# London Link Group

# Child Protection Policy

**Context**

The events run by LLG are spiritual gatherings for young people based on and centered round Quaker beliefs, testimonies, concerns and methods. They are an opportunity for young people to be together in a Quaker environment. These events are organised and run to enable everyone to be part of a caring and supportive community.

Quaker London Link Group (LLG) exists.

* Organise events that bring together young Quakers aged 11-18 from across all London area meetings.
* Provide an opportunity for young Quakers develop their friendships with each other.
* Enable young Quakers to explore their Quaker values through trips, workshops and speakers.
* Empower young Quakers to take an active role in running the events.
* Put into practice our Quaker ideals to create an egalitarian, safe, inclusive, caring and positive atmosphere at every event.
* Make a safe space for young Quakers in London to develop spiritually and explore their Quakerism.

LLG fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection and is committed to promoting a positive, supportive and secure environment where everyone feels safe, included, supported and valued.

This Child Protection policy should be used in conjunction with other LLG policies and guidelines (i.e. Criminal Records Bureau Disclosures, LLG Volunteer Guidelines and Confidentiality Guidelines.) and also the Meeting Safety document produced by Friends House for the Society of Friends. We have written this policy with guidance from the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS).

This policy applies to events run under the auspices of LLG.

**Note on terms:**

* The term ‘volunteer’ is used in this policy, this includes all adult volunteers at events which may be variously called ‘Staff’, ‘Volunteers’, ‘Over 20s’ or ‘Responsible Adults’.
* The terms ‘child’, ‘children’, ‘young person’ and ‘young people’ are used in this policy to refer to participants of the events, all of whom are aged 18 or under and may be referred to throughout this policy by any of these terms.
* The Event Co-ordinators are responsible for the management of the event and the well-being of the volunteers and participants.
* The Child Protection Co-ordinator is the individual responsible for Child Protection at the event. This Person should **not** be the sole Event Co-ordinator.
* A disclosure refers to one of the following:

1. A child or young person making a statement/sharing something relating to abuse outside the event.
2. A child or young person making a statement/sharing something relating to abuse at the event.
3. A child or young person or volunteer reporting suspicion or evidence relating to abuse.

**Policy Outline**

1. LLG will ensure the responsible recruitment of volunteers by checking their suitability to work with young people.
2. This policy outlines the procedures for responding to disclosures or identifying causes for concern.
3. This policy will outline how young people can voice their concerns, complaints or comments to an adult independent of the events.

**1. Event Procedures**

In order to ensure the safeguarding of young people and those who work with them, LLG will follow the procedures set out below:

* Ensure that events follow the appropriate Britain Yearly Meeting Children and Young People’s Committee guidelines for Quaker Organisations running residential events as set out in *Meeting Safety* (Britain Yearly Meeting 2001);
* Where appropriate take account of guidance from the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Boards;
* Ensure responsible recruitment practices are always followed;
* Ensure that there is a Child Protection Co-ordinator responsible for child protection at each event who has received appropriate training and support for this role. This person is responsible for making sure all staff are aware of, have understood and accept, this policy and their responsibilities as an LLG volunteer;
* Ensure that all records are kept securely;
* The Child Protection Co-ordinator and the Event Co-ordinators will liaise on what information is appropriate to share with volunteers, Trustees and members of Management Committee. As far as possible the names and full personal details of individuals involved should remain confidential;
* Ensure that this policy is reviewed and evaluated tri-annually and presented to the Management Committee and the Annual General Meeting for approval;
* LLG has a statutory obligation to inform social services if a young person is at risk of harm. Communication with parents/carers is at the discretion of the Child Protection Co-ordinator. (See Appendix 2);
* During events the responsibility for ensuring this policy is adhered to rests with the Event Co-ordinators. It is the responsibility of LLG committee and the Trustees to ensure that the Event Co-ordinators and Child Protection Co-ordinator receive appropriate training and support in implementing this policy.

