



## **Bullying and Harassment Policy**

### **1 Introduction**

It is the policy of Danesborough Chorus that all members, staff and volunteers associated with the choir will be treated with dignity and respect. Bullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

### **2 What are Bullying and Harassment?**

Harassment, in general terms, is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of people during activities organised by Danesborough Chorus, where actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient.

It may be related to age, gender, race, disability, religion, belief, sexuality, nationality or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

Bullying or harassment may be by an individual against an individual or involve groups of people. It may be obvious or it may be insidious. It may be face to face or in written communications, electronic/ social media posts. Whatever form it takes, it is unwarranted and unwelcome to the individual. It may take place in private or in public.

Complaints of bullying and/or harassment, or information from members relating to such complaints, will be dealt with fairly and confidentially and will be taken seriously and investigated promptly, objectively and independently.

Decisions can then be made as to what action needs to be taken.

If appropriate, the matter may be dealt with informally; sometimes people are not aware that their behaviour is unwelcome and an informal discussion can lead to greater understanding and an agreement that the behaviour will cease.

More serious cases of bullying or harassment will be dealt with under the choir's complaints procedures detailed below.

### **3 Dealing with complaints**

- 1) If any member, volunteer, freelancer or supporter feels they have been bullied, harassed, victimised or otherwise unlawfully discriminated against within the choir or arising from their choir activities, they should in the first instance discuss it in confidence with the Safeguarding Officer in the choir who will give assistance in referring it to the wider committee.
- 2) They may also wish to seek help and support from an independent professional or experienced source available to them.
- 3) The committee promises to take seriously any complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and other unlawful discrimination by fellow members, freelancers, volunteers and supporters in the course of choir activities or arising from their choir activities.
- 4) The committee promises to recognise that its legal responsibilities are its priority over personal loyalties or concern for the reputation of the choir.
- 5) The committee will investigate any complaint, listening to all parties involved.
  - a) If the complaint is against a committee member, that member will not be involved in the investigation.

- b) If the complaint is against an individual, that individual will have the opportunity to express their point of view in a safe environment, accompanied by a person of their choice.
  - c) The person making the complaint will have the same opportunity.
- 6) It is further advised that some harassment may amount to a criminal matter e.g. sexual assault or stalking. Harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence which may incur prosecution of an offending individual and of the committee that is legally responsible for ensuring compliance with law within the choir.
- 7) Particularly serious complaints such as:
- sexual assault;
  - persistent bullying or harassment by any individual(s) towards another individual; could lead to termination of membership, contract or other association with the choir without notice.
- 8) Should the complainant feel that their complaint has not been investigated fairly or should they be dissatisfied with the outcome, they may request that the committee appoint an independent third party to investigate.
- 9) If a complaint is found against Danesborough Chorus, the committee will work to ensure that such bullying, harassment, victimisation or otherwise unlawful discrimination does not occur in the future. The committee will inform the members how they propose to do this.
- 10) Furthermore, the committee promises it will not victimise nor treat any individual(s) less well because they made a complaint; nor will it allow further discrimination within choir ranks against such complainant.

#### **4 Policy review**

The policy will be reviewed every two years by the Danesborough Chorus Committee. Members of Danesborough Chorus will be informed of any changes to the policy and invited to comment.

**Date:** September 2024

**Review Date:** September 2026