

Forest Hill Quaker Meeting Safeguarding Procedures

Children & Young People

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**PROCEDURES FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG
PEOPLE AT FOREST HILL MEETING
March 2016 (V1c)**

**These Procedures should be read in conjunction with
South East London Area Meeting Safeguarding Policy**

A: Statement of Intent

Our intent in regard to safeguarding is for all Friends in Forest Hill Quaker Meeting to work together to keep our children and young people safe from physical harm and sexual or psychological abuse, and to minimise any risks to them. We recognise that these risk cannot be totally eliminated but can be minimised. We need to be clear about the limits of our resources, and the limits of safeguarding, that any of the procedures we adopt can bring. Safeguarding, or any aspect of it, is not a panacea which will automatically make our children safe. Safeguarding is a responsibility which we all share. The strength of safeguarding lies in it being the shared responsibility of all of us; where we are all aware, mindful, and are paying attention. This cannot be overstated.

B: The Context of Safeguarding in Forest Hill Quaker Meeting

Parents and adult carers bring their children to Sunday Meetings for Worship. The children have a separate Meeting from the adults but parents or adult carers remain on-site in a separate room. Whilst in the Children's Meeting the children are the responsibility of volunteers who are drawn from Forest Hill Meeting for Worship. The volunteers are either Friends or Attenders (members or attending non-members) and are often one or more of the parents or carers. The length of time the children are in the care of the volunteers is normally around 50 minutes. At times outside of these Children's Meetings children are in the care of, and are the responsibility of, their parents or adult carers.

Other similar arrangements will be made from time to time for other occasional activities on Meeting House premises, or off-site, where children are separated from their parents or adult carers. These arrangements need to be risk assessed and planned on a case-by-case basis.

C: Safeguarding

Safeguarding covers all issues relating to the security and safety of our children, and includes:

- Health and safety
- The suitability of Meeting House premises, as well as on-site equipment and other physical resources
- The behaviour of all adults and children attending Forest Hill Quaker events and activities

D: How we are organised

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked volunteer **Facilitators** and non-DBS checked volunteer **Helpers** facilitate or assist in sessions with the children and young people.

Elders & Overseers jointly are responsible for taking oversight of safeguarding in the Meeting and for organising safeguarding training for volunteers and the Meeting as a whole. Currently Elders and Overseers jointly oversee the recruitment and verifying of the DBS checked volunteers and non-DBS checked volunteer Helpers along with the creation of a rota of volunteers to work with the children and young people. These roles are currently delegated to one or more Elders or Overseers.

Safeguarding Reporting Advisors who are appointed by Local Meeting from current serving Elders and Overseers. The names and contact details of these Friends are made known to the Meeting.

The **Children and Young People Committee (CYPC)** organises the programme and activities for the children and young people.

E: Volunteers

This section covers both DBS checked **Facilitator** and non-DBS checked **Helper** volunteers.

1. Children and Young People's Work DBS checked Facilitator volunteers

Recruitment

Friends and Attenders will be encouraged to volunteer to help run Children's Meeting regularly.

For Friends or Attenders wishing to be volunteer application forms are kept in a folder in the Meeting House lobby. A copy of this form is contained in the appendix at the end of these Procedures. Once completed this form should be given to one of the Elders, Overseers, or CYPC members responsible for DBS checking – the DBS Verifiers.

Interviewing and References

Once the form is received the prospective volunteer meets with one of the DBS Verifiers to discuss Children's Meeting and their role in it. The interview will include talking about their experience of working with children and young people, their reasons for volunteering to help, and whether they have any special skills that could be incorporated into the children's programme. The roles and duties of volunteers on the rota will also be discussed. The applicant will also be given copies of the **Area Meeting Safeguarding Policy** and these **Safeguarding Procedures**.

The DBS Verifier will send the referee/s named on the form a request for a reference. If the results of the interview and reference/s are satisfactory, and once a satisfactory certificate from the DBS check has been received, the DBS Verifier or member of CYPC will invite the volunteer onto the main Children's Meeting rota. In the meantime they will be asked to assist other DBS checked volunteers for a few sessions.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check

Before a volunteer can lead or facilitate a children's meeting they must obtain a DBS certificate.

