

*Guidance
for
Youth Choirs*

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1.0 Introduction

The Diocese of Killaloe in bringing together young people within a musical context recognises and upholds the dignity and rights of all children. We are committed to ensuring their safety and well-being and will work in partnership with parents / guardians to do this.

We recognise each child as a gift from God, and we value and encourage the participation of all children in the youth choir. We hope will enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development through music.

2.0 Membership

The Youth Choir is open to any young person from Primary School up to 17 years old within the Diocese. There maybe times when other young people are asked to sing with the Choir with the agreement of the Choir Director (s) and Choir Committee.

3.0 Youth Choir Committee

The Youth Choir will have a Committee in place that will work with the Choir Director(s) in the areas of planning yearly programs, fundraising /finances, record keeping, supervision rotas, training, as well as linking and with parents and the parish priest. The Committee will also ensure that the youth choir is compliant with these guidelines and all safeguarding practices and assist in any complaint or issue that may arise.

The overall responsibility for any youth choir remains with the Parish Priest.

4.0 Guidelines for Parish Youth Choirs

4.1 The Choir Director(s) have overall responsibility for the musical compositions and musical programme, as well as retaining responsibility for all decisions relating to best musical practice.

4.2 Choir Practices will take place in parish buildings, parish halls, churches or schools at no time will any practice take place in the Choir Director(s) homes or private business. The responsibility for transporting young people to practice sessions rests with the parent / guardian.

4.3 Solo's -a The Youth Choir is committed to developing the musical gifts and talents of each of its members. At the beginning of each term, members will be invited to put their names forward for singing solo items. The Choir Director will make every effort to ensure that each person is given this opportunity.

The Youth Choir treats all members fairly and without discrimination or favouritism. No separate small groups exist within the Choir. However, in the event of a difficult piece or a soloist being unable to undertake a piece alone, a few voices from the Choir may sing a piece together.

4.4 Outside of practice times, communication between the Choir Director(s) and young people is through parents or guardians in line with Diocesan guidelines.

5.0 Safeguarding.

5.1 The safeguarding policy of the Diocese will be adhered to at all times. It is the responsibility of the Choir Director(s) and Choir Committee to ensure procedures are in place and the choir is compliant and in line with best practice.

5.2 Overall responsibility for safeguarding lies with the Parish Priest who is accountable to the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee.

5.3 Supervision ratios of 1 adult to 8 young people must always be adhered to for practices.

5.4 All volunteers / helpers with the youth choir must be garda vetted in line with the Diocesan Vetting Policy. They must have been recruited in line with the safeguarding recruitment guidelines and must have undertaken safeguarding training.

5.5 A Code of Behaviour will be in place, all young people in the choir will sign up to the code of behaviour and parents / guardians sign the consent form.

5.6 Any safeguarding concern will be reported directly without delay to the Diocesan Designated liaison person, Ms Cleo Yates.

5.7 Any activity / pilgrimage away from the Parish will follow the safeguarding guidelines currently in place. Any overnight trips must be discussed with the Director of Safeguarding to ensure safe practices and structures are in place.

5.8 The Diocesan Social Media Policy and IT policy is to be made available to all young people and to parents / guardians.

Further information regarding safeguarding policies and guidance can be found at www.killaoedioce.ie under safeguarding tab.

6.0 What constitutes a Choir

A choir of singers, two or more organized by a church and which sing at its services.

6.1 Types of Church Choirs and guidance

ADULT CHOIR

- All members must be over 18 years old
- Choir Director / Leader and Instrumentalist to be vetted, as they may be working with members and or young people on individual basis
- Follow Diocesan Safeguarding policy
- Come under Parish insurance.
- If an adult brings their child along, then must remain responsibility of parent
- If a child comes along at practice sessions and parents leave them, the choir effectively becomes a mixed Choir and those guidelines are then to be put in place.

MIXED CHOIR

- Choir Director / Leader and Instrumentalist to be vetted
- If Choir hold practice sessions and children are dropped off by parent, all adult members need to be vetted. If all children only attend with parent, then adult members do not need to be vetted.
- Follow Diocesan Safeguarding policy
- Come under Parish insurance.
- Parent / Guardian consent forms to be signed.
- Ratio of Adult to children need to be adhered to.
- No Leader / helper will transport children to and from unless this is a private arrangement with family.

YOUTH CHOIR

- Choir Director / Leader / helpers over 16 years old to be vetted.
- Instrumentalist to be vetted if over 18 years old
- Follow Diocesan Safeguarding policy

- Come under Parish insurance.
- Parent / Guardian consent forms to be signed.
- Ratio of Adult to children need to be adhered too.
- Day trips to sing in other venues will be part of the parental consent form.
- Overnight trips-need to liaise with Director of Safeguarding to ensure correct procedures are followed in line with Diocesan Policy
- Choir Director and instrumentalist should never be alone with a young person

7.0 SCHOOL CHOIRS

If a school choir is asked to sing with adult choir, then they remain the responsibility of the school and school will need to be informed the adult choir members are not vetted.

If a school choir wishes to practice outside school hours with any parish choir, if they are not already a member of the choir then parent must remain with the children during practice.