**2. Recruitment of Volunteers**

In recruiting volunteers LLG will:

* Ensure that volunteers are checked for their suitability to work with young people through the appropriate procedures and agencies;
  + All volunteers should have Disclosure and Barring service (DBS) checks and in date certificates (previously known as CRB)
  + in the unlikely event that a staff member is recruited at very short notice ahead of the event and there is not adequate time for a disclosure to be applied for.
    - The volunteer will be someone known to at least one member of the core team of the event;
    - the volunteer will have undergone all of the other parts of the application process and been interviewed by the Event Co-ordinators;
    - a DBS disclosure application will have been completed and posted before the start of the event and reviewed in retrospect;
    - all of the other staff of the event will be aware of the volunteers status;
    - the volunteer will be allowed no ‘one to one’ contact with the young people for the duration of the event and other staff will be vigilant to ensure that this does not occur;
    - discretion should be applied by the Event Co-ordinators and if there is any doubt about the volunteer they should not be considered as staff of the event;
    - the Event Co-ordinators will inform the Trustees of any volunteer whom this applies to.
* require and assess two references from every potential volunteer before offering them a place on the staff team. (This is primarily the responsibility of the Event Co-ordinators). One of these references should be from someone unconnected with LLG or any LLG event.

**3. Roles and Responsibilities of Volunteers**

All volunteers:

* Must be clear as to their role and responsibilities in reference to Child Protection procedures (See Appendix 1) and deal with disclosures/causes of concern in line with these;
* Must read the LLG Child Protection Policy (and Volunteer Guidelines, Appendix 4). They will be required to sign a copy of the Guidelines to confirm they understand and agree to them. The Event Co-ordinators and the volunteer will each keep a copy;
* Should be alert to signs and indicators of possible abuse. (See Appendix 5 for current definitions of abuse and examples of harm.)

**4. Roles and Responsibilities of the Child Protection Co-ordinator**

The Child Protection Co-ordinator:

* Must ensure that all volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and referring any concerns in accordance with the procedures laid out in this policy;
* Must ensure any allegation made against a volunteer will result in that individual leaving the event and an investigation being carried out;
* Must ensure that detailed records are made of any disclosures and concerns. Any further action must be recorded accurately.
* Keep record of volunteer CRB or DSB statuses

### Appendix 1

### Guidance to Volunteers on Responding to Disclosures or Causes for Concern

**Cause for concern may become apparent in a number of ways:**

* You may have a suspicion that a young person is being abused emotionally, physically or sexually;
* A young person may disclose abuse by someone to them;
* A young person may disclose abuse by someone to another young person.

**What to do in the event of a disclosure:**

* Stay calm - do not rush into inappropriate action, e.g. anger or embarrassment;
* Never enter into a pact of secrecy with the child. Assure her/him that you will try to help but let the child know that you will have to tell other people in order to do this. State who this will be and why;
* Reassure the young person that they are not to blame and that it is not their fault. Tell them you understand that it is difficult for them to talk about this. Children and Young People very rarely lie about abuse, but s/he may have tried to tell others and not been heard or believed;
* Encourage the child to talk but do not ask leading questions or press for information;
* Listen and remember. (It may be appropriate, if the child agrees and is comfortable with it, to record the details as they are disclosed);
* Check that you have understood correctly what the child is trying to tell you. It may help to repeat back to her/him what s/he has said;
* Be aware that at the moment of disclosure the young person may feel very vulnerable about what is going to happen, and his or her sense of self-esteem may be very low. Praise the child for telling you. Communicate that s/he has a right to be safe and protected;
* Do not tell the child that what s/he experienced is dirty, naughty or bad;
* It is inappropriate to make any comments about the alleged offender;
* Be aware that the young person may have been threatened by the abuser in order to discourage and prevent disclosure and that they may retract what s/he has told you. It is essential to record all you have heard;
* Maintain confidentiality; information should be shared on a ‘need to know basis’; only inform the Child Protection Co-ordinator;
* Explain clearly to the young person what you are going to do next, and who you are going to tell and why. Reassure them that you or the Child Protection Co-ordinator will keep them informed. It is important that you do not promise the young person confidentiality;
* As soon as you can afterwards (if you have not done so during the disclosure), make a detailed record of the conversation using the child’s own language. Include any questions you may have asked. Do not add any opinions or interpretations.

**Recording the information:**

Record your concerns accurately and legibly on a Cause for Concern Form (Appendix 6). Pass form on to the Child Protection Co-ordinator.

Details should include:

* The young person's name;
* Date and time of the disclosure/concern;
* A detailed account. If a young person has made a disclosure it needs to be recorded verbatim as far as possible. Also include your observations, e.g. describe the behaviour and emotional state of the young person and/or bruising or other injuries. It is important that you state the facts only and not your interpretation;
* Record whether you are expressing your own concerns or passing on those of someone else;
* Sign and date the report.

**N.B. It is important that you do not investigate your concerns but record and refer them to the Child Protection Co-ordinator.**

When a referral is made, it is the person to whom the disclosure was made that the authorities (police and/or social services) will come to for an account of what was said. This first hand account is of primary importance.

