

## MORLAND CHORISTERS' CAMP POLICIES

### SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION

*For the Morland Camp, the subject of 'Safeguarding and Child Protection' falls within the overall subject of 'Safety'*

The terms 'safeguarding' and 'child protection' is sometimes used to mean 'protecting children from danger however it arises' but probably more often to mean 'protecting children from danger caused by other people' (e.g. bullying, child abuse). Camp aims for **any** person (child or adult) to be safe from **any** danger, so refers generally to the overall concept of 'safety' rather than to the more limited concept of 'child protection'.

The Trust's overall approach to safety is laid down in the *Safety Policy*. This is supported by the Health & Safety *Risk Assessment* and by handbooks for staff and older choristers.

Potential sources of accidental danger include fire, traffic, equipment, the village beck or other water. These will probably be obvious. But other issues - sometimes grouped under the heading of 'child protection' - may be less familiar. To help ensure a common understanding of such issues amongst everyone responsible for Camp, passages have been extracted from Camp handbooks and reproduced below under the following headings:

- Health & Safety
- Child Abuse
- Bullying
- Reporting Incidents, Problems & Concerns

The handbooks were prepared in their current form in 2001, and reviewed annually since then. They are written for staff and older choristers, but these extracts are felt to be relevant for Trustees, visitors and any other adults involved with Camp.

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#### HEALTH & SAFETY

*[from the introduction to the section which covers health, physical safety and 'child protection' matters]*

Morland Choristers Camp is committed to safeguarding the health and wellbeing of choristers, and endorses the principles contained in the Children Act 1989 and other guidelines and legislation. A key principle is that "the welfare of the child is paramount". You are asked to be alert to danger however it arises - from the natural environment, from man-made devices and equipment, or from humans in the form of choristers, staff or other individuals. Our aim must be to promote a "culture" of safety and protection - to support choristers so that they enjoy a fulfilling week and have fun in an atmosphere of confidence and safety.

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### CHILD ABUSE

1. Child abuse can be physical (violent and/or sexual) and emotional. It occurs at all levels of society.
2. All adults at Camp have a responsibility to help protect children from the unwelcome attention of others, be this bullying, abuse or inappropriate behaviour of any description.
3. Staff/Seniors must ensure that they do not behave in a manner that could be deemed to constitute any kind of abuse of a chorister, be it physical or emotional in nature. To avoid making choristers feel uncomfortable (and to protect yourself from allegations of abuse) please:

**a) As far as practical, avoid meetings on a 1:1 basis with a chorister aged under 18.**

*If a staff member considers that such a meeting should be held, it should preferably take place in a public area and within the sight and/or hearing of other people, not behind closed doors. This applies whether the meeting is for musical reasons (e.g. auditions/coaching) or medical or pastoral. Seniors should not usually need such meetings - the only exception is a Senior asked by a Nurse to stay near a child who is tired or has a minor ailment: this role may only be carried out by previously nominated Seniors who have undergone specific Camp clearance for the purpose.*

**b) Be very careful about any form of physical contact with a chorister aged under 18.**

*Camp does not have an absolute "no-touching" rule. However:*

1. *If you consider it necessary to touch a chorister in order to prevent injury to the chorister, yourself or anyone else (or very serious damage to property) only the minimum of force needed for effective "restraint" may be used.*
2. *There can be medical reasons to touch a child, or occasions when he/she is in need of comfort/reassurance and to deny a friendly arm would appear unkind, but please note:*
  - a) *Before touching a child, make it obvious (by word or demeanour) what you intend to do - be sure the child understands and wants to be touched.*
  - b) *A general guideline of "not below the shoulder" can be helpful.*
  - c) *Any touching must be done in a manner that cannot be misconstrued. It is important to note that the chorister's interpretation of a situation could be vastly different from one's own.*
  - d) *This discretion to touch relates solely to caring for the child. Under no circumstances could it sanction activities which might be claimed to fall under the description of "a bit of harmless fun"*

4. All music, pastoral and medical staff, and adult choristers, are asked to exercise great care and judgement in these matters, taking into account the circumstances of the situation and the people involved. Interaction that might be considered appropriate between (say) a Nurse and a particular chorister might be inappropriate if between a different member of Staff/Senior and the same - or another - chorister.
5. The overriding concern must be the wellbeing of the chorister: the chorister should feel supported and cared for but must not, in the process, be caused to feel uneasy or intruded upon. It is important to note that the chorister's interpretation of a situation could be vastly different from one's own.

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### BULLYING

Bullying always harms the victim. It can be emotional or verbal, not just physical. Examples are:

- *Emotional*: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (eg threatening gestures, hiding possessions).
- *Verbal*: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- *Physical*: pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, any use of violence, unwanted sexual contact.

