

Equal Opportunities policy

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Review due September 2026

Aims

Saffron Walden Orchestral Society is a music group open to all. The purpose of the society is to provide performance opportunities for talented musicians living or working in and around the district of Uttlesford, and to promote the appreciation of music in the wider community through the presentation of public concerts and community based projects. The society oversees the running of both the [Saffron Walden Symphony Orchestra](#) and the [Saffron Walden Children's Orchestra](#).

Saffron Walden Orchestral Society aims to treat members, volunteers, staff (including freelance contractors) and supporters equally, regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, class or socio-economic background.

The Saffron Walden Orchestral Society is a music group that offers membership and provides musical activities. SWSO aims:

- To ensure that membership and activities are open and welcoming to everybody who plays an orchestral instrument to the required standard, and will treat all equally regardless of the characteristics set out above
- To treat our volunteers, any staff (including freelance contractors) and supporters equally regardless of the characteristics set out above.

Equality of opportunity – Saffron Walden Orchestral Society aims to:

- promote equality for its members and potential members in access to membership and musical activities and opportunities
- ensure no member or potential member will receive less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the criteria and characteristics set out above
- ensure no individual wishing to volunteer or work for (including on a freelance basis) Saffron Walden Orchestral Society will receive less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the criteria and characteristics set out above.

Inclusion and respect;

- Saffron Walden Orchestral Society values its members, staff, volunteers and supporters and will do all it can to:
 - treat them in a respectful manner and ensure they are made to feel equally welcome and included in all activities.
 - provide an environment in which the contribution and needs of everyone are fully valued and recognised.

- Accordingly all members, volunteers, staff including freelance contractors, supporters and those representing Saffron Walden Orchestral Society are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity and ensure activities are welcoming and inclusive for all.

- Inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour or otherwise offensive and inflammatory remarks and behaviour are not acceptable. These constitute harassment, and have no place in Saffron Walden Orchestral Society.

- Saffron Walden Orchestral Society will support our members, volunteers, staff and supporters in not tolerating any inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour from other group members, volunteers, colleagues, other organisations or customers.

Accessibility: Saffron Walden Orchestral Society aims to use venues that are accessible to all for rehearsals, concerts and any other activities or events it undertakes.

Dealing with Complaints

- If any member, volunteer, staff or supporter feels they have been discriminated against or harassed they should raise it with one of the committee members. Committee members are listed on the website www.saffronsymphony.org. Committee members can be approached informally at rehearsals. Alternatively, members can report to the current Chair using the email address enquiries@saffronsymphony.org A form for comments and complaints is available in the Notices section of the website.

- The committee will take complaints of discrimination and harassment seriously.

- A committee member will investigate the complaint, listening to all parties involved:
 - If the complaint is against a committee member, that member will not take part in investigating the complaint.
 - If the complaint is against an individual, that individual will have the opportunity to express their point of view in a safe environment and accompanied by a friend.
 - The person making the complaint will have the same opportunity.

- If a complaint is found against Saffron Walden Orchestral Society the committee must work to ensure that such discrimination is not repeated in the future, and must inform the members of how they propose to do this.

Employment practices, including in relation to volunteers

- Saffron Walden Orchestral Society aims to promote equality and inclusivity as an employer and shall ensure that no volunteer, employee, person engaged to provide a service (e.g. freelance) or job/volunteer applicant receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the characteristics set out in the aims of this policy
- Saffron Walden Orchestral Society regards discrimination, abuse, harassment, victimisation or bullying of staff or volunteers in the course of work as disciplinary offences that could be regarded as gross misconduct.

Request for DBS checks for current and potential members, staff and volunteers – with reference to ex-offenders

General:

SWOS does not currently employ staff, other than freelance tutors contracted to the Children's Orchestra.

- If at any point in the future staff were to be employed, in assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Saffron Walden Orchestral Society will comply fully with the code of practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly
- Saffron Walden Orchestral Society actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records.

Request of DBS checks

- An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS if this is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. At present this is required of all freelance tutors and volunteers working with the Children's Orchestra.
- For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position.
- Saffron Walden Orchestral Society can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that Saffron Walden Orchestral Society are legally entitled to know about, and where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and, where appropriate, Police Act Regulations as amended).

- Saffron Walden Orchestral Society makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the code of practice and makes a copy available on request.

Outcome of check and selection process

- Saffron Walden Orchestral Society undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.
- Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

Responsibilities

Should Saffron Walden Orchestral Society need to recruit staff including freelance contractors all those who are involved in the recruitment process will:

- be aware of the Saffron Walden Orchestral Society equality and diversity policy.
- Be aware of when and what type of DBS check is appropriate.
- have read the DBS code of practice.
- have read the Making Music guidance on safeguarding and DBS checks.
- have read any other guidance deemed appropriate by the Saffron Walden Orchestral Society committee

Policy review

The policy will be reviewed every two years by the Saffron Walden Orchestral Society.