

*Rejoice in the presence of children and young people in your meeting and recognise the gifts they bring. Remember that the meeting as a whole shares a responsibility for every child in its care.*

*Advices & Queries 19*

# Sheffield Central Quaker Meeting **Handbook for work with children and young people in relation to safeguarding**

Includes Sheffield & Balby AM  
Safeguarding Policy



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## 1. Statement of Intent

Sheffield and Balby Area Quaker Meeting (hereinafter referred to as Area Meeting) is committed to making our meetings and gatherings for *children, young people and vulnerable adults\** safe and free from harm.

*\*for definitions of these terms see page 11*

We recognise that this is a responsibility of all who attend our Meetings. We each have a responsibility to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from physical, emotional, financial or sexual abuse and to report it when it is discovered or suspected.

We are committed to giving support and adequate resources to those who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults on our behalf and to providing them with Oversight.

We aim to fulfil our commitment by

- Developing a policy based on the best safeguarding practice and guidelines
- Reviewing our policy on a regular (maximum 2 years) basis
- Ensuring that the policy and practices are widely shared and understood by everyone who attends our meetings; including the children and young people themselves
- Following carefully our procedures for recruiting paid staff and involving adults in activities with our children and young people
- Providing adequate supervision, support and training for both paid staff and volunteers in their work with the children and young people
- Adopting a procedure for dealing with concerns about possible abuse.

## 2. Expectations of conduct towards children and young people

It is important that we

- Treat everyone with respect
- Respect the right to privacy of each child and young person
- Encourage children and young people to feel confident and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they are not comfortable with
- Encourage the older children to be concerned and watchful about the welfare of younger children
- Recognise that caution is required in sensitive moments when dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse
- Remember that hugging, touching or making personal remarks depends on the intent and emotional state of each person, and on what each person considers to be safe boundaries.

It is important that we do not

- Have physical or verbal contact which might be construed as inappropriate
- Play excessively rough physical contact games
- Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- Show favouritism to any individual
- Rely on our 'good name' to protect us
- Permit abusive activities e.g. bullying, ridiculing etc.

In the event of receiving an allegation about any adult including yourself

- Immediately tell the Area Meeting Safeguarding Coordinator/s
- Record the facts as you know them
- Ensure no one is in a position which could cause further compromise.

### **3. The role of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/s**

The Safeguarding Coordinator/s is/are appointed on behalf of the Area Meeting

- To act as advocates for children and vulnerable adults
- To act independently in reporting concerns of abuse to the statutory authorities
- To oversee the implementation of the safeguarding policies and ensure they are regularly reviewed.
- To organise DBS checks.

### **4. Involvement of adults in activities with children and induction**

As part of our commitment to ensuring that the children and young people of our Meeting are fully integrated into the life of the Meeting, we encourage a wide range of adults to have some contact with them. In this way, the children and young people can come to learn how Friends practise their religious commitment in their daily lives. We recognise that adults become involved by different routes/means.

In view of this, we have decided that the level of vetting of individuals will be proportionate to the frequency and duration of their contact with the children and young people.

Hence, the more contact the role of an adult requires, the more vetting and training in health and safety issues will be required as follows.

1) Any paid support worker will be expected to have an enhanced DBS check, which should be renewed every 3 years (unless they are registered with the update service), along with usual job references. They will be expected to have a first aid qualification and receive child protection training.

2) Our children's and young person's work committee members ( appointed by local meetings for three years) will be expected to have enhanced DBS clearance. This is renewed on a three year basis (unless the volunteer has registered with the update service).

3) Individual volunteers who spend time helping in the supervision of the youngest children's groups by dint of their own children being part of the group

will not require DBS clearance while they are working under the supervision of our support worker or a DBS checked session leader.

4) Individual volunteers who offer to work with the older age groups for 50 minutes more than twice a school term will be expected to have enhanced DBS clearance, read the Safeguarding Policy, provide referees and have an opportunity to consider the role.

5) Invited visitors

- a. On an occasional basis, members of the various special interest groups in the Meeting (e.g. Peace Group, Gardening Group etc) are invited to work with the children in order to show them how they live out their Quaker principles in practice. These visitors do not require DBS checks.
- b. Individual Friends who are conducting appeals for various worthy causes may be invited once a month to make their appeal to the children and adults when we first gather as a group on that Sunday. They will be with a large group and several adults and as such will not require any vetting for their contact with the children.