The Camp's policy on bullying is that:

- Any form of bullying (physical, verbal or emotional) is incompatible with the Camp's ethos and is unacceptable.
- "Initiation ceremonies" intended to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation are unacceptable.
- Choristers are encouraged to speak to someone if they are unhappy about anything - the information sent to them with the *Nominal Roll* emphasises this, as does the *Who can I talk to* poster displayed in Camp buildings during the week.
- Staff/Leaders are asked to be alert for any signs of bullying, which may well not be obvious - bullying thrives on secrecy. If Staff/Leaders observe any behaviour which may imply that bullying is/has been taking place, they must discuss it at the earliest opportunity with a House Parent and/or the Health & Safety Officer.
- Senior staff will arrange for an appropriate member of staff to talk to a possible victim of bullying. It should be emphasised to any possible victims that victims of bullying are not at fault and that Camp regards a bully's behaviour as unacceptable.
- If possible bullying is identified, all practical steps will be taken to identify the perpetrator(s). Perpetrators will be helped to understand that their behaviour is not appropriate. It will be acknowledged that, whilst bullies are accountable for their actions, bullying may be a sign of unhappiness on the part of the bully.
- Perpetrators will be told that, whether or not they had intended harm, the bullying must stop and that a continuation could lead to their removal from Camp.
- The Camp aims to prevent bullying but, if it occurs, will support those being bullied and give help and guidance to the bullies.

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### REPORTING INCIDENTS, PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS

1. When a "significant" incident occurs, the Health & Safety Officer and any other staff who need to know about it must be told as soon as possible. A significant incident could be (but is not limited to): an accident; an act of physical aggression; a suggestion of abuse or bullying; a complaint or concern voiced by a chorister or parent, or a member of staff, or a member of the public.
2. An incident can still need to be reported even if no actual harm results. Examples of this might be:
  - someone falling on a slippery/uneven path but unhurt (should be reported so that the path can be checked and perhaps closed off or made safer, and/or that people can be warned);
  - an act of aggression that was restrained before injury resulted.These types of incident could be termed "near-misses" - it is important that they be made known, so that steps can be taken to prevent future harm occurring.
3. Camp provides a supportive environment that can encourage choristers to talk about things that are affecting them in their life away from Camp. Parents/guardians are invited to tell Camp of any particular circumstances that might be affecting choristers' well-being, but there may be situations that they do not think to mention or are unaware of (eg bullying at school). The information sent to choristers, and the *Who can I talk to* poster displayed in Camp buildings, encourage choristers to talk to someone if they are unhappy.
4. You should not feel daunted if a chorister chooses to disclose such concerns to you: they trust you, and your responsibilities are in fact not wide in this respect. There is a well-established approach that Camp is recommended to adopt in such situations, as follows:

**If a chorister aged under 18 tells you of words or actions that feel 'abusive' or have distressed them or threatened their safety, whether at Camp or elsewhere in their life, please -**

**a) Listen attentively, carefully, calmly, sympathetically.**

*Do not disbelieve (this is not the same as believing). Try not to over-react or show strong emotion.*

*Check you have understood what they are saying, but otherwise do not ask questions or offer comments. [Depending on the situation, questioning may need to be done by experts and perhaps recorded on video. Comments or leading questions by you could render later formal interviews invalid.]*

*There may be elements of fancy or imagination in what a child says but there will be reasons for saying it. A child may be looking for some help but will probably not be sure about precisely what.*

*Do not give any assurances about what will or will not happen (other than perhaps reassuring the chorister that they were right to talk to you and that whatever they say will be dealt with properly).*

**b) Once appropriate, hand the chorister into the care of another adult with whom they feel secure.**

**c) Immediately write down what was said and what you did, with the date and time and surrounding circumstances, and inform the Health & Safety Officer.**

*If the Health & Safety Officer cannot be contacted, inform a House Parent.*

*And/or, if the situation appears urgent, seek external advice - see Emergency Contact sheet.*

*If the chorister has implied an allegation against individual/s, do not contact those individual/s.*

5. If you become aware of possibly inappropriate behaviour by another person, please inform a House Parent and/or the Health & Safety Officer as soon as possible. This "other person" could be a chorister, a member of staff, or someone not connected with Camp (perhaps not even in Cumbria). Under no circumstances should it be seen as in the best interests of that other person, of choristers, of Camp, or of the world at large, to keep quiet. It is particularly important to support other members of Staff or Leaders by pointing out to them anything they have done that is possibly inappropriate or could be misconstrued. Whether a person's actions are unwitting or deliberate, it is better that attention is drawn to them rather than that they be ignored.

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6. In connection with an actual or potential complaint, or allegation of abuse, Staff/Leaders should not agree to comply with any request by a chorister (or anyone else) to keep a matter confidential; the situation should be communicated as soon as possible to a House Parent and/or the Health & Safety Officer.
7. It is important, however, that information on incidents, complaints etc is restricted to people who *need* to know about them; sensitivity is essential.
8. If in doubt on any of these matters, please discuss them without delay with the Health & Safety Officer, who has designated responsibility. [The House Parents will discuss with the Health & Safety Officer, at the earliest opportunity, any matters raised with them.] Should a matter arise that involves the Health & Safety Officer, and contact with an alternative individual seems more appropriate, please instead inform the Camp Chief who will discuss it with the Chairman of the Trustees.
9. Nothing in [this Handbook] should be read as attempting to remove the right of any individual to contact the statutory authorities or other agencies if they have concerns for the safety of a child or young person.