

**Policy on Youth Protection**

October 17, 2016

**Purpose.** It is the goal of the Fox Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists to provide opportunities for youth interested in knowledge and performance of organ music to learn, perform, and gain a love of organ literature. Such an endeavor can be financially challenging, so the Chapter has designated money through the Scholarship funds to assist worthy students.

In the distribution of these Scholarship funds through the Scholarship Competition, the Chapter wants to assure minors, parents and guardians of minors, and perhaps indeed, young adults who are no longer minors, to know that the Fox Valley chapter has a policy which protects them from any sexual abuse or offense or would-be sexual predators. This policy will be strictly enforced.

**Policy.** It is the policy of the Fox Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists that no participant under the age of 18 will ever be alone with an adult other than a parent or guardian in any event sponsored by the Fox Valley Chapter, such as a lesson, audition, or any kind of rehearsal or performance. Such protection shall also be available to those 18 and over who request that protection.

This protection policy requires one parent of the applicant or two approved chaperones to remain in the room while the minor or person requesting protection is rehearsing, taking a lesson, or otherwise participating in a chapter-sponsored event. The two approved chapter chaperones must have passed the background check as required by the Chapter.

**PROCEDURES**

In order to assure the protection from sexual abuse of youths participating in events conducted by the Fox Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, members of the Chapter and adult participants will be subject to a criminal background check.

**Permission.** The Dean of the Chapter will request of the adult participants in each event their written permission to conduct a criminal background check. The adult participants will sign a form designed by the Chapter for this purpose and give it to the Dean. The form will include name, social security number, and addresses where the participating adult has lived in the prior 30 years.

**Report.** The Dean will order the background check from the selected agency which will examine the court records of each county where the individual has lived or worked during the prior 30 years. The agency will report to the Dean all recorded arrests and convictions for felonies and misdemeanors during that period. The Chapter will pay the agency for the background checks.

**Evaluation.** The Dean will determine whether any information on the report disqualifies the adult from participating in the event. The Dean will determine which incidents in an applicant's background disqualify the applicant from participation in the event.

**Notice.** The Dean will inform the adult volunteer of the results of the report and the evaluation. If the determination by the Dean excludes the adult from participating in the event, the notice to the adult shall be in writing.

**Delegation.** The Dean may delegate the prior steps of the process to the Subdean, to the chapter member leading the event, or to another chapter member qualified to administer this process. The Dean may choose to jointly administer the process with the delegate. In any event, the Dean will supervise the process and check to assure that the criminal background checks are conducted and the records are complete before each event.

**Appeal.** If the adult volunteer decides to appeal the Dean's determination to exclude the volunteer from the event, the volunteer will write an appeal to the Dean who will meet with the Executive Committee to review the criminal background report, the Dean's determination of exclusion, and the appeal by the adult. The Dean will report to the adult in writing the results of the Executive Committee's determination. The determination of the Executive Committee is final.

**Recordkeeping.** The Secretary of the Chapter will maintain in a secure manner the records of each adult's permission to conduct the background check, the results reported for each adult, and the Dean's or Executive Committee's determinations based on the results, any appeal, and any other documents related to this procedure. The documents shall be kept secure for a period of five years following the event and the Secretary shall then destroy them.

**Confidentiality.** No persons other than those identified in this procedure are to have access to or to be informed of any information contained in any documents used in this process. No person identified in this procedure is to discuss or share any information in the procedure with any person other than those identified above in the procedure and then only in the course of conducting this approval procedure. Only the Chapter Dean will discuss any information or aspect of the procedure with the volunteer.

**Repeat participation.** An adult volunteer who participates in a Chapter event within the three years of first participation and criminal background check will not need to repeat the process until after three years from the first event.

**Coordination of Authority.** The policies and standards of a host location or sponsor of a Chapter event shall be coordinated with the provisions of this policy and procedure such that the more stringent policy and procedural provision of the host or the Chapter shall apply.