

# The Boaters' Christian Fellowship Safeguarding Policy & Procedures



***This policy will be reviewed at the first Trustees meeting of each calendar year.***

## Mission Statement

The Trustees recognise that Boaters' Christian Fellowship (BCF) has a responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of all people it encounters through its activities. As part of its mission, BCF is committed to:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting people as well as promoting their welfare and protection.
- Adopting a procedure for dealing with safeguarding concerns.
- Encouraging and supporting people.
- Supporting people known to be affected by abuse.

## Fellowship Policy

All people have the right to be protected from abuse. BCF will therefore value, listen to and respect everyone who is present at any of its meetings and events. Where there are disclosures or allegations of abuse, BCF will take them seriously, notify the Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS) or their deputy (DDPS) promptly, and co-operate with statutory agencies.

The Trustees have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this document (hereafter “the policy”), which will be reviewed at least annually at the first Trustees’ meeting of each calendar year.

## 1. Safeguarding Trustee

The board of trustees of BCF is legally responsible for safeguarding and will therefore appoint a Safeguarding Trustee at the first Trustees' meeting of each year. The Safeguarding Trustee will:

- champion safeguarding culture throughout BCF.
- ensure that the Trustees conduct an annual review of safeguarding policies and procedures.
- liaise with the DPS and DDPS
- report back to the trustees on a regular basis any concerns and issues, ensuring that statutory requirements for confidentiality are maintained.
- seek appropriate safeguarding advice to inform the policy and procedures of BCF to minimise the risk of safeguarding concerns arising from BCF's activities.

The safeguarding trustee for 2026 is Peter Braybook – 07865 086082

## 2. Designated Persons for Safeguarding

A designated person for safeguarding (DPS) and a deputy designated person for safeguarding (DDPS) will also be appointed at the first Trustees' meeting of the year. The DPS and DDPS are nominated by the Trustees to act on BCF's behalf in referring allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to statutory authorities. In the absence of the DPS, the report will be made to the DDPS. If suspicion involves the Safeguarding Trustee, the DPS or DDPS, then those not under suspicion or the board of Trustees shall receive the report.

To contact DPS: Mark Macaulay – 07866 740612

To contact DDPS: Ann Murphy – 07986 567105

## 3. Working in conjunction with other charities or organisations

BCF, as a voluntary fellowship organisation, conducts no prior reference checks on its incoming members. BCF as an organisation also does not undertake regulated activity (as defined in the Protection of Freedoms act 2012). If members of BCF work with or alongside other charities and organisations, e.g. Canal Ministries, a local church, or similar organisations, which are Regulated Activity Providers (as defined in the Protection of Freedoms act 2012), then the policies of the leading Regulated Activity Provider will be adopted and followed while regulated activity is being undertaken.

## 4. Definitions of Abuse

Abuse and Neglect come from the misuse of power and control that someone has over another. It can be perpetrated by an individual or a group, from a child to a child, or from one adult at risk towards another. Abuse can occur in a family, in an institutional or community setting or via the internet and social media; by those known to the victim or, more rarely, by a stranger.

Abuse may be: Physical; Emotional; Sexual; Neglect; Financial; Spiritual or Other Types of Abuse, which may be difficult to recognize but which can cause harm, distress or loss to the victim. Abuse may also be historic, and a person may suffer more than one type of abuse. ***Please see Appendix 1 for broader definitions and examples.***

## 5. Recognising and Responding to Suspicions of Abuse

Every member has a duty towards the safeguarding of children and adults at risk within the life of the fellowship. Therefore, **all allegations of abuse shall be taken seriously and reported to the DPS or DDPS.**

Examples include the following:

- an allegation is made in any context about a child or adult at risk.
- the behaviour of a child or adult at risk gives any cause for concern.
- the behaviour of any individual or group towards children or adults at risk causes concern

WHAT TO DO	WHAT NOT TO DO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listen to and acknowledge what is being said.</li><li>• Try to be reassuring, supportive and remain calm.</li><li>• Explain clearly that you cannot keep the matter confidential and that you will give the information to the DPS who will take the necessary action.</li><li>• Explain that somebody who can help will contact them.</li><li>• Tell them that: They were right to tell you; you are taking what they have said seriously, and it is not their fault.</li><li>• Give contact details for them to report any further details or ask any questions that may arise.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not promise confidentiality.</li><li>• Do not show shock, alarm, disbelief or disapproval.</li><li>• Do not minimise what is being said.</li><li>• Do not ask probing or leading questions or push for more information.</li><li>• Do not offer false reassurance or guaranteed timescales that are outside your control.</li><li>• Do not delay in contacting the DPS.</li><li>• Do not contact the alleged abuser.</li><li>• Do not investigate the incident any further.</li><li>• Do not pass on information to those who don't need to know; not even for prayer ministry.</li></ul>

**Children:** If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or if a child discloses abuse to you, THIS MUST ALWAYS BE REPORTED TO THE NECESSARY STATUTORY AGENCY. The DPS/DDPS will assist as necessary in making the report to the statutory agency.

