

July 17, 2023

Child Protection Policy Greater Manassas Children's Choir (GMCC)

Scope of Policy

This Child Protection Policy applies to children who attend rehearsals and performances with the Greater Manassas Children's Choir.

This policy applies to all leaders, staff and volunteers who have contact with children who are members of the Greater Manassas Children's Choir. We are a child-safe organization.

Definitions

Leaders: Members of the GMCC Committee who have direct contact with children.

Staff: Directors and accompanists who are paid on a regular basis by the GMCC.

Volunteers: Anyone who serves on a regularly scheduled basis during rehearsals, two or more times per month.

Helpers: Adults and teens who help leaders/staff and who volunteers on an infrequent basis, less than two times per month.

Two-Adult Rule

In our interaction with children we aim to be blameless and above reproach. At least two qualified, unrelated adult leaders, staff or volunteers must be present in each rehearsal room at all times. Helpers, if needed, are always in addition to and supervised by the two adults. Helpers are never to be left alone at any time with children without the presence of the two adult leaders, staff or volunteers. Leaders, staff and volunteers must never leave a child alone in a rehearsal room. When working individually with children, GMCC staff will always remain in open sight of other adults.

Protection of Children

While children are in our care, the child's safety is our first concern. The Greater Manassas Children's Choir leaders, staff and volunteers will do all we can to work together and ensure a safe environment. To that end, we will:

- Require all leaders, staff and volunteers to pass a National Service Criminal History background check every five years.
- Require mandatory training for all leaders, staff and volunteers. Initial and on-going training will focus on adult supervision of children, legal reporting requirements, prevention of bullying/harassment, and safety procedures.
- Use parent (guardian/designee) sign in/sign out procedures for each rehearsal and performance. Children are in our care from the time parents (guardians/designees) sign them in until parents (guardians/designees) sign them out.
- Provide one additional adult (or teen helper) in each rehearsal room, in addition to the Director and Accompanist.
- Equip each rehearsal room with a first aid kit.
- Encourage good health practices, such as access to tissues and hand sanitizer.
- Schedule events at places and times that optimize safety.
- Maintain up-to-date emergency contact information for each child.

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- Require all leaders, staff and volunteers to abide by this GMCC Child Protection Policy.
- Reserve the right of the GMCC to dismiss any volunteer for any reason, including any issues that might compromise the volunteer's ability to care for children.

Responsibilities

- The GMCC Director of Operations is responsible for the implementation of this policy.
- Any exceptions and/or changes to this policy must have written approval from the GMCC Director of Operations.
- The GMCC Director of Operations will serve as liaison and resource person for any parent or volunteer who has child protection concerns.
- The GMCC Director of Operations will immediately inform the Artistic Directors and the President of the Manassas Chorale of any matters regarding child abuse.

Confidentiality

- Personal information concerning specific singers and their families shall be kept confidential.
- Parents (guardians/designees) will indicate on the GMCC Photo Release Form whether or not photographs of their children will be allowed. For safety reasons, the GMCC will never use names and/or locations to identify photographs of minors online.
- The GMCC Director of Operations or Artistic Director will immediately remove any photo that we have posted on electronic media (i.e. Facebook, GMCC webpage) that a parent (guardian/designee) would like removed.

Reporting Requirements

- If there is reason to believe a child's welfare is at risk, adults who work with children have legal responsibility for intervening on the child's behalf.
- Should a leader, staff member, or volunteer raise a concern; the matter will be dealt with immediately in accordance with the legal requirement for reporting child abuse found in the Code of Virginia §63.1-248.3.
- A written statement will be required from the reporting party.
- All reports and supporting evidence will be maintained in a confidential file at the *Law Office of Stephen Bamberger* (1529 Old Bridge Road, Suite 102, Woodbridge, VA 22192). These reports shall be confidential subject to disclosure only with the consent of the reporting person(s) or by judicial process.

Annual Review

In order to meet with all current legislation and best practice, the Greater Manassas Children's Choir Committee will review this Child Protection Policy on an annual basis. The next review will be 12 months from the date of this policy. Notification of any policy change will be reported to the Manassas Chorale Board of Directors, who will have final approval authority. The GMCC Child Protection Policy will be available on the GMCC website.