QiB Policy: Safeguarding policy

One of the purposes of Quakers in Britain is the furtherance of the general religious and charitable purposes of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain and beyond. This policy is designed to support its safeguarding of children, young people, and adults at risk in the activities it undertakes in pursuit of this object.

This document consolidates and replaces our existing QiB policies on Safeguarding, Online Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment.

“Quakers in Britain” or “QiB” is used throughout this document as the name for: Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

1. Purpose

QiB is committed to protecting from harm children, young people and adults at risk engaged in Quaker activities, wherever contact is made with Quakers and whether participants are present with each other at a venue or together online.

This policy statement outlines our approach and the principles that underpin it for staff and volunteers, as well as children, young people, and adults at risk, and their families and carers.

2. Scope

The policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Quakers, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, those receiving grant funding, and groups that use space in QiB premises.

For staff members, compliance with the policy is a condition of employment with QiB. For volunteers, compliance is a condition of continuing in service.

Our approach to safeguarding encompasses:
Our care for participants in our activities who are vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.

Our approach to online safeguarding encompasses:
Our care for children, young people, and adults at risk from harm in relation to online communication with our staff and volunteers.

Our approach to safer recruitment encompasses:
Recruitment of all QiB staff and volunteers, recognising that there are different requirements according to their role and activity.

We have a separate policy on social media use, which is available on the Policies & Procedures page of the QIB intranet or on request from QiB staff.

Quaker Area Meetings and other similar bodies are independent charities with their own safeguarding and safer recruitment policies and procedures.

3. Definitions

- 'Adult at risk' - Someone who may need help because they have care and support needs and is unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation.
- 'Child' and 'Young person' both refer to someone under the age of 18.
- 'Online communication' - Emails, video meetings, online events, and the use of electronic devices and applications to communicate via and access the Internet.
- 'Online safeguarding' - Protecting children, young people and adults from harm in the online environment, such as: bullying and harassment, sexual exploitation and grooming, discrimination and abuse on the grounds of any protected characteristic, sharing of illegal and inappropriate imagery, cyberstalking, impersonation and hacking, disinformation and misinformation, the oversharing of personal information, financial abuse such as exerting improper pressure regarding a person's finances.
- 'Position of Trust' – See Sexual Offences Act 2003, c 42 Part 1, Sections 21-24, expanded by Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 c 32 Part 2, Chapter 4, Section 47 to describe the status of those who coach, teach, train, supervise or instruct others, on a regular basis, in a religion. This covers anyone volunteering to support QiB events for children and young people.
- 'Safer Recruitment' - The term used to describe QiB's recruitment policies and procedures for staff and volunteers which prioritise robust safeguarding checks.
- 'Volunteers' – Those who undertake voluntary roles in events, activities and other work arranged or overseen by QIB, including Elders, Pastoral Care volunteers, volunteers working with children and young people, Committee Members and Trustees.
- 'Vulnerable groups' – Groups which include children, young people, or adults at risk.

4. Policy Principles & Statement

The following principles underpin QiB's approach:

4.1. Quakers believe that:

- Children, young people and adults at risk should never experience abuse of any kind.
- All adults and children deserve respect, value and care appropriate to their needs.
- There is 'that of God' in everyone. Our care extends to victims of abuse, those who are vulnerable to abuse and perpetrators of abuse.
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk; to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

4.2. Quakers recognise that:

- The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take.
- All children and adults, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children and adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.
- Volunteers at young people's meetings or youth groups, or adult volunteers at any form of Quaker event (residential or otherwise) are in a "position of trust"; if they were to engage in sexual activity with a 16- or 17-year-old participant in such an event, for example, they would be committing an offence under the Sexual Offences Act, regardless of whether that sexual activity was consensual.

4.3. Policy Statement:

- In the event of an incident or disclosure of abuse, the welfare of the child or young person or adult at risk is paramount.

- If anyone has a concern about a child, young person or adult at risk they will act without delay, assess the urgency of the situation, and follow our Safeguarding

Advice on dealing with an incident can be obtained from the BYM Safeguarding Officer at safe@quaker.org.uk or from the safeguarding agency Thirtyone:Eight telephone helpline: 0303 003 1111.

4.4. We will seek to children safe, young people and adults safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them.
- recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers in accordance with Safer Recruitment procedures, assessing every role for DBS eligibility, following UK Government guidance, and, where relevant, ensuring the appropriate DBS certificate is obtained before a role-holder's appointment is confirmed.
- holding interviews following QIB's prescribed procedure for all roles requiring an Enhanced level DBS check or above.
- building a safeguarding culture where staff, volunteers, adults at risk, children, young people, their families and carers treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.
- promoting and fostering a culture of 'informed vigilance' about the dangers of possible abuse, adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice, setting clear expectations of staff and volunteers through our policies and procedures, and creating an environment where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- fostering a culture of good practice in relation to activities promoted by Quaker meetings and groups.

- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through support and role-appropriate safeguarding training.
- maintaining a safeguarding network including the Safeguarding Officer, departmental Safeguarding Champions, and a designated lead Trustee/board member for Safeguarding for mutual support and to embed good practice and continued learning.
- ensuring all staff and volunteers know when and how they should report a concern, what action to take, and when to inform a statutory agency.
- always respecting a person's right to confidentiality unless abuse or harm is suspected or disclosed.
- responding without delay to any allegation or complaint that is made that suggests that a child, young person or adult may have been harmed or is at risk of harm.
- keeping an open mind when allegations emerge, despite friendships and reputations.
- cooperating fully with Police and other statutory agencies in the investigation of abuse.
- recording, storing, using, and destroying information professionally and securely, in line with GDPR legislation and guidance.
- sharing safeguarding information and good practice with vulnerable groups, their families and carers; telling them about measures in place to keep them safe prior to events.
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have an Anti-Bullying Procedure, available on the Policies and Procedures page of the QiB Intranet and website, to help us deal effectively with any incidents arising. The website page is here.
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- providing a safe physical environment for children, young people, adults at risk, staff and volunteers, in or out of Quaker buildings, by applying Health and Safety measures in line with the law and regulatory guidance and with appropriate insurance.
- where someone is known to have harmed someone or to pose a risk to children, young people or adults, taking appropriate action to protect all vulnerable groups. Such a person will only be able to attend centrally managed activities if appropriate pastoral care can be put in place to support them, along with robust and effective risk-management during the event.
- issuing Community Agreements (which incorporate behavioural agreements) which must be accepted at the point of booking setting out what is expected in relation to safeguarding of those joining QiB events, whether in person or online.

4.5. And online:

- risk-assessing all online events to make sure appropriate safeguards are in place.
- maintaining clear and open relationships with parents and/or carers regarding communication with them and their children, young people, or adults at risk.
- being friendly and professional in all communications, not over-familiar or personal.
- not sharing personal information or requesting or responding to any personal information from a child or young person or adult at risk, other than that which might be essential in the course of their work or service.
- following all QiB's procedures relating to when and how to communicate electronically or by mobile phone with children, young people, and adults at risk.
- not using electronic or mobile phone communication to build one-to-one relationships.
- only using equipment provided by the organisation to communicate with children, young

people and adults at risk.
- not deleting records of electronic contact with individuals or groups of children, young people or vulnerable adults, including text messages and emails, in accordance with our Safeguarding retention policy. See also the 'Acceptable IT use policy' and 'Youth and Families Events Retention policy' (all available on request).
- not using visual communications (Zoom, WhatsApp video etc) to communicate with children and young people, unless for specific pre-planned events, which will be supervised by trained staff and volunteers.
- only downloading, accessing and using video communications tools and applications as authorised by QiB.

5. Legal/regulatory and governance context

This policy is grounded in legislation and regulations applicable in England, Wales, and Scotland and established best practice relating to this policy area. Key references include:

5.1. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19.

5.2. The Sexual Offences Act 2003

5.3. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022

5.4. The Care Act 2014

5.5. UK Government DBS Eligibility Guidance

6. Processes & Procedures and Related QiB policies and Governance documents

Processes and procedure documents relating to this policy, which may be modified and updated independently of it, are available here: *Safeguarding Procedures and Guidance for Staff and Volunteers* https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/safeguarding or on request from a member of QiB staff.

Related QiB policies and other governance documents listed below are available here: https://www.quaker.org.uk/communities/children-and-young-people-2/i-work-with-children-and-young-people-in-a-quaker-setting/policies-procedures

- How to deal with disclosures and concerns about a child, young person or adult at risk.
- Safeguarding data management system user protocol. (available from Safeguarding Officer).
- Role description for the BYM Safeguarding Officer.
- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers.
- Recording concerns and information sharing.

- Child protection records retention and storage.
- Expectations of Volunteers and Staff working with children.
- Behaviour codes for children and young people.
- Photography and sharing images guidance.
- Safer recruitment.
- Anti-bullying.
- Managing complaints.
- Whistleblowing.
- Health and safety.
- Induction, training, supervision and support.
- Adult to child supervision ratios.

Policy Ends

Policy Management Information

Review

This policy is subject to review every year, but may be reviewed ad hoc if, for example:

- there is an incident within the policy area OR there are external changes (eg regulations or legislation) which warrant it;

OR

- the policy is found to have been materially breached.

Policy governance

The following chart sets out the governance framework around this policy:

Responsible	Mark Mitchell, Safeguarding Officer; Suzy Lidbury, Head of Governance
Accountable	Siobhan Haire, Deputy Recording Clerk (designated safeguarding lead); Paul Parker, Recording Clerk
Consulted	31:8, external advisors; Children, Young People & Families team
Informed	QiB staff, volunteers, grant recipients, and users of QiB premises
Governance Review, Approval & Monitoring	BYM Trustees

Document control

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Role for QiB: Governance Manager

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Approved by minute: BYMT/26/09/09.