If the volunteer has already registered with DBS the online Update Service, one of the Verifiers can check their registration and status on-line.

A DBS check can be undertaken through the Churches Agency for Safeguarding.

DBS checking forms are held by the DBS Verifiers. The names of the Verifiers can be obtained from any member of the **Children and Young People Committee** or an **Elder or Overseer**. Volunteers complete a DBS application form and arrange with a Verifier to meet and bring their completed form and supporting documentation.

Once the form has been verified it is sent to the Churches Agency for Safeguarding by the Verifier. The Volunteer will then receive a copy of the disclosure certificate in the post, which they will need to show to a DBS Verifier.

Volunteers are strongly advised to register with the DBS Update Service on-line. It is free for volunteers and allows the certificate to continue indefinitely.

Verifiers

Verifiers are responsible for checking that the details on the DBS form are correct and that the supporting documentation covers all the aspects required and matches with the details entered on the DBS application form. Forest Hill Elders & Overseers, together with Forest Hill Local Meeting and South East Area Meeting, will ensure that training is provided to Verifiers to support them in their role.

What we do if a DBS disclosure certificate details past convictions

In order to comply with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 an organisation must ensure that all those applying to work whether in a paid or voluntary position are treated fairly. This means that having a criminal record does not necessarily mean an individual cannot volunteer. **However, under UK law any conviction related to the abuse of a child or adult, or being listed in one of the two disclosure Barred Lists, automatically precludes a volunteer from working with children or vulnerable adults.**

If we receive a disclosure which details past convictions the Verifier will contact CCPAS for advice and follow their recommendations which may involve an independent risk assessment (see **I:** below for contact details). The Verifier can consider discussing this with Joint Elders and Overseers who can hold a confidential Meeting for Clearness if this is appropriate. Issues of confidentiality should be taken into account.

Trial period

DBS checked volunteers will all have the opportunity to work alongside existing volunteers before they are asked to lead a session. If new or existing volunteers have any concerns they should raise these with the CYPC Convenor.

2. Children and Young People's Helpers

A separate list will be kept of people who are happy to work as Helpers in the children and young people's meeting. These Helpers will:

- Help the volunteer leader with the CYP meeting, but not plan the activity or take responsibility for it.
- Be supervised all the time by a DBS checked volunteer Facilitator and never be alone with the children.
- In the event of a child or young person being distressed, disruptive, or a small child needing the toilet the Helper can take the child to the parent in Meeting; or go to get the parent to come to the children's room.
- Be recruited by filling in a simple form giving contact details and information about what they would like to do (a copy of this form is in the appendix at the end of these Procedures).

Record Keeping

A list of **Helpers** and DBS checked volunteer **Facilitators** will be kept by Elders & Overseers and shared with CYPC.

3. All Volunteers

Support and training

In the children's room there are many resources available including ideas about sessions to run. There are also books in the library about caring for our children and young people. There are regular opportunities for volunteers to attend Quaker run training focusing on children and young people. CYPC will also arrange training as needed. Elders & Overseers will arrange safeguarding training in liaison with CYPC. The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCAPS) 0845 120 4550, email info@ccpas.co.uk offer short safeguarding training courses.

Appropriate behaviour

Volunteers need to work with children and young people in an appropriate way. It is important that children and young people are respected and listened to. Children and young people's privacy, and physical and psychological boundaries, should be respected. We need to remain alert as to how we touch children; it is best to allow the child to make the first approach and we should always carefully challenge what we feel to be inappropriate touching by others.

We need to ensure that all children and young people feel included and an equal part of Meeting. To ensure that every child feels cared for it is important to maintain good discipline and appropriate boundaries between the children ourselves.

If you have any concerns or questions talk to one of the Safeguarding Reporting Advisors, or an Elder or Overseer.

Dealing with problems

If a volunteer Helper or Facilitator is concerned about an issue with the children and young people, another volunteer, or any other issue, there are a number of sources of support:

- A safeguarding concern about a child or volunteer should be taken to a Safeguarding Reporting Advisor, or an Elder or Overseer.
- General issues, e.g. discipline, or ideas for sessions, should be taken to the Convenors of Children's Committee or one of the other members of the CYPC.