**Adults:** If you have any concerns about an adult's welfare or an adult discloses abuse to you, please advise the person making the disclosure that it will be reported to the DPS/DDPS. It should be noted that Adults with Capacity have the right to refuse help. However, WHEN AN ADULT LACKS CAPACITY TO MAKE THIS CHOICE, THE NECESSARY STATUTORY AGENCY MUST BE INFORMED. Be aware, however, that statutory agencies invariably assume that ALL ADULTS HAVE CAPACITY, unless there is a formal incapacity order in place (Examples include DOLS (Deprivation of Liberty Services) or a statutory order under the Mental Health Act 1983). Reality is more complex and a judgment needs to be made. The DPS/DDPS will therefore record the disclosure in all circumstances, whether or not the person making the disclosure wishes to be helped. The DPS/DDPS is able to seek advice from professional safeguarding bodies as to whether the situation disclosed passes a legal threshold, poses a public risk or indicates a risk of serious harm to the victim. Examples include: actual or possible criminal activity; risk to the health and welfare of any member of the public or risk to the life of the victim, such as by suicide. Invariably the worst-case scenario is that a statutory body may take an adult's word at face value that they don't wish to be helped, and further harm may or may not result. In case of known harm resulting, an Inquiry is established and the person or organisation that made the safeguarding report is both a witness to the Inquiry and is exonerated by the Inquiry.

In general, anyone who receives an allegation of abuse shall write it down at the earliest opportunity, recording the allegation in language used by the person making the allegation. If possible, get the maker of the allegation to agree the statement. Do not add anything to the statement that has not come from the person making the allegation.

The DPS/DDPS will receive the report and notify the appropriate authorities, seeking advice as necessary from professional safeguarding bodies.

Priority shall be given to the safety and welfare of the individual by contacting statutory agencies immediately if necessary.

- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the DPS, the absence of the DPS or DDPS should not delay referral to appropriate statutory agencies. Any member of the public can raise safeguarding concerns with statutory agencies regardless of whether their portals state "professionals only". Once reported, it is the Statutory agency's responsibility to determine further action, and they are unlikely to contact the person who made the report.
- The Trustees will support the DPS/DDPS in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need-to-know basis.

## 6. Safer recruitment

BCF is not a regulated activity provider although individual members may work with regulated activity providers under their policies (see section 2).

## 7. Training

BCF does not provide formal safeguarding training. However, when holding its own public events and participating in events organised by other bodies, the safeguarding policy and health and safety risk assessments are provided for reading by the participants and a signature sheet is provided to confirm this.

## 8. Support to Those Affected by Abuse

The Trustees are committed to offering pastoral care and support to those who have been affected by abuse, working with statutory agencies as appropriate.

## 9. Working with Offenders

When someone attending the Fellowship is known to have abused children or adults at risk, the DPS will be notified at the earliest opportunity and determine what action is to be taken. Because BCF is not a regulated activity provider, it is dependent on its own policies to protect its members and others that may be present at its events. To this end, no activities subject to the oversight of BCF will take place with fewer than two members present at all times. In practice, this means that three members as a minimum will need to be present at events to allow for breaks. Failing this, the activities will not take place. The purpose of this clause is to ensure that no BCF member will be alone at any time while in a public-facing event overseen by BCF. BCF is unable to regulate the behaviour of individuals on their own time, nor to control their wearing of BCF uniform while on their own time.

## 10. Best Practice Guidelines

These clauses do not preclude friendships and associations being formed on an individual basis. BCF is intended to be part of God's family and the people within it are expected to treat others with respect and dignity even when not representing BCF.

## 10.1. Abuse of Trust

Abuse of trust is any situation where a leader uses or misuses their position of authority in terms of their relationship with, treatment of, or contact with someone who is under their authority. Should a member become aware, or an allegation be made that this is happening, the DPS must be informed.

## 10.2. Working with adults at Risk

BCF members may not represent BCF alone in any interaction with a child or adult at risk. If a BCF member is alone they shall not enter any space where they could be alone with an adult at risk to whom they are not lawfully related (e.g. blood family, stepfamily, recognised carer or guardian, or legally appointed) unless acting in a medical emergency. BCF members will always act with respect towards others and treat them with dignity. Any behaviour considered inappropriate will be reported to the DPS.

