



Barnet Churches Action,
117 Fitzjohn Avenue,
Barnet,
Hertfordshire,
EN5 2HR

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

1. General Policy Statement

- 1.1 Barnet Churches Action has a duty to ensure that it promotes the welfare and safeguarding of children.
- 1.2 Throughout these policies and procedures, reference is made to “children and young people”. This term is used to mean “those under the age of 18”. The governing body recognises that some adults are also vulnerable to abuse; accordingly, the procedures may be applied (with appropriate adaptations) to allegations of abuse.
- 1.3 The governing body/ trustees is/are committed to ensuring that the organisation
 - ♦ Provides a safe environment for children and young people.
 - ♦ Identifies children and young people who are victims of abuse.
 - ♦ Takes appropriate action to see that such children and young people are kept safe from harm.
- 1.4 In pursuit of these aims, the governing body will approve and annually review policies and procedures with the aim of:
 - ♦ Raising awareness of issues relating to the welfare of children and young people and the promotion of a safe environment for them.
 - ♦ Providing procedures for reporting concerns.
 - ♦ Establishing procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff.
 - ♦ The safer recruitment of staff.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 Safeguarding Lead Person. The organisation has nominated **Mary Boland** as lead person with special responsibility for operational child protection issues for the year **2023**. She will undertake appropriate training and will ensure safeguarding issues are kept current and up to date. This person is a senior member of staff (i.e. paid employee or trustee or member of the management committee).
- 2.2 Training. Staff and volunteers working with children will receive adequate training to familiarise them with child protection issues and responsibilities and the organisation’s procedures and policies, with refresher training at least every three years.
- 2.3 The governing body will receive from the Safeguarding Lead Person an annual report that reviews how the duties have been discharged.
- 2.4 The designated person with lead responsibility for child protection issues in 2017 is **Mrs Mary Boland, Hope Corner Community Centre, 185 Mays Lane, Barnet, Hertfordshire, EN5 2DY. Telephone number 020 8364 8756.**
- 2.5 The Safeguarding Lead Person has a key duty for raising awareness within the organisation of issues relating to the welfare of children and young people, and the promotion of a safe environment for the children and young people.
- 2.6 The Safeguarding Lead Person is responsible for ensuring that exempted questions are asked on relevant volunteer and employment application forms.
- 2.7 The Safeguarding Lead Person has received appropriate training and should keep up to date with developments in child protection issues. They also have responsibility for making new staff and volunteers aware of the existing child protection/ safeguarding policy.
- 2.8 The Safeguarding Lead Person will be the main contact point for Child Protection issues. Both the Safeguarding Lead Person and the Safeguarding Administrator will have contact details for relevant organisations available for employees and volunteers.

Company Limited by Guarantee: Registered in England No: 8625115
Registered Charity Number 1154935

Directors: Julian Desborough – Mary Boland – Roger Seaton – Simon Shoreman – Ray Thomas
Registered Office: 117 Fitzjohn Avenue – Barnet – Hertfordshire – EN5 2HR

This list will usually include contact details of relevant individuals and provisions such as the NSPCC Helpline 0800 800 5000 and the local police child protection unit, LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer for Safeguarding), the Disclosure and Barring Service referral unit and where appropriate CAS.

3. Definitions

3.1 The management committee recognises the following as definitions of abuse:

i. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse causes harm to a child's person. It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning or suffocating. It may be done deliberately or recklessly, or be the result of a deliberate failure to prevent injury occurring.

ii. Neglect

Neglect is the persistent or severe failure to meet a child or young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs. It will result in serious impairment of the child's health or development.

iii. Sexual Abuse & Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)

Sexual abuse involves a child or young person being forced or coerced into participating in or watching sexual activity. It is not necessary for the child to be aware that the activity is sexual and the apparent consent of the child is irrelevant.

HSB is: "Sexual behaviours expressed by children and young people under the age of 18 year old that are developmentally inappropriate, maybe harmful towards self or others, or abusive towards another child, young person or adult." (DofE definition). HSB can occur online and offline or a mixture of both.

iv. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM comprises "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs".

FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.

v. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse occurs where there is persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection. It causes severe and adverse effects on the child's or young person's behaviour and emotional development, resulting in low self-worth. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all forms of abuse.

vi. Peer-on-Peer Child Abuse

(Definitions: Metropolitan Police)

A term used to describe children abusing other children. Peer-on-peer child abuse can include:

- bullying (including online bullying and bullying because of someone's race, religion, sexuality, disability or trans status);
- abuse by girlfriends, boyfriends or partners;
- physical abuse;
- sexual violence, such as rape and sexual assault;
- sexual harassment;
- sharing naked or semi-naked photos, videos or live streams without permission nudes (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- upskirting (taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission);
- Initiation / hazing type violence and rituals to harass, abuse and humiliate;
- emotional abuse;
- financial abuse.
- coercive control.

4. Regulated Activity and eligibility for DBS Criminal Record checks

4.1 Under the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, an individual working unsupervised with children is considered to be engaged in regulated activity and must have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check which will involve a check of the children's barred list, in order to perform their duties.

4.2 An individual working in a directly and permanently supervised position is not considered to be engaged in regulated activity but should still have an enhanced DBS disclosure check. However, because they are working in a supervised role the enhanced check will not include a check of the children's barred list.

4.3 Note that applications for a DBS enhanced check can only be submitted where the applicant is aged 16 or over at the time of making the application.

5. Duty to refer to the DBS (Now Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS))

- 5.1 The Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 both make it mandatory to refer anyone known to pose a threat of harm to a child or vulnerable people to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This means that the designated member of staff responsible for safeguarding must not knowingly employ anyone who poses a risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults, this includes anyone who is believed to have committed a relevant conduct while on the job or who has a record of such conduct.
- 5.2 The organisation has a legal duty to refer an employee or volunteer who poses a risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults to the DBS, failure to do so can result in a fine and/or up to five year's imprisonment. There must be sufficient and solid evidence that the employee or volunteer poses a risk of harm before they can be referred to the DBS. The DBS will not consider evidence based on rumour or unsubstantiated reports. The employer should also inform the police and other relevant authorities if they believe a relevant conduct has occurred.
- 5.3 Referral forms can be downloaded from the DBS's website www.gov.uk/dbs

6. The DBS's barring process

- 6.1 Whenever new relevant information (such as a conviction or caution) becomes known, the information will be sent to the DBS. The DBS will consider this information, together with other information known on the individual, and decide whether it indicates that the individual poses a risk of harm to vulnerable groups. If so, the DBS will commence its barring process and the DBS will issue a disclosure certificate to the applicant with the barring information.
- 6.2 The applicant should be advised by the designated member of staff to make a representation to the DBS regarding the barring information. The DBS will assess the barring information and representation and decide whether to bar the applicant. If there is sufficient barring evidence, the applicant will be placed on either the Children's Barred List or the Vulnerable Adults Barred List or both depending on the offence. The applicant must then be removed from regulated activity.
- 6.3 The applicant has the right of appeal to a tribunal and must be advised of this right. Serious offences committed against vulnerable people will lead to automatic barring and the applicant will have no right to make representations or to appeal against a barring decision.

7. Dealing with Disclosure of Abuse and Procedure for Reporting Concerns

- 7.1 If a child or young person tells a member of staff about possible abuse:
- ♦ Listen carefully and stay calm.
 - ♦ Do not interview the child, but question normally and without pressure, in order to be sure that you understand what the child is telling you.
 - ♦ Do not put words into the child's mouth.
 - ♦ Reassure the child that by telling you, they have done the right thing.
 - ♦ Inform the child that you must pass the information on, but that only those that need to know about it will be told. Inform them of to whom you will report the matter.
 - ♦ Note the main points carefully.
 - ♦ Make a detailed note of the date, time, place, what the child said, did and your questions, etc.
 - ♦ Staff should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves but should report them immediately to the Designated Person.
- 7.2 Dealing with cases of FGM. If a child or young person tells a member of staff about possible FGM:
- ♦ Follow steps in 7.1.
 - ♦ Must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a mandatory statutory duty and staff will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it. As this is a disclosed case, you will need to follow your mandatory duty. Therefore, you will need to call the non-emergency 101 number and write down the crime reference number.
 - ♦ Unless they have been specifically told not to disclose, they should also discuss the case with the Designated Person and involve children's social care as appropriate. Talk to your DSL and discuss actions. The Designated Person may want to have a further conversation with the child – you should be present for this discussion.
- 7.3 Dealing with cases of peer-on-peer child abuse. If a child makes an allegation of abuse against another child:
- ♦ Follow steps in 7.1.
 - ♦ The Designated Person will contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence.
 - ♦ Where a concern has been referred to social care or the police, the Designated Person will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the

child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed.