## **5. Supervision of Children's and Young People's Activities**

### CHILD /ADULT RATIOS

Our policy is to have a minimum of two adults working together for all children's activities, irrespective of the age of children. No one should work alone. One of the adults must have enhanced DBS clearance. If there are insufficient adults to run a session then the session should not run.

In order to supervise activities safely, it is necessary to have sufficient adult leaders and helpers. There are legal requirements for certain activities involving children aged 8 or under. If we are taking children out of the building we would check the legal requirements and note that this is based on the nature of the activity and the age group of the children.

If a session for a specific age group is cancelled, and enough adults are available to support, the children will have the option of joining one of the other groups. Parents/carers of children aged 0-3 always stay with their children throughout the session. Parents of children aged 4-7 are required to stay until they are settled. If children require extra support parents are required to stay with them whatever age.

Children are ultimately the responsibility of the adult who brought them to Meeting for Worship. For this reason, the adult should not leave the Meeting House whilst the child is there. During Meeting for Worship the adults in Children's meeting have practical responsibility for the child but they should not hesitate to ask for help from the responsible adult if the child is in distress or there is any other difficulty. Children are the responsibility of the adult who brought them to Meeting, once they join the main Meeting at 11.20am..

## DBS PROCEDURE FOR VOLUNTEERS and PAID EMPLOYEES

It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Coordinator/s to arrange for checks from the Disclosure and Barring Service (hereinafter DBS) for volunteers and paid employees working with children.

Some liaison with the Management Committee and Office Manager may be appropriate in the case of checks for paid employees involved with children and young people, ie. As part of the recruitment process.

Children and Young People's Work Committee (CYPWC at Sheffield Central Local Meeting) or other responsible groups/appointed Friends within the Area Meeting should notify the Safeguarding Coordinators if a volunteer requires a DBS check and the coordinator/s will arrange for the CAS website link and password to be issued.

It is expected that the applicant will begin the process and contact the Verifier within 6 weeks of the initial notification to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

Safeguarding Coordinators will communicate successful DBS clearance to the person arranging the rota for the children's sessions as soon as it is received from the verifier.

There is no cost for volunteers.

## DBS PORTABILITY

A volunteer who holds a DBS for a different organisation, for example as part of their professional role, should not rely on this as sufficient coverage and should still undertake a DBS for the specific role they would be undertaking for the Area Meeting, unless they have registered with the Update Service. In this case, the Safeguarding Coordinator will contact the Update Service, using information provided by the F/friend. If a F/friend holds an up to date DBS certificate for their work with children and young people in Sheffield and Balby Area this is 'portable' and can be used to support other organised national Quaker children's activity.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

The presence of each child and young person attending the Children's meeting will be recorded in a book laid out for them for their responsible adult to sign when they arrive (although some children prefer to sign themselves in, giving the name of their responsible adult). Its location at other times should be in a confidential location.

It will be the responsibility of the session leader working on the lower ground floor to ensure that this book is available for signing and to use it as a record of attendance in the event of an evacuation of the building due to an emergency.

There is a space on the register for adults to remind staff of any special needs or information about their child which might be relevant during the 50-minute session (allergies, epilepsy, toileting needs etc).

Parents, children and young people will be reminded every 2 months about procedures for emergency. The children and young people will take part in any evacuation drills.

A member of the CYPWC will serve as Health and Safety representatives. Their particular responsibility will be to survey the building every 6 months with a view to the specific Health and Safety needs of the children and young people. The children and young people will be encouraged to make the Health and Safety representatives aware of any dangers for them in the building. The Health and Safety representatives will liaise with the Meeting House Management Group and the Office Manager with regard to any issues which might arise.

More specifically the following guidance will apply.

- Children will not be allowed unsupervised in the kitchen. Doors and windows will have child proof locks and will be checked for safety by the session leader or support worker at the beginning of each session
- Children will only be allowed to leave their age group session with permission or supervision.
- A notice will indicate the whereabouts of the First Aid box.
- Children are the responsibility of the adult who brought them to Meeting for Worship once they join the main Meeting at 11.20 and they may not leave the first floor social area unsupervised.
- The upstairs social area can be a challenging space for both children and adults at busy times with hot drinks, doors and stairs so we all need to remember to look out for each other.
- Any incidents or accidents, however minor, should be reported to the person on duty in the office and recorded, as appropriate, in the main accident book in the office for the attention of staff and prevention of future accident.

## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SAFETY

The strength of any policy to protect and enhance the emotional and spiritual development of our children and young people depends upon the atmosphere of relationships which we build between them and the adults. The guidance on good practice, mentioned earlier, is crucial in this respect.