See also **H: What to do when something goes wrong** below.

F: Record keeping

CYPC will keep a list of all children and young people involved in the Meeting. This is kept securely by the Convenor of CYPC. It is updated at CYPC meetings and will not be emailed to avoid any potential loss of sensitive information about our children.

There is also a log-book of the names of children and young people in the Meeting that should be completed each week with the details of the children who have attended that week. In the log-book there is space to note down activities that volunteers have undertaken with the children and young people along with any issues of note.

The accident book for the meeting will be used to note any accidents that occur and the action that was taken.

G: The safety of our children and young people

During Meeting for Worship and notices afterwards the children and young people are the responsibility of the volunteer Facilitators on the rota. After notices the children and young people are the responsibility of their parents or adult carers.

Each week on the rota, in school term time, there should be three volunteers consisting of at least two DBS checked volunteers along with a Helper; and in the school holidays a DBS checked volunteer with a Helper for a single combined-age group. If one DBS checked volunteer is responsible for more than six children (or three children under the age of 2) an additional DBS checked volunteer or parent should be sought from Meeting for Worship.

Whilst in the Children & Young People's Meeting children and young people should be supervised by a DBS checked volunteer at all times. If for any reason a DBS checked volunteer needs to leave the children and young people additional support should be sought from the meeting.

If a child or young person is distressed, or causing distress to others, a Helper can get the parent or guardian from the Meeting Room; or take the child to the Meeting Room. If a young child needs to go to the toilet the Helper can take them to their parents. Children over the age of 5 can go to the toilet unsupervised, one at a time, during Meeting for Worship.

During Meeting for Worship and notices the Doorkeeper and/or duty Door Elder ensures that both front doors of the Meeting House are closed with the Yale latch.

If a child or young person has an accident help should be sought from the Meeting and, if necessary, first aid should be administered with the consent of the parent or carer. The details should be noted in the accident book. A report form is given in the appendix to these Procedures.

Activities

Volunteer Facilitators will ensure they assess the risks involved in any activities – including using scissors or playing very active games. It is not appropriate for the children and young people to climb on the furniture.

If activities are arranged outside normal Meeting for Worship – e.g. during an Area Meeting, a wedding, or a trip outside the Meeting House appropriate risk assessments and consent forms will be used (see appendix).

Risk Assessments

Taking care of children, young people and vulnerable adults involves taking responsibility for their well-being at all times, being prepared for unforeseen eventualities, anticipating situations where they could be harmed, and taking steps to minimise the risks.

CYPC will undertake risk assessments for any activities which take place outside the normal Children's Meeting. This will be completed using a simple form identifying any risks that could be encountered, the action required, the person responsible to carry this out and when any action has been completed (see appendix). Regular out of Meeting activities will have an assessment which can be used each time the activity takes place.

CYPC will liaise with Premises Committee in relation to safety issues relating to the building and garden.

After Meeting for Worship

Children under the age of 10 should not be involved in the preparation of hot drinks. Children can only take hot drinks with the permission of their parents. When the Meeting House is busy after Meeting everyone attending the meeting should be aware of potential safety issues – e.g. not running in a busy area, not leaving the front door open and unattended, etc..

If anyone has a concern relating to the safety of a child or young person they should talk to one of the Elder or Overseer Safeguarding Reporting Advisors

H: What to do when things go wrong – inappropriate or abusive behaviour of an adult

Whilst ensuring we protect the child or children concerned we need to ensure that, as far as is possible, we are mindful of the well-being of all concerned – including any adults accused of inappropriate or abusive behaviour. Quakers believe that whilst we may not condone the conduct or behaviour of an individual we still respect the person, seeking ‘that of God within everyone’.

We need to consider the possibility that misunderstandings may have occurred, or that an adult accused was not sufficiently aware that their behaviour was inappropriate or unintentionally abusive.

In coming to an understanding of what has occurred during any incident it may be necessary and appropriate to ensure that we speak directly to the child or children along with any adults involved in order to establish exactly what has transpired. We should be cautious of relying on third-hand accounts and hearsay, and of jumping to conclusions. When speaking with a child or children ensure that at least two adults are present, one of whom should be DBS checked. Consideration should also be given to having parents or guardians present.