If you are unhappy with the handling of the incident, or if the allegations are made specifically against the Child Protection Co-ordinator, you should contact the Event Co-ordinators. The Event Co-ordinators will then contact CCPAS in the first instance followed by the local Social Services department and/or the Police immediately.

**If you are unsure what to do advice can be obtained from CCPAS helpline 0845 120 45 50 or if you are still unsure then contact the NSPCC freephone helpline 0800 800 500 or contact the local social services department.**

### Appendix 2

### Guidance for the Child Protection Co-ordinator and/or Event Co-ordinators

These guidelines are intended as an addition to *Guidance to Volunteers on Responding to Disclosures or Causes for Concern.* When disclosures or causes for concern are brought to your attention you should follow this procedure:

* Read the volunteer’s report and discuss with that member of staff;
* Be aware that the reporting volunteer may need support as dealing with Child Protection issues can be traumatic;
* The Child Protection Co-ordinator will decide upon the appropriate course of action, this may involve discussion with other agencies ie. CCPAS, Social Services or the Police;
* If the allegation relates to a volunteer or young person at the event the matter should be referred to the local Social Services Department, who will deal with the support of this individual;
* There may need to be a consultation between the Event Co-ordinator(s)/ Child Protection Co-ordinator. This is for the Child Protection Co-ordinator to Inform the Event Co-ordinator(s) of the enquiries she or he has made, the advice that has been received and the decisions made. On no account should there be interviews, investigations or informing of parents (until an appropriate time as decided or recommended by the advice agencies CCPAS,NSPCC or others). All cases will be put forward for further investigation where it is felt that the child or another individual is at risk. At no time may anyone other than the Child Protection Co-ordinator or a representative from one of the agencies, participate in any kind of further investigation into a disclosure. This is to ensure the best interests of the child are catered for;
* Make sure that you keep a record of who is informed, what information they are told along with the date and time;
* Confidentiality should be upheld; if an individual is required to leave the event then other volunteers and young people should not be told the full reasons;
* Where appropriate LLG will provide support for volunteers and young people who have had allegations made against them whilst the investigation is ongoing. The responsibility for providing this support falls to the Clerk or the Assistant Clerk of LLG who will appoint the appropriate person. This support should not be provided by the Child Protection Co-ordinator or the Event Co-ordinators;
* LLG has a statutory obligation to fulfil their duty of care.

**N.B. See flow chart, Appendix 3, for specific courses of action.**

**If you are unsure what to do advice can be obtained from the NSPCC freephone helpline 0800 800 500 or contact the local social services department.**

**Appendix 3**

**Summary of event procedures to follow where there are concerns about a child**

|  |
| --- |
| **Cause for Concern**  Complete “Cause for Concern” form  speak to Designated Person |

|  |
| --- |
| **Discussion**  Concerned party/  Child Protection Co-ordinator |

|  |
| --- |
| Seek advice from other agencies:  Child Protection Training Co-ordinators/ Social Services Department |
| **Referral**  to Social Services Department by Child Protection Co-ordinator |

|  |
| --- |
| **Monitor**  within event |

|  |
| --- |
| **Initial assessment**  (Social Services Department) as soon as they can, if required they will refer the case to the appropriate department after the event. |

|  |
| --- |
| Child Protection Co-ordinator /  Event Co-ordinator(s) confirm monitoring procedure and review post-event action |

Reasons given to Child Protection Co-ordinator

|  |
| --- |
| No further action |

Social Services review and decide on appropriate action

Decision about ongoing support

### Appendix 4

**Volunteer Guidelines**

London Link Group events are Quaker events and so Quaker values and practices underlie the way we work together. We are committed to providing an environment in which all young people and volunteers are valued and respected as individuals and Quaker values are upheld in what we do, the way we act and the way we treat each other. As a volunteer team we are role models to the young people and should bear this in mind at all times. In order to ensure a successful and safe event we ask all volunteers to read and sign these guidelines.

