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# Complaints Policy of The Aeolian Singers

The Aeolian Singers view complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person that has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone
- wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to
- contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone at The Aeolian Singers knows what to do if a complaint is
- received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships
- are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

## Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of The Aeolian Singers.

## Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in The Aeolian Singers.

A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

## Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

## Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with The Aeolian Singers Committee.

## Review

The Aeolian Singers will review this policy annually

Policy agreed by Committee on 19 September 2016

To be reviewed in September 2017

Signature: Grethe Hansen  
Chair of trustees

Date: 19th September 2016

# Complaints Procedure of The Aeolian Singers

## Publicised Contact Details for Complaints:

Written complaints may be sent by e-mail to [info@aeoliansingers.org.uk](mailto:info@aeoliansingers.org.uk)

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to the Chair, telephone number available from [info@aeoliansingers.org.uk](mailto:info@aeoliansingers.org.uk) or in person to any of The Aeolian Singers Committee at any of our events or activities.

## Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded.

The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to The Aeolian Singers (for example: choir member, audience member)
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

For further guidelines about handling verbal complaints, see **Appendix 1**

## Resolving Complaints

### *Stage One*

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Vice Chair of the choir within one week.

On receiving the complaint, the Vice Chair records it in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, they delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within a week. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

### **Stage Two**

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Committee level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chair.

The request for Committee level review should be acknowledged within a week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Chair may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitable Committee member to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Committee decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution

### **Variation of the Complaints Procedure**

The Committee may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading a Stage Two review.

### **Monitoring and Learning from Complaints**

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

## Appendix 1 - Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaints

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
- Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words.
- Sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam"
- Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry
- Show an interest in what is being said
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down
- Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable) - you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation e.g "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you"
- If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility of your organisation, then apologise
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve.
- Don't promise things you can't deliver
- Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met
- Make sure that the person understands what they have been told
- Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal

## **The Aeolian Singers Data Protection Policy**

The Aeolian Singers is a voluntary music making organisation open to all ages. It is a non-profit-making organisation and a charity.

The object of the choir is to advance, improve, develop and maintain public education in, and appreciation of, the art and science of music in all its aspects through the presentation of public concerts and recitals.

### **Scope of the Policy**

The policy will apply to all manner of personal information, whether electronic or manual, held by any member about any other member of the choir. Specifically, the main source of information is the database held by the Membership Secretary, who is a Committee Member.

### **Rationale for Information Held**

The name and personal contact details of each member are required in order to be able to make contact with the member on a day to day basis, and particularly in times of emergency, such as bad weather or rehearsal venue unavailable at short notice. This contact information should include name, address, telephone numbers, and e-mail address. This information will be collected on a form to be completed at the first rehearsal attendance and passed to the Membership Secretary for inclusion on the membership database..

Provided the member agrees, their name, email address and phone number(s) will be put on an electronic membership contact list which will be circulated to all choir members.

Sensitive data, defined in the Data Protection Act (1998) as data about the individual's racial or ethnic origin, beliefs, health, sexual life and criminal convictions will NOT be required or recorded.

### **Responsibilities**

The Membership Secretary will-

- Maintain accurate and up to date records that comply with the legal requirements, as detailed above.
- Ensure that each member has given permission for personal information to be added to the database.
- Maintain security and password control, on a need to know basis only, for committee members. Each time any information is added or changed, update the database and re-issue to committee members who require a copy (Secretary and Librarian).
- Develop and maintain a system to ensure an annual review of individual information held with each member.
- Archive non active members' details in another section of the database 12 months after the last rehearsal attended.
- Immediately archive details should a Member die.
- Shred paper application forms as soon as the information has been added to the membership database

The Secretary will-

- Maintain an email circulation list consisting of ex Aeolians, people attending workshops and people requesting tickets by email for the sole purpose of keeping them informed of

forthcoming performances and workshops. Any person not wanting to receive information is able to ask to be removed from the list.

The Committee will-

- Ensure this information is kept securely on home computers (password protected) and out of date copies are deleted as soon as the new one is received.
- Keep the password to the database secret. The password will be issued to relevant trustees and will be regularly changed. No trustee will divulge the password to anyone else.

Individual Members will-

- Complete a membership form at first attendance, This form will be passed immediately to the Membership Secretary, who will enter the details on the pending members section of the membership database.
- Upon joining the choir the new members details will be transferred from the pending members section of the membership database to the members section.
- If a prospective new member does not subsequently join the choir their details will be removed from the membership database.
- Ensure that they only give information that they are prepared to have stored.
- Notify the Membership Secretary immediately of any change of personal details.

