

Safeguarding Vulnerable Beneficiaries

Policy

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility:

Safeguarding vulnerable beneficiaries of the Charity is a part of the wider role of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific vulnerable beneficiaries who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm. As Trustees, staff and volunteers, everyone has a responsibility to safeguard vulnerable beneficiaries and promote their welfare.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable beneficiaries and, in particular, protecting them from significant harm, depends upon effective, joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise.

Some of the most vulnerable beneficiaries and those at greatest risk of social exclusion, will need co-ordinated help from health, education, social care, and quite possibly the voluntary sector and other agencies, including justice services.

For those vulnerable beneficiaries who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, joint working is essential, to safeguard and promote their welfare and, where necessary, to help bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against them. All Trustees, staff and volunteers should:

- ✓ be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect;
- ✓ be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to vulnerable beneficiaries;
- ✓ contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the individual's welfare;

As one of its activities the Greek Orthodox Community of Bristol Charity seeks to assist vulnerable beneficiaries, promoting a holistic development.

In doing, so the charity takes seriously the welfare of all vulnerable beneficiaries who come onto its premises or who are involved in its activities.

The charity aims to ensure that they are welcomed into a safe, caring environment with a happy and friendly atmosphere.

The charity recognises that it is the responsibility of each one of its Trustees, staff and volunteers to prevent the neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse of vulnerable beneficiaries and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.

The charity is committed to a link with the statutory social services authorities as required.

Procedures

Concern for any vulnerable beneficiary of the Charity should be highlighted to the following "Designated Persons" :-

1. For Adults - the resident Community Priest and Community Chairperson or Chairperson of the "TAVITHA" Committee.
2. For Children - the resident Community Priest and the Chairperson of the School Committee or Head Teacher or Community Chairperson or Liaison Trustee with the School Committee.

They should then immediately notify any relevant statutory social services authorities as required and the Board of Trustees.

What to do if you have concerns about a child

You may have concerns about a child because of something you have seen or heard, or a child may choose to disclose something to you. If a child discloses information to you, you should:

- ✓ Not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to share this information and refer to Children's Social Care Services.
- ✓ Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- ✓ Accept what is said.
- ✓ Reassure the child, but only as far as is honest, don't make promises you may not be able to keep eg: *'Everything will be alright now'*, *'You'll never have to see that person again'*.
- ✓ Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the child refers to it. For example, you could say, *'You're not to blame'*.
- ✓ Do not interrogate the child; it is not your responsibility to investigate.
- ✓ Do not ask leading questions (eg: Did he touch your private parts?), ask open questions such as *'Anything else to tell me?'*
- ✓ Do not ask the child to repeat the information for another member of staff.
- ✓ Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.
- ✓ Take notes if possible or write up your conversation as soon as possible afterwards.
- ✓ Record the date, time, place any non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child (do not paraphrase).
- ✓ Record statements and observable things rather than interpretations or assumptions.

Whatever the nature of your concerns, discuss them with the "designated person" (see above).

If you still have concerns, you or the "designated person" should refer to:

The Bristol City Council Social Services Authority

Phone Number: 0117 9222700

What information will you need when making a referral? :

You will be asked to provide as much information as possible. Such as the adult's/child's full name, date of birth, address, school, GP, languages spoken, any disabilities the adult/child may have, details of the parents. Do not be concerned if you do not have all these details, you should still make the call.

You or the "designated person" should follow up the verbal referral in writing, within 48hrs

Allegations Involving a Trustee, Members of Staff or a Volunteer

The Greek Orthodox Community of Bristol Charity is committed to having effective recruitment and human resources procedures, including checking all staff and volunteers to make sure they are safe to work with children and young people.

However, there may still be occasions when there is an allegation against a Trustee, member of staff or volunteer. Allegations against those who work with children, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, cover a wide range of circumstances

All allegations of abuse of children by those who work with children or care for them must be taken seriously. **All reports of allegations must be submitted within one working day to The Chairperson of the Greek School (who is also the designated Child Protection Officer) and the Head Teacher.**

The following procedure should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- ✓ Behaved in a way which has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- ✓ Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- ✓ Behaved towards a child or children in a way which indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children.

The allegations may relate to the person's behaviour at work, at home or in another setting.

The Child Protection Officer will discuss the matter to determine what steps should be taken and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The discussion should also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded, whether a referral to the Bristol City Council Social Services Authority is required and/or whether disciplinary action is appropriate.

Some allegations will be so serious as to require immediate referral to the Police, but common sense and judgement must be applied in reaching a decision about what action to take.

Some allegations may be less serious and at first sight might not seem to warrant consideration of a police investigation. However, it is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are followed up and examined objectively by someone independent of the organisation. Consequently, the Child Protection Officer should be informed of all allegations that come to the reporter's attention and appear to come within the scope of this procedure so that he or she can consult the Police and social care services as appropriate.

Where such allegations are made, consideration must be given to the following three strands:

- 1) The police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
- 2) Enquiries and assessment by Children's Social Care Services as to whether the child is in need of protection or in need of services;
- 3) Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

Change Record

Date of Change:	Changed By:	Comments:
08/11/20	HS	Policy approved by the Trustees