



AOTOS Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct is for Charity Trustees, volunteers (including AOTOS members when volunteering in relation to AOTOS Activities (as defined in the Safeguarding Policy), staff (and contractors and visiting presenters).

AOTOS seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which promotes the well-being of all persons in contact, in line with our musical, educational, and pastoral aims. This Code of Conduct seeks to clarify the conduct expected of all persons in positions of trust at events, including Charity Trustees, Volunteers (including AOTOS Members when volunteering in relation to AOTOS Activities), staff, contractors and visiting presenters and performers, and anyone who is undertaking duties for the organisation, whether paid or unpaid.

Safeguarding all Persons in Contact (as defined in the Safeguarding Policy”) and in particular our young and vulnerable members, singers and performers is an important part of our overall strategy.

Purpose of code

This code aims to help us to maintain the respect due to all our members and Persons in Contact. It also seeks to protect children, young persons and vulnerable adults from abuse and reduces the possibility of unfounded allegations being made.

Our responsibility

AOTOS is responsible for making sure everyone taking part in AOTOS Activities has seen, understood and agreed to follow this Code of Conduct, and that they understand the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.

We will ask you to sign a form to indicate that you have seen, understood and agreed to follow the Code of Conduct.

Your responsibility

In your AOTOS Role you are acting in a position of trust and have a duty of care towards all Persons in Contact and in particular, the children and young people we work with. You are likely to be seen as a role model and are expected to act appropriately.

You are responsible for:

- Treating all Persons in Contact with respect or consideration
- Prioritising the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Providing a safe environment for all Persons in Contact, in particular children and young people and vulnerable adults
- Ensuring equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose
- Having a sound awareness of issues relating to safeguarding and child protection and taking action when appropriate

- Following our principles, policies and procedures, including our policies and procedures for Safeguarding (including child protection) and all policies referred to therein (“other AOTOS Policies”)
- Operating within the law at all times
- Modelling good behaviour for children, young and vulnerable people and all Persons in Contact to follow
- Challenging all unacceptable behaviour and reporting any breaches of the behaviour code to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Reporting all safeguarding concerns, following the procedures set out in our Safeguarding Policy and other AOTOS Policies

Maintaining professional relationships

AOTOS promotes relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect. We expect all persons in positions of trust to:

- treat all persons in Contact fairly and without prejudice or discrimination
- be patient with others
- understand that adults, children and young people are individuals with individual needs
- respect differences gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity disability and religions and belief systems, and appreciate that all participants bring something valuable and different to the group/organisation
- listen to and respect the views of all members, including children and young people, at all times
- avoid favouritism
- challenge discrimination and injustice
- encourage young people and adults to speak out about attitudes or behaviour that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- value and take seriously the views of all members, including children and young people

Handling sensitive situations

- You should respect the right to personal privacy of all Persons in Contact, In particular children, young people and all members as far as possible.
- You should exercise caution when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people.
- You should ensure your contact with children and young or vulnerable people is appropriate and relevant to the work of the project you are involved in.
- You should ensure that whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young or vulnerable people
- If a situation arises where you are alone with a child or a young or vulnerable person, ensure that you are within sight or hearing of other adults.
- If a child or vulnerable adult specifically asks for or needs some individual time with you, ensure that at all times other staff or volunteers know where you and the child are.

Only provide personal care in an emergency and make sure there is more than one adult present if possible, unless it has been agreed that the provision of personal care is part of your role and you have been trained to do this safely.

If you need to break confidentiality in order to follow child and vulnerable adult protection procedures, it is important to explain this to the child or young or vulnerable person at the earliest opportunity.

Unacceptable behaviours

You must not:

- allow concerns or allegations to go unreported
- take unnecessary risks
- smoke, consume alcohol or use illegal substances
- dress inappropriately
- develop inappropriate relationships with children and young or vulnerable people
- make inappropriate promises to children and young or vulnerable people
- engage in behaviours that are in any way abusive, including having any form of sexual contact with a child or young or vulnerable person
- allow children and young or vulnerable people to have your personal contact details (mobile number, email or postal address) or have contact with them via a personal social media account
- act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- patronise or belittle children and young or vulnerable people
- make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures, in particular to or in front of children and young or vulnerable people.

GENERAL CODE OF SAFE PRACTICE

1. At AOTOS Activities and Events

From time to time under 25s are required to demonstrate at AOTOS Events. In order to safeguard our young singers and performers, AOTOS organisers will always:

- Make contact with any performer falling into this category through the child or young person's teacher.
- Request and ensure that under 18s are accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult at all times.
- Appoint a DBS Enhanced checked Trustee to liaise with the singer (and parent if under 18) during the event.
- Ensure that an image consent/media release form has been signed before any publicity concerning the singer is released.
- Treat all performers and visitors at AOTOS events with respect and dignity.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING ALLEGED SAFEGUARDING INCIDENTS: Any AOTOS member receiving an allegation of abuse or concern should follow referral procedures set out in our AOTOS Safeguarding Policy

2. At AOTOS Online Events (including Teachers Development Courses)

AOTOS has a clear policy to protect children and young and vulnerable singers from online abuse and harassment.

- We ensure that usernames, logins, email accounts and passwords are used effectively
- We provide clear and specific directions to staff and volunteers on how to behave online through our Online Safety Policy.
- Delegates are held in a waiting room before online entry to the event

- We support and encourage all adults and young people using our service to use the internet, social media and mobile phones in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others
- We support and encourage parents and carers to do what they can to keep their children and vulnerable adults safe and we have developed an online safety policy (forming part of the other AOTOS Policies, for use with young people and vulnerable adults and their parents/carers)
- We have clear and robust procedures in place to enable us to respond appropriately to any incidents of inappropriate online behaviour, whether by an adult or a child/young person
- We review and update the security of our information systems regularly.
- We ensure that personal information about any adults and children who are involved in our organisation is held securely and shared only as appropriate.
- We ensure that written permission has been obtained before images of children and young and vulnerable people are used and use the images and only for the purpose for which consent has been given.
- We provide supervision, support and training for staff and volunteers about online safety and dealing with all forms of online abuse, including bullying/cyberbullying, emotional abuse, sexting, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.
- We examine and risk assess any social media platforms and new technologies before they are used within the organisation.
- We have clear and robust safeguarding procedures in place for responding to alleged safeguarding incidents (see Procedures for referral below (including online abuse))
- Ensure that our response takes the needs of the person experiencing abuse, any bystanders and our organisation as a whole into account.
- We review the plan developed to address online abuse at regular intervals, in order to ensure that any problems have been resolved in the long term.

PROCEDURES FOR REFERRAL: Any AOTOS Person in Contact receiving an allegation of abuse or concern or wishing to report an alleged abuse or concern should follow referral procedures set out in our AOTOS Safeguarding Policy

Upholding this code of behaviour

You should always follow this code of conduct and never rely on your reputation or that of our organisation to protect you.

If you have behaved in an inappropriate manner you may be subject to our disciplinary procedures. Depending on the seriousness of the situation, you may be asked to leave AOTOS. We may also make a report to statutory agencies such as the police and/or the local authority child protection services and/or the Charity Commission.

If you become aware of any breaches of this code, you must report the alleged breach to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If necessary you should follow our Whistleblowing Policy and our safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Last updated March 2022