



Friends World Committee
for Consultation
EUROPE & MIDDLE EAST SECTION

Europe & Middle East Section
PO Box 18578,
Birmingham. B30 9GH UK
Tel: +447934310715
Email: michael@fwccemes.org
www.fwccemes.org
Registered Charity No: SC036528
Executive Secretary: Michael Eccles

FWCC - Europe & Middle East Section Safeguarding Policy

Background:

The Europe & Middle East Section (EMES) of the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) is the collective body for Quaker meetings in Europe and the Middle East. Our mission statement is: *Connecting Friends, Communicating, Networking and Nurturing Meetings.*

Our vision for our work in 2020-30 is to: *envisage a thriving, vibrant, inclusive, all-age, spiritual community of Friends in Europe and the Middle East, woven together in transformative faith and love, working and connecting with others, listening to the Spirit, actively living out our Quaker testimonies of truth and integrity, equality and community, simplicity, peace, and care for the earth and the environment.*

Volunteers and paid staff work together to encourage the development of an ethos that embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights and dignity of all people. EMES aims to make its events as inclusive and welcoming as possible. However, we recognise that neglect and physical, sexual and emotional abuse exist and damage those in both the receiving and perpetrator positions, and that the organisation must be vigilant in its endeavours to recognise and prevent such abuse from occurring within our work.

Safeguarding policy:

This safeguarding policy is written in line with legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and vulnerable adult groups based on UK law, however we consider that this policy applies at all EMES events held in any country in Europe or the Middle East and all our events held online.

We use the term 'children and young people' to mean anyone aged under 18; this is interchangeable with 'child' throughout the policy and procedures. We use the term 'adults at risk' as used in UK government guidance; this includes 'adults with care and support needs', the term used in the UK Care Act 2014, and 'vulnerable adults' used previously.

Purpose and scope of this Policy:

- This document displays our commitment to keep people safe, especially children, young people and adults at risk who are engaged with meetings or activities within EMES

- This document provides members and attenders, as well as children, young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to the protection of children, young people and adults at risk in our Quaker communities

What we do - a summary of our activities involving children, young people and adults:

- Annual Meeting of representatives
- Monthly representatives & roleholders gatherings
- Annual in person youthgroup gathering (14-18 year olds)
- Monthly online youthgroup sessions (14-18 year olds)
- Peace & Service Network annual gathering
- Peace & Service Network monthly online gatherings
- Online gatherings for International Members & other isolated Friends, three times per year

Responsibilities:

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Our Trustees hold specific responsibility on behalf of EMES. One trustee is appointed as EMES Safeguarding Coordinator and one or more Deputy Safeguarding Coordinators (not necessarily Trustees) may be appointed, with safeguarding work being delegated as agreed between the parties.

Contact details for our Safeguarding Coordinators and/or Deputies are at the bottom of this document.

Our commitment:

- Abuse in any form is unacceptable and we are committed to keeping everyone safe
- Everyone, including children, young people and at-risk adults, has a right to participate in Quaker communities without suffering harm, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Quakers recognise 'that of God' in everyone
- All people deserve respect, value and appropriate care. Our care extends to people who are potentially vulnerable to abuse and also to those who may be perpetrators
- We recognise abuse can include, but is not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect
- We know that Quakers may be particularly open to risks because we foster a culture of welcome and trust for all
- We accept that often an abuser is known to or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult and that sometimes abusers can be covert manipulators.

EMES recognises that:

- The welfare of children and adults at risk is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take – all children and adults at risk, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, ethnicity, 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.

Safer Appointments/Recruitment:

We recognise the need to follow safeguarding legislation and accepted good practice to reduce risk, both to vulnerable groups and to Quakers as an organisation. We also have an established and complementary spirit-led Quaker nominations process.

Training and Good Practice:

Each individual in a role of responsibility will be appropriately trained according to their Role Description. Everyone involved in our Quaker activities will be familiar with our Code of Conduct, our Processes and Procedures and any specific safeguarding arrangements held locally.

When we need safeguarding advice we use the online Safeguarding Manual from specialist Christian safeguarding agency Thirtyone:eight or their helpline: +443030031111.

Procedure for responding to concerns or allegations of abuse:

EMES follows Britain Yearly Meeting's safeguarding procedures which are outlined in our Procedures document* containing detailed information about how to respond to a Safeguarding concern. If someone is in immediate danger we will contact the Police as soon as possible. Our Safeguarding contact details can be found at the bottom of this document.

*The original of this document can be found here: [BYM Safeguarding Procedures and Toolkit](#). We will need to edit this for our purposes.