Depending on the nature of the alleged incident it may be in the best interests of all involved or concerned, including the adult/s accused, to remove them from contact with children until the matter has been resolved.

Unacceptable behaviours

There are two key descriptions of unacceptable behaviour, although in reality they may overlap. These are **inappropriate behaviour** and **abusive behaviour** (the latter is also commonly known as ‘child abuse’).

Inappropriate behaviour is that behaviour which does not respect and listen to children, in which the child’s boundaries and privacy not are respected, where children are addressed or touched in a way which does not respect their boundaries and privacy.

Abusive behaviour occurs when the perpetrator attempts to manipulate and control a victim, either by bullying or influencing the victim to participate in inappropriate behaviours, such as sexual or semi-sexual acts. Abusive behaviour can also involve acts of physical or psychological aggression or violence.

Reporting allegations of inappropriate and abusive behaviour

For Children

Children can report inappropriate or abusive behaviour to any adult or adults.

For Adults

If an adult observes inappropriate or abusive behaviour of another adult or such behaviour is reported to them by a child – and depending on the nature of the behaviour – it may be appropriate to inform a Safeguarding Reporting Advisor who is responsible for taking action. The first priority is the protection of the child/ren. It may be necessary to get the support and counsel of other adults in the Meeting including other Elders and Overseers. In some circumstances it may be necessary to convene a meeting of Joint Elders & Overseers. None of these steps

should hinder a timely and immediate response but neither should any action be ill-considered or hasty.

What to do when an incident of inappropriate or abusive behaviour is reported

The procedures below are intended only as guidance as each situation, along with the individuals involved, will require different responses. In order of priority, the following steps need to be taken:

1. Protecting the child/children and managing any risk to them
2. Taking advice from the Safeguarding Reporting Advisors and/or other knowledgeable Friends
3. Reaching a decision about what action to take
4. Taking action

Considering reports of inappropriate and abusive behaviour

It is important that Friends should not take decisions about what action to take alone but should take them with advice and guidance from other appropriately informed Friends; and Friends are strongly encouraged to take advice from the Safeguarding reporting Advisors. It may be necessary to convene a joint meeting of Elders and Overseers, even if such a meeting has to be convened urgently and with only a few Friends present. In any decisions the following will need to be considered:

- Who should inform the parents or guardians of the child/ren
- Whether it is necessary to meet with the child/ren to establish the exact circumstances and who this should be (more than one adult needs to be present)
- Whether it is necessary to meet with alleged perpetrator to establish the exact circumstances of the allegation, and decide who this should be (more than one adult needs to be present). When arranging this meeting the accused individual should be given the option to have another adult of their choice present with them
- What action should be taken to protect the child/ren and resolve the situation including whether the accused adult should be suspended from contact with children
- Whether counselling and support may be required for those involved
- Whether the authorities should be informed in order to ensure protection of the child/ren

In any event Elders & Overseers will need to be informed. An accurate written record will need to be made of all considerations, decisions, action taken – along with the outcomes of each incident.

Inappropriate Behaviour – what to do when reported

Inappropriate behaviour needs to be addressed directly with the adult concerned and, dependent on the circumstances, it may be appropriate to involve another adult when raising the issue with the individual. It should be made clear that repetition of the inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated. We should be mindful that misunderstandings can occur. As Advices & Queries 17. advises “Think it possible you may be mistaken”.

Elders & Overseers should consider the appropriateness of what, and with whom, information about the incident should be shared, including the child/ren’s parent or guardian and CYPC members.

Abusive Behaviour – what to do when reported

There is no legal requirement for us, individually or corporately, to report abuse or abusive behaviour to the authorities unless we believe that a child or other children may be at risk of continuing abuse. This is a **child protection** issue and is different from safeguarding. Safeguarding our children whilst they are in our care is the responsibility of all of us in Forest Hill Meeting. Child protection is the responsibility of authorities legally appointed with this task and include the police, social services, and local authorities.