Information about all members will be respected and not divulged to a third party, nor used for any purpose not relating to The Aeolian Singers.

The Aeolian Singers will review this policy annually

Policy agreed by Committee on 19 September 2016

To be reviewed in September 2017

Signature: Grethe Hansen  
Chair of Trustees

Date: 19th September 2016

## The Aeolian Singers Data Protection Policy

### THE AEOLIAN SINGERS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

#### A) STATEMENT OF POLICY

- The Aeolian Singers recognises that we live in a society where discrimination still operates to the disadvantage of many groups in society.
- The Aeolian Singers believes that all persons should have equal rights to recognition of their human dignity, and to have equal opportunities to be educated, to work, receive services and to participate in society.
- The Aeolian Singers are committed to the promotion of equal opportunities within The Aeolian Singers through the way we manage the choir and provide rehearsals, concerts and workshops. In order to express this commitment, we develop, promote and maintain policies that will be conducive to the principles of fairness and equality in the choir.
- The objective of this policy is that no person should suffer or experience less favourable treatment, discrimination or lack of opportunities on the grounds of gender, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religious or philosophical beliefs, health status, HIV status, age, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, political beliefs, class, responsibility for dependents, physical attributes, ex-offender status as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, lack of formal qualifications where such qualifications are not formally required, or any other grounds which cannot be shown to be justifiable within the context of this policy.
- This policy will influence and affect every aspect of activities carried out by The Aeolian Singers i.e. choir membership, committee membership, rehearsal, concerts, workshops and other functions linked to The Aeolian Singers, as determined by the management committee.
- In the provision of the choir services and the employment of staff (conductor, accompanist and other musicians and soloists as required), The Aeolian Singers is committed to promoting equal opportunities for everyone. Throughout its activities, The Aeolian Singers will treat all people equally whether they are:
  - A member or potential member of the choir.
  - Applying for a job or already employed by us.
  - A member of the audience.
  - Using the choirs services for a concert, wedding etc.
  - Volunteer.

#### B) HOW THE POLICY WILL BE IMPLEMENTED AND WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

The Chair of the Choir has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. Each member of the committee also has responsibilities and we expect all our choir members to abide by the policy and help create the equality environment which is its objective.

In order to implement this policy we shall:

- Communicate the policy to choir members, staff and volunteers.
- Incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the equal opportunities policy into the roles of all the committee members.
- Ensure that those who are involved in assessing new choir members, conductor, accompanist and other musicians and soloists as required for recruitment or promotion will be aware of discriminatory selection techniques.
- Incorporate equal opportunity notices into leaflets, programmes and on social media.



- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfill the objectives of the policy.

## **Conduct and general standards of behaviour**

All staff, choir members and volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and considerate manner at all times. The Aeolian Singers will not tolerate behaviour such as:

- making threats
- physical violence
- shouting
- swearing at others
- persistent rudeness
- isolating, ignoring or refusing to work with certain people
- telling offensive jokes or name calling
- displaying offensive material such as pornography or sexist / racist cartoons, or the distribution of such material via email / text message or any other format
- any other forms of harassment or victimisation.

The items on the above list of unacceptable behaviours are considered to be serious offences within The Aeolian Singers and can lead to action being taken by the committee. The Aeolian Singers does, however, encourage staff, committee members and volunteers to resolve misunderstandings and problems informally wherever possible, depending on the circumstances. However, whether dealt with informally or formally, it is important for members and staff who may have caused offence to understand that it is no defence to say that they did not intend to do so, or to blame individuals for being over sensitive. It is the impact of the behaviour, rather than the intent, that counts, and that should shape the solution found both to the immediate problem and to preventing further similar problems in the future.

## **Complaints of discrimination**

The Aeolian Singers will treat seriously all complaints of unlawful discrimination on any forbidden grounds made by choir members, staff, volunteers or other third parties and will take action where appropriate.

We will also monitor the number and outcomes of complaints of discrimination made by choir members, staff, volunteers, and other third parties.

## **C) LEGAL OBLIGATIONS**

### **Equal Opportunities and Discrimination (Equality Act 2010)**

The new Equality Act came into force in October 2010 and replaces all previous equality legislation in England, Scotland and Wales – namely the Race Relations Act 1976, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Sex Discrimination Act, the Equal Pay Act, the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006, The Civil Partnership Act 2004, the Employment Equality Regulations 2003 (religions and belief and sexual orientation).

The Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics are:

Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

In valuing diversity The Aeolian Singers is committed to go beyond the legal minimum regarding equality.

The Equality Act 2010 harmonises and strengthens and replaces most previous equality legislation. The following legislation is still relevant:

**The Human Rights Act 1998.**

**The Work and Families Act 2006.**

**Employment Equal Treatment Framework Directive 2000** (as amended).

## **D) RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

- The process of recruitment of new members and selection of conductor, accompanist and other musicians and soloists as required is crucially important to any equal opportunities policy. We will endeavour through discussion, and training where appropriate, to ensure that members, making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.
- Role descriptions for the committee and job descriptions for the conductor and accompanist, where used, will be written in line with our equal opportunities policy.
- We will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to choir member recruitment leaflets and recruitment materials used to recruit a conductor or accompanist.
- All applicants who apply for jobs with us will re

## **The Aeolian Singers Health and Safety Policy**

The Aeolian Singers is a voluntary music making organisation open to all ages. It is a non-profit making organisation and a charity. The object of the choir is to advance, improve, develop and maintain public education in, and appreciation of, the art and science of music in all its aspects through the presentation of public concerts and recitals and to support charitable purposes through performance at local charitable institutions.

It is The Aeolian Singers policy to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of all its members, supporters, volunteers and others who have contact with the choir by ensuring that the choir's activities are carried out in healthy and safe conditions.

### **Our objectives are to**

- promote standards of health, safety and welfare for the choir, its supporters and others who have contact with it that comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and all other relevant statutory provisions and codes of practice,
- to ensure that there are safe means of access to all places where the choir practices or performs, and
- to provide and maintain safe and healthy working environments, equipment and procedures for the choir members and others, and to provide such information, training and supervision as they need for this purpose.

In the pursuit of these objectives The Aeolian Singers expects all members and supporters to co-operate and give support in creating and maintaining safe and healthy conditions for the Choir to perform in.

Overall responsibility for health and safety of the choir rests with the Committee, who will ensure the effective implementation of the policy and may delegate as appropriate, provided clear roles and responsibilities are established.

Health and safety is also a responsibility for everyone at all levels. To achieve a good standard of health and safety all members of the choir must take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other choir members and others who may be affected by their actions. They should co-operate with the Committee in all matters relating to their health, safety and welfare.

Any member of the choir or its supporters who breaks this code of conduct may be suspended pending an investigation by the Committee.

Significant hazards and risks which might affect the health and safety of choir members, supporters, volunteers and others who have contact with the choir will be assessed by a member of the Committee or, by agreement, another member of the choir, and if necessary recorded. Where any risk is identified appropriate action will be taken to control, eliminate or reduce that risk. If necessary the choir members will be excluded from a site/area or vehicle where, in the opinion of the assessor, there are unacceptable risks until such time as these are mitigated.

We must take a positive interest in our health and safety and exercise a common duty of care to others. We must be alert to draw attention to anything we encounter during our activities as a choir which could be a threat to the health and safety of ourselves, our colleagues, our audiences and others. We also have a special duty of care to those who may have particular requirements through, for example, disability or inexperience.

The Aeolian Singers will review this policy annually

Policy agreed by Committee on 19 September 2016

To be reviewed in September 2017

Signature: Grethe Hansen

Date :  
19th September 2016

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Chair of Trustees

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- receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do their job.
- Short-listing and interviewing will be carried out by more than one person where possible.
- Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature.
- Selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of the committee.
- All applicants who apply to become members of the choir will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to sing in the choir.

## **E) MONITORING**

- We will review the make-up of the choir and any unsuccessful applicants to join the choir to ensure that no one is discriminated against.
- The results of any monitoring procedure will be reviewed at regular intervals to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy. Consideration will be given, if necessary, to adjusting this policy to afford greater equality of opportunities to all applicants and staff.

The Aeolian Singers will revise and review this policy annually

Policy agreed by Committee on : 23rd August 2016

To be reviewed on : 23rd August 2017

Signature: Grethe Hansen 23rd August 2016  
Chair of Trustees

## **THE AEOLIAN SINGERS SAFEGUARDING POLICY – CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

The Aeolian Singers will publicise its Safeguarding policy on its site [www.aeoliansingers.org.uk](http://www.aeoliansingers.org.uk) and draw it to the attention of members at the beginning of each season.