* Treat all young people with respect and dignity and be aware of your language, tone of voice and body language.
* Encourage an atmosphere of mutual trust, support and care.
* Recognise when you are too tired or stressed to work cooperatively and inform the Event Co-ordinators if this situation arises or you are concerned that it may.
* Be prepared to be on time for all sessions, meetings and jobs. Sessions are not optional unless it is your time off.
* If you are unable to do a job or are likely to be late then please arrange for someone to cover for you.
* If you need to make a change to your night duty or job allocations please talk to the Event Co-ordinators.
* Equal Opportunities: London Link Group wishes to include everyone; no-one should feel excluded or isolated because of race, age, gender, disability, sexuality, culture or social background. Please consider how you can contribute to an inclusive atmosphere.
* It is important that you observe the health and safety rules which apply to the site, including any off-limits areas.
* There should be no smoking, alcohol or illegal substances on site at any time.
* If you need to leave the site for a cigarette please inform the Event Co-ordinators.

The Event Co-ordinators have overall responsibility for the London Link Group event. This includes the site, young people and volunteers. If you have any concerns about anything during the event it is important that you discuss them with the Event Co-ordinators.

I have read and understood these guidelines and agree that I will abide by them during London Link group events.

**Appendix 5**

**Possible Indicators of Abuse**

**Neglect**

Examples which **may** indicate neglect (it is not designed to be used as a checklist):

Hunger

Tiredness or listlessness

Child dirty or unkempt

Poorly or inappropriately clad for the weather

Poor concentration

Affection or attention seeking behaviour

Untreated illnesses/injuries

Pallid complexion

Stealing or scavenging compulsively

Failure to achieve developmental milestones, for example growth, weight

Failure to develop intellectually or socially

Neurotic behaviour

**Physical abuse**

Examples which **may** indicate physical abuse (it is not designed to be used as a checklist):

Patterns of bruising; inconsistent account of how bruising or injuries occurred

Finger, hand or nail marks, black eyes

Bite marks

Round burn marks, burns and scalds

Lacerations, wealds

Fractures

Bald patches

Symptoms of drug or alcohol intoxication or poisoning

Unaccountable covering of limbs, even in hot weather

Fear of going home or parents being contacted

Fear of medical help

Fear of changing for in front of others

Inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance

Violence or aggression towards others including bullying

Isolation from peers

**Sexual abuse**

Examples which **may** indicate sexual abuse (it is not designed to be used as a checklist):

Sexually explicit play or behaviour or age-inappropriate knowledge

Anal or vaginal discharge, soreness or scratching

Reluctance to go home

Inability to concentrate, tiredness

Refusal to communicate, selective mutism

Thrush, persistent complaints of stomach disorders or pains

Eating disorders, for example anorexia nervosa and bulimia

Attention seeking behaviour, self mutilation, substance abuse

Aggressive behaviour including sexual harassment or molestation

Unusually compliant

Regressive behaviour, Enuresis, soiling

Frequent or open masturbation, touching others inappropriately

Depression, withdrawal, isolation from peer group

Reluctance to undress for PE or swimming

Bruises, scratches in genital area

**Emotional abuse**

Examples which **may** indicate emotional abuse (it is not designed to be used as a checklist):

Over-reaction to mistakes, continual self deprecation

Delayed physical, mental, emotional development

Sudden speech or sensory disorders

Inappropriate emotional responses, fantasies

Neurotic behaviour: rocking, banging head, regression, tics and twitches

Self harming, drug or solvent abuse

Fear of parents being contacted

Running away

Compulsive stealing

Masturbation, appetite disorders – anorexia nervosa, bulimia

Soiling, smearing faeces, Enuresis

**Responses from parents**

Research and experience indicates that the following responses from parents may suggest a cause for concern across all four categories:

* + - An unexpected delay in seeking treatment that is obviously needed;
    - An unawareness or denial of any injury, pain or loss of function (for example, a fractured limb);
    - Incompatible explanations offered, several different explanations or the child is said to have acted in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development;
    - Reluctance to give information or failure to mention other known relevant injuries;
    - Alcohol misuse or other drug/substance misuse;
    - Violence between adults in the household.

**Appendix 6**

***CONFIDENTIAL***

**Cause for Concern Form**

**Note: Please do not interpret what is seen or heard; simply record the facts. After completing the form, pass it immediately to the Child Protection Co-ordinator.**

**Name of child……………..…………………………………. D.O.B.………………………….**

**Name of staff member completing form………………………………………………………...**

**Day……………….. Date……………….. Time……………… Place………………………**

(of observed behaviour/discussion/disclosure)

**Nature of incident/concern including relevant background** (Record child’s word verbatim)

***For Child Protection Co-ordinator use* (please tick relevant items)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Action Taken** | **By Whom** | **Outcome** |
| **Discuss with child** |  |  |
| **Contact parents** |  |  |
| **Refer to Social Services** |  |  |
| **Other (Please specify)** |  |  |