

## BRF Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

BRF's safeguarding policy and procedures should be read in conjunction with BRF's safeguarding statement and the Designated Safeguarding Officer and Designated Safeguarding Trustee role descriptions.

The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) is committed to the care, nurture and protection of all the communities it serves. BRF believes that the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is of paramount importance and that, at all times and in all situations, any child, young person or vulnerable adult with whom we are working has the right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice that could result in them being harmed or at risk of harm.

BRF is committed to the nurture, protection and safekeeping of all the children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom its staff come into contact. It accepts its responsibility to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and to report any abuse that is suspected or discovered. It undertakes to provide appropriate supervision to ensure the above and recognises mutual accountability.

BRF strives to:

- promote a safer environment and culture for our staff and all they serve;
- safely recruit and support all those with any responsibility for those who are vulnerable;
- respond promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation;
- care pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations;
- respond appropriately to those who may pose a risk to others.

This document outlines BRF's commitment to safeguarding as it relates to, and is relevant to, BRF's programmes: Barnabas in Schools, Messy Church, Who Let The Dads Out?, Parenting for Faith and The Gift of Years. In addition, there is an awareness of the need to identify and support vulnerable donors. This policy and guidelines have been developed in line with the BRF Trustees' commitment to equality and diversity, and is underpinned by the following standards:

- The child, young person or vulnerable adult's needs come first.
- The child, young person or vulnerable adult's welfare and safety is everyone's responsibility.
- BRF staff in contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults will always work together with and respect other professionals' roles and responsibilities.
- No child, young person or vulnerable adult may be discriminated against on the grounds of ethnicity, religion, culture, class, sexual orientation, gender or disability.

This policy applies to all BRF staff, BRF volunteers and BRF Trustees.

### BRF's safeguarding guidelines

BRF's activities that engage with children consist of a range of programmes designed to nurture and resource the spiritual journey of children. Each BRF staff member involved in these programmes, and each freelance Barnabas in Schools team member, has a background of working with children professionally, and holds a DBS certificate. In addition, it is a requirement of the role that all volunteer Messy Church Regional Coordinators and Who Let The Dads Out? Regional Representatives hold a DBS certificate.

BRF's activity that engages with vulnerable adults centres around The Gift of Years, which is delivered through a network of Anna Chaplains. These chaplains are recruited and line managed by local churches and follow the safeguarding policy and procedures of their church or denomination.

In addition, vulnerable adults and young people may attend intergenerational activities such as Messy Church and Who Let The Dads Out?, or a BRF Quiet Day. In these situations, the leader of the local group will follow the policy and procedures of the local church or denomination.

The BRF guidelines on identifying and supporting vulnerable older donors provide useful advice for BRF staff involved in fundraising, which may include contact with vulnerable adults.

A safe recruitment process is used for all posts involving work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Where BRF staff work directly with children, young people and vulnerable adults on special events, in church services or in small groups, they agree to observe the highest professional standards in the preparation, delivery and content of sessions, as well as in the way they relate to the children, young people and vulnerable adults and other supervising adults.

BRF staff who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults agree to:

- promote excellence and enjoyment through a professional and well-prepared programme;
- observe the agreed ethos, standards, traditions and boundaries set by the church or organisation with which it is working;
- undertake to talk in advance with church ministers or children's work coordinators in charge of an event concerning the content and theme of the booking, and to comply fully with the local safeguarding policy of those bodies with which they are working;
- treat each child, young person or vulnerable adult with respect and attentiveness.

The BRF Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and Safeguarding Statement are available on the BRF website.

One BRF programme, Barnabas in Schools, works directly with children and has its own specific child protection policy:

[www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/pdfs/barnabasinschools\\_child\\_protection\\_policy.pdf](http://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/pdfs/barnabasinschools_child_protection_policy.pdf)

Guidance for local Messy Churches is set out on the website here:

[Safeguarding | Messy Church](#)

Guidance for local Who Let The Dads Out? groups is set out on the website here:

[Safeguarding | Who Let The Dads Out?](#)

Guidance for Anna Chaplains who are part of The Gift of Years network is found in the Anna Chaplaincy Handbook.