We will seek to keep children and vulnerable adults safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them;
- Appointing a safeguarding officer and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding;
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and expectations of staff and volunteers and fostering a culture of good practice in relation to EMES activities;
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through support and role-appropriate safeguarding training, so that all staff and volunteers are able to follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently;
- Responding without delay to any allegation or complaint that is made that suggests that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may have been harmed or is at risk of harm;
- Keeping an open mind when allegations emerge, despite friendships and reputations;
- 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;
- Cooperating fully with police and other statutory agencies in the investigation of abuse;
- Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers using the principles of safer recruitment, ensuring all necessary checks are made;
- 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 and their families;
- Ensuring that vulnerable individuals and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern, using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with those responsible for safeguarding and/or relevant outside agencies;
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately;
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any incidents arising;
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place;
- Providing a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, in or out of Quaker buildings, by applying Health and Safety measures in line with the law and regulatory guidance;
- Building a safeguarding culture where staff, volunteers, adults at risk, children, young people and their families 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 and creating an environment where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility;
- Taking appropriate action where someone is known to have harmed someone or to pose a risk to children, young people or adults, to protect all vulnerable groups – such a person will only be able to attend EMES activities if appropriate pastoral care can be put in place to support them, along with robust and effective risk-management during the event.
- We will prepare risk assessments for our events.

Online events:

In addition to the above points, the following applies to our online events:

- We will ensure all our activities support all our children, young people, adults at risk, staff and volunteers to stay safe online.
- We will maintain clear and open relationships with parents and/or carers regarding communication with them and their children or young people. Any exceptions to this will be carefully assessed and risk-managed by at least two staff/volunteers.
- We will be clear and explicit with children, young people and adults at risk about information that we need to share and why.
- We will be friendly and professional in our communications, not over-familiar or personal.
- We will not share personal information or request or respond to any personal information from a child or young person or adult at risk, other than that which might be essential as part of the role we are carrying out on behalf of Quakers.
- Volunteers will not communicate with an individual young person by mobile phone or email unless the young person is a member of a planning team, parental consent has been obtained and a staff member is copied on the message, or is forwarded a copy as soon as practicable.
- When communicating electronically with a person we know to be an adult at risk, we will always copy in a responsible person from within our organisation (this could be a more

senior colleague, team leader or safeguarding coordinator/lead) to achieve maximum transparency in our dealings with that vulnerable person.

- In our authorised email communications with children and young people, we will only communicate specific information relating to the work of the organisation; we will not use email communications as a tool for building one-to-one relationships.
- We will only use equipment provided by the organisation to communicate with children, young people and adults at risk. An exception to this would be the necessity to use a home computer if working from home with no access to a work computer.
- We will not delete records of electronic contact with individuals or groups of children, young people or vulnerable adults, including text messages and emails. This is a requirement of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) and will be reviewed when the enquiry is complete.
- We will always respect a person's right to confidentiality unless abuse or harm is suspected or disclosed.
- When using electronic communications with young people, contact will take place between 9am and 9pm on non-school days. Exceptions can be made in circumstances such as an emergency, for an online event or for notification of a short-notice change of plans in agreement with a team leader or other responsible person.
- We will not use visual communications (Skype, Zoom, etc.) to communicate with children and young people, unless for a specific pre-planned event, which will be supervised by trained staff and volunteers. All events have a staff member attached, to provide professional support and guidance to volunteers.
- Where practicable, staff and volunteers will use headphones at online events for the purposes of confidentiality.
- We generally use Zoom as the platform for our online events. Zoom should only be downloaded from the company's website <https://zoom.us/download>, as downloads from other websites may cause security issues.

Consent for photographic images and videos online:

- Permission will be obtained from parents/carers for use of images of children or young people on the EMES website or in other EMES and FWCC publications. Images will only be used for the specific purpose for which permission was sought and granted.
- Photographs that include children or young people will be selected carefully to avoid them being easily identified.
- Full names will not be used on the website in association with photographs of children and young people.
- It is not appropriate to publish images of adults who are known to be at risk, unless for a specific and limited purpose which has been agreed by those with a caring responsibility for the person.
- Use of images will reflect a diversity of age, ethnicity and gender as far as possible.

Regular Reviews:

This policy will be reviewed annually in the light of any new guidance, information or legislation. A more comprehensive review will take place every three years.

Key Safeguarding Contacts:

Trustee Safeguarding Coordinator: To be confirmed	Staff Safeguarding Coordinator: Michael Eccles michael@fwccemes.org +447934310715
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Approved by EMES Executive Committee September 2023