We need to conduct our relationships with groups of children and young people in a way which makes it clear that all of them will be included equally. Also we will not allow tensions and conflicts between the children and young people to pass unchallenged. Above all, we will encourage friendship and a safe atmosphere in which they can develop their best qualities.

## DATA AND IMAGE PROTECTION

We will ensure that the permission of parents or guardians is always obtained before others are able to obtain personal information about any of the children (e.g. address, telephone numbers, email etc). Also permission will need to be sought before taking photographs or video recording of the children whether individually or in a group. A standard template form is available from the Safeguarding coordinator/s.

## **6. Responding to allegations, observations or admissions of abuse**

Despite our efforts, it may come to the attention of anyone in the meeting that a child, young person or vulnerable adult's welfare is at risk. Some indicators of this might be

- That they were having too much contact with an unfamiliar adult
- Inappropriate physical or verbal contact is noticed
- One or more are using inappropriate language towards another
- Bullying behaviour is noticed
- They appear to be socially isolated from the group
- They show a pattern of behaviour over time which suggests emotional distress
- They may disclose ill treatment by someone else (Note that a vulnerable adult is also open to financial abuse in a way that a child isn't).

In these circumstances the general principles are

- That the person disclosing should be listened to
- The listener should not promise to keep any secrets

- The listener should not ask leading questions or try to investigate
  - It is useful to make some verbatim notes
  - Another adult should be consulted immediately.
1. A **concerned adult** should talk to the Area Meeting's **Safeguarding Coordinator/s**.
  2. The role of the **Safeguarding Coordinator** role is to seek advice from Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (**CCPAS**) (**24 hour confidential helpline is 0845 1204550**), collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass on this information to **Social Services** (telephone **0114 2734855**) or the **police**.
  3. It is the **Social Services'** task to investigate the matter under appropriate legislation and regulation.

## 7. Support for those affected by abuse

We are committed to encouraging and supporting in the provision of pastoral care and support to those attending the meeting who have been affected by abuse, working with the statutory agencies as appropriate.

## 8. Supervision of offenders

As our meeting is open and welcoming to all, there may be occasions where someone who poses a risk to children, young people or vulnerable adults may want to join in with activities or become part of the life of the meeting. The meeting manages this risk by creating clear policies and a code of agreed behaviour the individual must follow to provide a safe environment for all.

Key elements of managing this risk are:

- Details about a convicted offender should only be shared with key individuals, Safeguarding Coordinator/s, and those with leadership responsibilities for children and young people and vulnerable adults. As well as addressing safeguarding issues this is done to promote greater understanding and support for the individual.
- The person who poses a risk should never be on their own with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

## 9. Commitment to review

The Safeguarding Coordinator/s will work with the Sheffield and Balby Area Quaker Meeting Trustees, CYPWC and wider meeting to ensure that the policy is reviewed once every 2 years (next review: January 2017).

## 10. Appendix

**Copies of this policy** are available on the Sheffield Central website. .

### Definitions

'*Children*' refers to the legal definition of children which is up to the age of 18.

'*Young people*' is not a legal term but a way of referring to older children/young adults in our Meeting.

'*Vulnerable adult*' refers to an adult over 18 'who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'. Department of Health and Home Office (March 2000)

### Safeguarding Resources

The Area meeting has membership of CCPAS (Churches Child Protection Advisory Service). Additional resources and information to support safeguarding are available on their website.

# Activities with children

The CYPWC and the safeguarding coordinators distinguish between formal and informal activities, using these descriptions.

## **Formal activity**

- Applies to any children's activity event, on-site or off-site, being undertaken in the name of Sheffield Meeting in which children are **supervised by adults other than their parents/carers**.
- Organised on behalf of the Meeting House, with the support/knowledge of the CYPCC and the Safeguarding Coordinators.
- Organised by two group leaders who ensure all Health and Safety and Safeguarding requirements are met in terms of DBS, appropriate group size/ratios appropriate to age/activity, contact numbers, risk assessment and parental consent for medical/photos/transport arrangements.
- Activity is covered by Meeting House insurance so long as leaders work within the Safeguarding policy guidelines.
- Because of all the above - needs organising in advance.

## **Informal social activity**

- Families getting together with their children to do something together in their own time.
- **Adults are responsible for their children/young people** and understand that the activity is not being formally supervised or undertaken by the Meeting.

*This document is based on a model safeguarding policy supplied by the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service.*

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