

Rodolfus Choral Foundation

The Rodolfus Choral Foundation Limited

DIGITAL STRATEGY POLICY

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This policy serves as an overview of the Foundation's digital strategy on courses. Further information for staff and students can be found in the respective Digital & E-safety – Acceptable Use documents on the Foundation's website.

KEY TERMINOLOGY

The Foundation refers to **The Rodolfus Choral Foundation**

The OT refers to **The Operations Team**. This would usually comprise the General Manager, Course Operations Manager, Communications Manager, Access and Partnerships Manager and the Choir Team.

Adult refers to all people 18 and over, including staff, volunteers and guests.

Staff refers to all those who work for or on behalf of The Foundation in any capacity whether paid or voluntary. All staff working for the foundation will be over the age of 18.

Parent refers to birth parents or other adults who are in a parenting role e.g guardians, stepparents or adoptive parents.

Child refers to all young people under the age of 18.

Young person (here) refers to all people who may be participants in The Foundation's courses and choirs (excl. Adult Courses). This includes participants on Senior Courses or singers in the Rodolfus Choir who may be aged between 18 and 23.

DSL refers to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

ToS refers to the **Trustee with oversight of Safeguarding**

CoBT refers to the **Chair of the Board of Trustees**

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1 POLICY AIMS

1.1 Philosophy and Ethos

- i. The safety of young people on the Foundation's courses is paramount. In the new age of technology, digital devices and the internet bring with them a wealth of opportunity in communication and teamwork, but can equally pose several issues for children and young people with regards to personal safety and wellbeing when used inappropriately.
- ii. The improper use of technology has been linked to sleep deprivation, poor mental health, bullying, harassment and the accessing of age-inappropriate content.
- iii. The aim of this policy is to minimise the risks posed by poor digital safety.

It is essential that this policy is read in conjunction with the Foundation's 'Digital & E-Safety – Acceptable Use' documents for staff and students.

1.2 Objectives

- i. This policy is linked to the Foundation's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, available on the Foundation's website.
- ii. This policy has been authorised by the Board of Trustees, is available on request and is published on the Foundation's website. It is reviewed annually.
- iii. To promote opportunities for the safe and appropriate use of technology while encouraging and valuing human contact and relationships over what is shown by digital devices.
- iv. Our policy reflects the latest research and prevailing opinion about access to mobile phones published by the department for education.

2 MOBILE DEVICES

2.1 Residential Courses

- i. Students are permitted to bring mobile devices on both junior and senior residential courses, though expensive devices are discouraged.
- ii. On junior courses where students are aged 8-15, all mobile phones will be kept safely by the course staff and only given to students at a suitable time in the day when they are permitted to phone home. They will not be allowed free usage of their mobile phones for lengthy use e.g. gaming or watching content online.

- iii. On senior courses where students are mostly aged 16 plus, students will be allowed to keep their phones on them. However, there will be a zero-tolerance to phone usage during the teaching day. In practice, this means phones will stay in bags or pockets and should not be used at all even during break times and meal times.
- iv. At the discretion of the course manager, students will be designated a time when they are allowed to use their phones to keep in touch with family.
- v. The Staff on each course reserves the right to remove access to mobile devices temporarily if it is necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of anyone in the Foundation's care.
- vi. Devices are brought to a choral course at one's own risk; The Foundation cannot accept any liability for loss or damage.

2.2 Off-site and Travel (Senior Courses)

Where older students have been granted permission by staff to go off site unaccompanied, in accordance with Foundation policy, students are expected to remain in groups of three and must have at least one working mobile phone in each group. All students should have the contact numbers of their course manager and house parents. These will be provided on the first day of their residential. This should be used solely in an emergency.