## Trustees

The Designated Safeguarding Trustee is Jane Whittington, who can be contacted care of Richard Fisher [richard.fisher@brf.org.uk](mailto:richard.fisher@brf.org.uk). In the event of there being an allegation against a member of BRF's staff or one of BRF's volunteers, the Designated Safeguarding Officer will inform the Designated Safeguarding Trustee and the Chair of Trustees.

Safeguarding is a standing item on the agenda of every Council meeting, when Trustees will be informed of any safeguarding issues that have arisen.

## Safeguarding concerns

All safeguarding concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously by Trustees, staff and volunteers and responded to appropriately.

### Procedure for BRF staff to follow in the event of a safeguarding concern

The Designated Safeguarding Officer for BRF is Sara Sheerin ([sara.sheerin@brf.org.uk](mailto:sara.sheerin@brf.org.uk) or 01865 319718), who should be contacted in the event of a safeguarding concern.

The procedure can be summed up as

#### **Recognise, Respond, Report, Record, Refer**

- Ensure you know how to **recognise** signs of abuse and neglect, attending training as necessary (see Appendix 1 for definitions of abuse, types of abuse, and neglect)
- **Respond** by telling someone your concerns if you see or hear anything that raises questions or issues for you; don't ignore it. You may need to respond within a short timescale. Think about whether a person may be at risk of immediate harm.
- If you are at all concerned that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is at risk or has been harmed, or are concerned about the behaviour of someone towards such a person, **report** this to your designated line manager, the BRF Designated Safeguarding Officer, or within the institution where those activities are taking place – for example, to the care home manager, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in a school or church safeguarding officer.
- **Record** your concerns and share them with the relevant people as soon as you can. Make a written record straightaway of what you have seen and heard and the circumstances. Include the date and time. N.B. Record the facts only and do not include opinion or inference.
- **Refer** to the appropriate statutory authority, children's services, adult social services or the police, who provide emergency services 24/7.

### Procedure for BRF to follow in the event of a safeguarding concern

- Refer any persons who have been dismissed from or left BRF's employment due to risk or harm to a child or vulnerable adult to the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the police as required.
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Trustee of any concerns as they arise.
- Ensure that the Charity Commission is informed of any incidents or cases of concern.

### Making a safeguarding complaint about a BRF staff member or volunteer

In the event that you wish to raise a concern or make a complaint related to safeguarding about a BRF staff member or volunteer, you can do so by contacting BRF's Designated Safeguarding Officer:

Sara Sheerin  
BRF  
15 The Chambers  
Vineyard  
Abingdon  
OX14 3FE  
[sarasheerin@brf.org.uk](mailto:sarasheerin@brf.org.uk)  
01865 319718

## **Raising safeguarding concerns about churches or organisations with which BRF works**

In the event that a BRF staff member is participating in an event organised or run by a local church, denomination or other organisation and has a concern regarding the safeguarding provision for that event, the BRF staff member must raise this with the organiser of the event.

- **Always be prepared to challenge unsafe practice or inappropriate behaviour by adults.**
- **Trust your judgement: if something doesn't seem right, then act appropriately.**
- **Remember... Recognise, Respond, Report, Record, Refer.**

The BRF Safeguarding Policy and Statement have been prepared with reference to the Department for Education's *Working Together to Safeguard Children – March 2015 (update 2017)* and the Charity Commission's *Safeguarding Children and Young People*.

This policy is reviewed annually by the BRF Trustees or when legislation changes.

*Approved by BRF's Trustees 5 October 2017*

*Reviewed January 2018*

## **Appendix 1 – Definitions of abuse, types of abuse, and neglect**

The following definitions are taken from the Department for Education's *Working Together to Safeguard Children – March 2015 (update 2017)*.

### **Abuse**

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

### **Physical abuse**

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

### **Emotional abuse**

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

### **Sexual abuse**

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

### **Child sexual exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

### **Neglect**

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;

- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.