers that both bully and bullied need to be supported positively, to moderate unacceptable behaviour and to take remedial action when appropriate.

Definition

The intentional hurting of one person by another, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It is usually repetitive or persistent, although some one-off attacks can have a continuing harmful effect on the victim.

- anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Behaviour by an individual or group usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

- Safe to Learn: Department of Children and Family Services

Bullying can either be:

- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, threats
- Verbal: name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing

- Indirect: spreading nasty stories about someone, gossiping and excluding people from social groups
- Racist: racial name calling, gestures
- Cyber bullying

Why bullying may occur

There are many reasons why individuals become bullies. It may be:

- a way of coping with a difficult situation, i.e. a death of a relative, a lack of attention,
- jealousy,
- inability to accept differences between people,
- the need to exert power over other weaker individuals,
- being spoilt and used to getting his/her/their own way etc.

Bullies are often unhappy and use bullying to achieve popularity and friends. They have to learn that bullying is unacceptable behaviour and that there are severe consequences if they continue to act as a bully. They should be given plenty of encouragement to stop bullying but also must not be allowed to get away with it, for their own sake and for the sake of their victim.

Who may be bullied

A bully may target anyone, but children and vulnerable adults with specific problems such as speech difficulties, academic difficulties, a disability are highly vulnerable to bullying.

The Law

The Choir has a duty to do all that they reasonably can to protect children and vulnerable adults in its charge from intimidation, assault or harassment. This right and this duty are enshrined within documents such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Children Act 1995 and the European Convention on Human Rights.

Aims

The Choir aims to:

- bring issues of bullying into the open,
- ensure that bullying is everyone's responsibility,

- develop the self-esteem of individuals by investigating and resolving instances of bullying,
- engage parents and carers at every level in bullying issues,
- ultimately reduce incidents of bullying/eliminate bullying.

Dealing with inappropriate behaviour

Challenging behaviour will be addressed in a calm, firm and positive manner. In the first instance, the individual will be temporarily removed from the activity. Staff will discuss why the behaviour displayed is deemed inappropriate. Staff will give the individual an opportunity to explain their behaviour, to help prevent a recurrence.

Staff will encourage and facilitate mediation to try to resolve conflicts through discussion and negotiation.

We will not threaten any punishment that could adversely affect a child or vulnerable adult's well-being (e.g. withdrawal of food or drink).

Physical intervention

Physical intervention will only be used as a last resort, when staff believe that action is necessary to prevent injury to the child/vulnerable adult or others, or to prevent significant damage to equipment or property. If a member of staff has to physically restrain a child/vulnerable adult, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be notified and an Incident record will be completed. The incident will be discussed with the parent or carer as soon as possible. The Incident Report will be stored in a password protected file accessible only by the DSL and will be held for 3 years.

Corporal punishment

Corporal punishment or the threat of corporal punishment will never be used at the Choir's activities.

What to do if you suspect an individual is being bullied (parents and carers)

If you suspect an individual is being bullied you should:

- stay calm, try not to become angry or aggressive,
- try to find out exactly what has happened,
- make an appointment with a Choir staff member to discuss your suspicions,
- write everything down - dates, injuries, meetings etc.

After you have informed the Choir, the Choir will carry out an investigation based on the information that you have provided. It may take a bit of time to investigate the matter as all staff and children/vulnerable adults concerned will be spoken to. The Choir will always respond as quickly as possible and inform you of any action that has been taken.

What to do if you suspect an individual is being bullied (staff)

- Ask other staff if they have noticed anything.
- Ask the child/vulnerable adult if there is anything wrong. Express your concerns so that he/she/they know you are worried.
- Voice your concerns to parents/carers. They may be able to explain the behaviour.
- Keep a written record of any conversations.

What to do if a bullying incident is reported to you (staff)

If an incident has occurred which either yourself, another member of staff, another child/vulnerable adult has witnessed and informed you of that might be a bullying incident, or if a child/vulnerable adult themselves tells you that they have been bullied you should carry out a full investigation.

- Speak to the victim and ask them where and when the bullying took place and by whom
- Speak to the bully and find out why they behaved in this way
- Speak to any other children/vulnerable adults who are mentioned by the victim or bully
- Keep written records which include the type and pattern of bullying behaviour, the number of incidents reported, the time taken and actions taken to resolve incidents, who was involved/affected, why it is bullying, the actions agreed to be taken, the outcome.
- Report all information on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Fiona Fraser (fiona@sansarachoir.com). Information will be stored in an Incident Report that will be kept in a password protected file accessible only by the DSL and will not be held after 3 years.
- If the bullying incident is considered to be severe, it will be dealt with according to the Choir's Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.