This policy applies to all members of The Aeolian Singers and anyone who from time to time works with the Aeolian Singers, including our conductor and accompanist, guest/substitute conductors and accompanists, all volunteers helping with concerts, rehearsals and activities, all paid performers and anyone working on behalf of The Aeolian Singers.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who attend our rehearsals, performances or other activities. This includes the children of adults who attend our rehearsals, performances or other activities.
- To provide members and volunteers with the overarching principles that guides our approach to safeguarding.

The Aeolian Singers believe that a child, young person or vulnerable adult should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

The Aeolian Singers have appointed a 'named person' who will be responsible for ensuring the safeguarding policy and procedure are followed and who should be contacted in the event of any breach of the policy or procedure. For the 2016/17 season the named person is Amanda Masterman.

### **Legal framework**

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults namely:

- Working together to safeguard Children 2010
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children.

### **We recognise that:**

- All children, young people and vulnerable adults regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.



## **THE AEOLIAN SINGERS CHILD, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

The Aeolian Singers believe that a child, young person or vulnerable adult should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

### **Contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults**

- Children and young people may attend The Aeolian Singers concerts either
- as members of the audience or
- as part of a school choir taking part in the concert.

In either case the children and young people will be accompanied by a responsible adult (either parent or member of school staff). The responsibility for their safety and well-being remains with the accompanying adult.

- Vulnerable adults may attend The Aeolian Singers
- rehearsals as a member of the choir or
- concerts as a member of the audience

If a vulnerable adult joins The Aeolian Singers as a member of the choir a risk assessment will be undertaken with their parent/carer and procedures put in place to meet their needs and protect them.

If a vulnerable adult attends a concert they will be accompanied by a responsible adult (either parent or carer). The responsibility for their safety and well-being remains with the accompanying adult.

### **Procedures**

No member of The Aeolian Singers or volunteer should be alone with any child, young person or vulnerable adult either attending or taking part in a concert.

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult attending or taking part in a concert approaches a member of The Aeolian Singers or a volunteer asking to be taken to the toilet or for first aid they should be referred to their responsible adult.

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult attending a concert becomes separated from their responsible adult they should remain in the audience section of the venue with the named person and an announcement made to the audience



In the event of a child, young person or vulnerable adult becoming separated from their responsible adult whilst an emergency evacuation is taking place they should be taken to the meeting point and an announcement made to the audience for their responsible adult to collect them.

It is unlikely that a child, young person or vulnerable adult would disclose anything that has harmed them or happened to another child, young person or vulnerable adult to a member or volunteer with The Aeolian Singers. If they do the named person for The Aeolian Singers should be informed who will take advice from the relevant authorities.

If another member of The Aeolian Singers or a volunteer is acting inappropriately with a child, young person or vulnerable adult the named person should be informed who will take advice from the relevant authorities.

If a child, young person, vulnerable adult, parent or carer has a complaint concerning safeguarding they should raise it with the named person who will take notes of the incident and report to the relevant authorities to investigate. This code will be reviewed annually along with our safeguarding policy.

Contacts:

Named Person: Amanda Masterman, telephone number: 01442213324, 07930759503

Child Safeguarding Concern HCC: 03001234043

Vulnerable Adult Concern Adult Care Services Adult protection: 03001234042

Local police:

Non- emergency 101, Emergency 999

**THE AEOLIAN SINGERS CODE OF CONDUCT:**  
**CHILD, YOUNG PERSON AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION**

Follow these ten golden rules when you interact directly with children, young people and vulnerable adults in any capacity on behalf of The Aeolian Singers

1. Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the child, young person or vulnerable adult at all times.
2. Never take sole responsibility for a child, young person or vulnerable adult; if a child, young person or vulnerable adult needs care alert the responsible adult.
3. Never give out your personal contact details, and do not 'friend' or 'follow' children, young people or vulnerable adults you meet through The Aeolian Singers on social networking sites.
4. Remember they are children, young people or vulnerable adults first, and participants or audience second.
5. Never lose sight of the fact that you are with children, young people and vulnerable adults - behave appropriately and use appropriate language at all times.
6. Listen to and respect children, young people and vulnerable adults at all times; don't patronise them.
7. Avoid favouritism, and treat children, young people and vulnerable adults fairly and without prejudice or discrimination.
8. Always act within professional boundaries; ensure all contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults is essential to the programme / event / activity / project you are working on.
9. Ultimately, if you feel anyone is behaving inappropriately around children, young people or vulnerable adults, you have a duty to report your concern to the named person for The Aeolian Singers