It is **very important** you also read the section on **Suspicious of abuse happening outside the Meeting** below.

If we consider the abuse is serious, or we believe there is a continuing risk to a child or other children, then we need to contact the NSPCC Helpline for advice 0808 800 5000, Text 88858, Email help@nspcc.org.uk ; or the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCAPS) 0845 120 4550, email info@ccpas.co.uk for guidance on how to proceed. Any abusive behaviour must be reported to a Safeguarding Reporting Coordinator.

Suspicious of abuse happening outside the Meeting

It may occur that a child or children who attends our Meeting gives rise to a suspicion that abuse may be occurring outside the Meeting.

There is no legal requirement for us, individually or corporately, to report abusive behaviour to the authorities unless we believe that a child or other children may be at risk of continuing abuse. However, we do have a moral imperative to act in the best interests of those more vulnerable than us, including children.

Without witnessing the abuse taking place first hand it is extremely difficult to identify whether a child is being abused. Even when there are physical signs such as scars or injuries these may be from other entirely innocent causes. By its very nature abuse will be covert and secretive and often the victim is manipulated into denying the behaviour of the perpetrator and so may try to hide the fact of abuse from others. In many instances victims are manipulated into believing that the actions of the perpetrator are 'normal' or unexceptional and so they may come to believe that the abuse they are suffering is acceptable. Children are particularly vulnerable in this respect.

Although there are a known range of behaviours that abused children often exhibit it is very difficult to ascertain from a child's behaviour whether abuse is taking place, even for experienced professionals in this field. There are a range of behaviours which can easily be attributed to other psychological or physical conditions and so great caution needs to be exercised.

In the past there have been cases of abuse mistakenly being identified, the outcomes from which caused great damage and distress to adults and children alike. Indeed, Quakers are not excepted, and in 1991 some Quaker families on the island of Orkney were wrongly accused of child abuse by the authorities.

When we have not witnessed any abuse first hand and can only rely on hearsay, third-hand accounts, and our own suspicions we have to exercise extreme caution in reporting any suspicions.

Although it may be necessary to take action without delay **any suspicions of abuse should be notified to Elders & Overseers** who can also convene a special meeting to consider what action should be taken. The Area Meeting Safeguarding Coordinator also needs to be informed.

The above section ‘What to do when things go wrong’ will be published in a summary form in a leaflet available to everyone attending our Meeting.

I: Sources of external support

NSPCC Helpline for advice 0808 800 5000, Text 88858, Email help@nspcc.org.uk .

Churches’ Child Protection Advisory Service. (CCPAS) who are an independent Christian childcare charity working across the faith sector. Please ring 0845 120 4550, visit www.ccpas.co.uk/or email info@ccpas.co.uk .

CCPAS, together with the Lucy Faithful Foundation, have produced materials to assist faith communities in working with offenders, including a DVD, *SOS Supporting Offenders Safely*, and a booklet, *Help... a sex offender has joined my church*. CCPAS has also produced *Safe and Secure*, ten safeguarding standards for faith communities, which contains both policies and procedures, as well as an hour long safeguarding DVD drama documentary set around the 10 standards. CCPAS also offer safeguarding training courses.

“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. Seek for them as for yourself a full development of God’s gifts and the abundant life Jesus tells us can be ours. How do you share your deepest beliefs with them, while leaving them free to develop as the spirit of God may lead them? Do you invite them to share their insights with you? Are you ready both to learn from them and to accept your responsibilities towards them?”

Advice and Query 19

Quaker Faith & Practice

Annex
Role Descriptions for Volunteers
Forest Hill Children's Work Crib Sheet

Role description for volunteers and helpers with the children and young people's groups at Forest Hill Meeting

Forest Hill Local Meeting holds a Children's Meeting each week. Our aim is that during term time there are at least two DBS verified volunteers and a helper every week in our Children's Meeting, which may divide into different age groups depending on numbers. In the holidays one volunteer and a helper run a play session.

Volunteers prepare and lead the activities and are responsible for the session. Helpers work under the supervision of verified volunteers, do not lead activities, and are never alone with children.

We run occasional activities off the premises e.g. winter fire and film evenings, during which the children and young people are the responsibility of their parents or carers.