- ♦ The Designated Person will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate.

7.4 **Dealing with cases of sharing of nudes and semi-nudes ('sexting').** If you are made aware of an incident involving the consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images/videos, you must:

- ♦ Report it to the Designated Person immediately.
- ♦ **You must not:**
 - View, download or share the imagery yourself, or ask a child to share or download it. If you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the Designated Person;
 - Delete the imagery or ask the child to delete it;
 - Ask the child(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility);
 - Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the child(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers;
 - Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved;
- ♦ Explain that you need to report the incident, and reassure the child(s) that they will receive support and help from the Designated Person.

8. Reporting and Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Members of Staff.

The procedures apply to all staff, whether trustees, administrative, management or support, as well as to volunteers. The word "staff" is used for ease of description.

8.1 In rare instances, staffs of Christian organisations have been found responsible for child abuse. Because of their frequent contact with children and young people, staff may have allegations of child abuse made against them. The (organisation name) recognises that an allegation of child abuse made against a member of staff may be made for a variety of reasons and that the facts of the allegation may or may not be true. It is imperative that those dealing with an allegation maintain an open mind and that investigations are thorough and not subject to delay.

8.2 The Organisation recognises that the Children's Act 1989 states that the welfare of the child is of paramount concern. It is also recognised that hasty or ill-informed decisions in connection with a member of staff can irreparably damage an individual's reputation, confidence and career. Therefore, those dealing with such allegations within the organisation will do so with sensitivity and will act in a careful, measured way.

9. Safer Recruitment and Selection Procedure

Barnet Churches Action will follow safer recruitment and selection procedures. These should be reviewed regularly in order to ensure that they take account of the following:

- ♦ They should apply to staff and volunteers who may work with children.
- ♦ The post or role should be clearly defined.
- ♦ The key selection criteria for the post or role should be identified.
- ♦ Vacancies should be advertised widely in order to ensure a diversity of applicants.
- ♦ Obtain professional and character references.
- ♦ Verify previous employment history.
- ♦ Disclosure and Barring Service disclosure/List 99 checks (maintain sensitive and confidential use of the applicant's disclosure).
- ♦ Use a variety of selection techniques (e.g. qualifications, previous experience, interview, reference checks).

10. Online Safety

10.1 Barnet Churches Action recognises the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material and we understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. To address this, we aim to:

- ♦ Have robust processes in place to ensure the online safety of children, staff, volunteers and trustees.
- ♦ Protect and educate the Hope Corner community in its safe and responsible use of technology, including mobile and smart technology (which we refer to as 'mobile phones').
- ♦ Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones, tablets, laptops, computers and other electronic devices at Hope Corner Community Centre.

- ♦ Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate
- 10.2 The four key categories of risk to online safety is based on:
- ♦ Content – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, HSB, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.
 - ♦ Contact – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual (HSB), criminal, financial or other purposes
 - ♦ Conduct – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images, (HSB), (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying.
 - ♦ Commerce – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams.

This document was updated June 2023.

Next review: June 2024.

TRUSTEES DECLARATION

I have read and been informed about the content, requirements and expectations of this Policy for the Trustees at Hope Corner Community Centre. I have received a copy of the policy and agree to abide by the policy guidelines as a condition of my role as Trustee of Barnet Churches Action.

I understand that if I have questions, at any time, regarding the policy, I will consult my manager and/or human resources manager.

Please read the policy carefully to ensure that you understand the policy before signing this document.

Trustee Signature

Trustee Printed Name

Date

STAFF / VOLUNTEERS DECLARATION

I have read and been informed about the content, requirements and expectations of this Policy for the Staff at Hope Corner Community Centre. I have received a copy of the policy and agree to abide by the policy guidelines as a condition of my role as an employee / volunteer of Barnet Churches Action.

I understand that if I have questions, at any time, regarding the policy, I will consult my manager and/or human resources manager.

Please read the policy carefully to ensure that you understand the policy before signing this document.

Employee / Volunteer Signature

Employee / Volunteer Name

Date