2.3 Digital Communications with Younger Students (Senior Courses)

Older students are cautioned against the creation of group chats, particularly where this crosses large age gaps. All students on Senior Courses are reminded of this at the beginning of each residential. Those found to be messaging such groups after the 'lights-out' times of members in such group chats will be dealt with in the same manner had they disturbed those children in the boarding house. Inappropriate content found to be shared in the presence of children will be dealt with in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

2.4 Overnight

- i. The House Parents may decide, at their discretion, to remove overnight access to mobile devices, particularly to some or all children under the age of 16. This may be a proactive step rather than a punishment, and younger students are advised to bring an alarm clock to residential courses if they prefer to wake themselves in the morning. House Parents on Junior Courses will ensure that the students are woken up by a member of staff each morning.
- ii. Parents are asked to respect the bedtimes advertised and not to encourage contact when their child is getting ready for bed or supposed to be sleeping. This request is advertised in the Course Information Booklets.

2.5 Wi-Fi and Internet Supervision

- i. The Foundation does not provide its own Wi-Fi networks. Access to filtered Wi-Fi is provided to students where schools and other course venues make it available.
- ii. The Foundation recognises the challenges resulting from mobile data internet access and care is taken to encourage, as much as possible, access to the internet through filtered and monitored Wi-Fi rather than via unfiltered means.
- iii. The use of VPNs is strongly discouraged. It is impossible for Staff to monitor fully the use of mobile network internet access or public-use Wi-Fi network.
- iv. All staff are made aware in their safeguarding training about the risks presented by the ease of access to unfiltered mobile phone networks. All Staff are therefore encouraged to monitor device use where possible while also fostering an atmosphere that enables students to feel comfortable and confident in expressing concerns.

3 SOCIAL MEDIA

- i. The Foundation has social media accounts that are managed by the Communications and Marketing Manager. Responsibility for social media on each course will be given to individual course staff for the purpose only of documenting and sharing the high-quality work on courses. They will be briefed in advance.
- ii. Staff are instructed not to accept 'friend' requests or otherwise follow the social media profiles of any students under the age of 18 that would allow private contact between the staff member and child, or would give the child access to the personal profile of a member of staff. This rule applies to any member of staff and student, even after the course has ended, and remains in effect until the child is 18 and has left school.
- iii. Staff are not permitted to post or publish information, including media, pertaining to students except where it has previously been published by the Rodolfus Foundation social media account.

4 ONLINE EDUCATION

- i. There are clear parameters and expectations that apply both to students and staff when engaging online, just as they do for in-person activities. Staff should ensure that any profiles used for work are adequately private and appropriate.
- ii. Staff and students should always be appropriately dressed when using video, and staff should be in a non-personal space.
- iii. All remote interaction should take place only with written permission from the General Manager or DSL.

- iv. Staff are reminded to be mindful of their safeguarding responsibilities: in particular to report any safeguarding concerns directly and immediately to the DSL. Staff should also report any inappropriate behaviour by students to the DSL as they would normally.

5 PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO

- i. Photography and video may only be used for publicity, education or parental communication.
- ii. Personal devices should not be used for photography or video unless granted prior approval for professional use by the OT. In all cases, photos and videos should be sent to the Foundation by email and removed from personal devices leaving no trace at the earliest convenience.
- iii. The Foundation seeks permission for photography and video of students in the preliminary application forms for each course, with provision for parents/students to opt out for any reason.
- iv. The law recognises students' own rights – from the age of 13 – to decide how their personal information, including images, is used.
- v. Photography and video should not be used or taken in any circumstances in which a student may be embarrassed or upset.
- vi. Students' use of photography and video is monitored by course staff and should conform to the aims outlined in the Foundation's Digital Strategy Policy. Where Staff judge photography or video use by a student to be inappropriate, restrictions on devices or other appropriate measures may be put in place.

6 INAPPROPRIATE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

6.1 Sexting, Online Abuse and Sharing Nudes

- i. The Foundation operates a zero-tolerance policy towards inappropriate use of technology
- ii. For further information, see the Foundation's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

6.2 Digital & E-safety – Acceptable Use

- iii. The Foundation has created two 'Digital & E-safety – Acceptable Use' documents which are applicable to Staff and Students respectively. These documents should be read in conjunction with the Digital Strategy Policy.