Children and Young People's Committee (CYPC) organise the children's work and provide support and training for the volunteers, as well as deciding on the term's theme. Elders & Overseers jointly take responsibility for organising rotas and arranging recruitment. CYPC is supported and guided by the Overseers of the Meeting, with at least one member who belongs to both groups and regular joint meetings.

Volunteers and helpers are e-mailed before each term and asked for the dates they are available and the age-group they would prefer. They are then allocated between one and three Sundays for the children's or young people's group. The rota is e-mailed to all volunteers and helpers and displayed on the notice board in the children's room. If the dates on the rota are inconvenient, it is the responsibility of volunteers and helpers to contact other people on the rota and arrange a swap.

There is a theme for each term (such as 'Influential Quakers' or 'Families'), which we encourage all volunteers to contribute to. Most volunteers who are leading prepare the session in advance and perhaps share plans with the helper for the session.

Volunteers who are new to the meeting begin in a helping role first so that they can observe more experienced volunteers. The Children and Young People's Committee (CYPC) are happy to help volunteers with advice and suggestions. In addition, there is a folder of ideas from Friends' House, along with many books and other resources, which are kept in the children's room. Details of courses about working with children (e.g. about safe guarding or Godly Play) are also circulated to volunteers.

It is advised that the leading volunteer arrives before the children's session begins at 10:30 am, so that the resources can be set out. There is a 'crib sheet' on the table with reminders about important procedures (e.g. if a child asks to go to the toilet). The children's ground rules are also displayed on the notice board. As the children arrive, most leaders start with a welcoming activity in which everyone can introduce themselves and play a short game (5-10 minutes). There is usually then some 'input' which relates to the theme of the session (10-30 minutes, depending on the ages of the children and young people). Finally there is a practical activity (e.g. building with Lego, art, playing) This is a good time to note the participants' names, etc. in the register. At 11:15 am the group prepares to join the main adults' meeting at 11:20.

During the notices, at least two volunteers or a volunteer and helper need to supervise any children who wish to play. At the end of the notices, they may need to alert the parents and carers that the children's group has ended. Any issues that arose during the session should be noted in the register and brought to the attention of the duty overseer and the relevant parents and carers. Any child safeguarding concerns should be brought to the immediate attention of the Safeguarding Reporting Advisors, or an Elder or Overseer, (i.e. as soon as possible on the same day). Lastly, it is very helpful if a quick outline of the session is subsequently shared with the other volunteers by e-mail. It saves repetition and many people also find it encouraging and interesting!

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE VOLUNTEER ON APPOINTMENT

I understand the nature of the work I am agreeing to do with children/young people. I have received a copy of Forest Hill Quaker Meeting's Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and understand that I must follow the procedures set down. I understand that it is the duty of every member of the Meeting, including myself, to safeguard the wellbeing of all young people with whom we come into contact. I know what action to take if abuse is disclosed or discovered. I agree to undertake such training as is recommended by the Children and Young People's Committee.

Signed.....Date.....

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE CONVENOR OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE ON BEHALF OF THE MEETING

In asking you to complete this form we welcome you wholeheartedly to this work and hope you will find it rewarding. We agree to provide support and supervision and to encourage you in receiving training.

Signed.....Date.....

Forest Hill children's work crib sheet

1. There should be a verified volunteer and at least one helper working with the children, and a verified volunteer with the older group. If there are not enough adults then go into meeting and ask for another helper.
2. If a child needs to go to the toilet then:
If they are old enough to go to by themselves then the helper should watch them down the corridor and back.

If they need help in the toilet then the helper should take them to the Meeting Room door and ask the parent to come out.
3. If a child is unhappy or disruptive and the adults in the Children's Meeting can't sort things out then the helper should go to the Meeting Room and ask the parent to come out.

Enjoy your session.

If you need any help ask a member of the Children and Young People's Committee.

It is the duty of everyone in the Meeting to safeguard the wellbeing of all our young people.

If we have any concerns contact one of the Safeguarding Reporting Advisors in this Meeting – Simon Simpson, Denise James-Mason and Joanna Scott; or any Elder or Overseer.