## 10.3. Working with Children and young people

BCF is not a regulated activity provider. When BCF members have contact with children and young people to whom they are not related legally, it will be in the company of their recognised parents and carers or under the policies and procedures of an organisation that undertakes regulated activity (see section 2).

## 10.4. Photographs taken for BCF's use

When taking personal photographs at BCF events, members must either obtain permission from or offer voluntary exclusion of adults from being included. Photographs of children should be avoided unless in the company of their recognised parents and carers, from whom written permission should be sought if it is necessary to include them. For BCF events, e.g. Spring Conferences, Fellowship Weekends and the AGM, the Trustees will designate an official photographer. The Editor will ensure that photographs used for BCF's purposes have the permission of all subjects before use. The Editor will also ask for formal confirmation from the subjects for any photograph used in any publication.

## 10.5. Electronic Communications and Social Media

All Electronic Communications and Social Media will be under the jurisdiction of the Social Media Manager, who will control these under the Social Media Policy. No member may issue any electronic communication or social media post on behalf of BCF unless this has been authorised by the Social Media Manager. ***Please see Appendix 4 for more detailed information.***

## APPENDIX 1 – DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

The following are non-exhaustive definitions of types of Abuse provided to aid the recipient of a report of abuse to recognise the nature of Abuse, that it may be taking place and in particular cases that professional advice should be sought prior to making a referral to a statutory safeguarding agency:

**Physical:** To inflict pain, physical injury or suffering. This includes, hitting, slapping, beating, shaking, pinching, throwing, pushing, kicking, burning, drowning, hair pulling, squeezing, suffocating, poisoning, and using inappropriate restraint. It also includes situations when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional:** The use of threats, fear or power gained by another's position, to invalidate the person's independent wishes. This includes mocking, coercing, threatening, controlling behaviour, bullying, intimidation, harassment, humiliation, lack of privacy or choice, denial of dignity, deprivation of social contact or deliberate isolation, making someone feel worthless, demonstrating a lack of love or affection or ignoring the person. These behaviours can create emotional and psychological distress. In children they can cause severe and persistent adverse effects on emotional development.

**Note: All forms of abuse have an emotional component.**

**Sexual: Adults:** For an adult, sexual abuse is defined as any non-consenting sexual act or behaviour. Adult sexual abuse may or may not cross a legal threshold and sexual abuse may or may not involve physical contact. Even when there is consent, no one should enter a sexual relationship with someone over whom they have authority, pastoral oversight, designated legal responsibility, hold a position of trust or where there is an obvious imbalance of social power. The age that any person can legally consent to sexual activity is sixteen years unless with another who is in a legal position of trust, in which case it rises to eighteen.

**Sexual: Children:** Below sixteen, a person is considered a child who cannot legally consent to sexual activity that involves another person, regardless of whether there is or is not any physical contact. Sexual activity involving a child under the age of 16 should be considered a potential safeguarding concern, however, sexual activity between children of a similar age is not uncommon and the law provides for this. For sexual activity between children aged thirteen to fifteen, advice should be sought from medical professionals, and/or professional safeguarding bodies, who may direct the referrer to professionals other than statutory safeguarding agencies. Sexual activity involving a child under thirteen must be referred to statutory agencies. However, it is critical to bear in mind in all cases of sexual activity between children, that the law is intended to protect children from abuse or exploitation and not to unnecessarily criminalise children. Therefore, seeking advice from medical professionals, and/or professional safeguarding bodies, particularly for people with strong beliefs in this regard, before making a safeguarding referral, is recommended. For additional advice in this regard, the NSPCC website is helpful: (<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/children-the-law>).

**Neglect:** A person's health and welfare may be impaired when their care needs are not met. In a child, neglect can impair a child's development into adulthood. Neglect can be deliberate, which is a safeguarding matter and may or may not cross a legal threshold. Neglect can also occur as a result of a carer not understanding what someone's needs are, which is common when care is being provided by a child or when the person being cared for is unable to express their needs adequately. Self-neglect is common in people with unmanaged mental health needs or when their capacity is diminished through illness, e.g. dementia. Neglect may not cross a threshold which requires a safeguarding report, but could indicate that a Social Services Welfare Check should be conducted. The reporting mechanism for a Social Services Welfare Check is often less onerous than a safeguarding report and is more likely to lead to a positive outcome.

**Financial:** The inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement, fraud or theft of money, property or possessions from a person.

**Spiritual:** The inappropriate use of religious belief or spiritual practice; coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context; the abuse of trust by someone in a position of spiritual authority over another, or any use of faith frameworks to create advantage for one or more individuals over others.

**Examples of Other types of Abuse include:** discrimination, institutional abuse, domestic abuse, online abuse, self harm, mate crime (where someone claims to be a friend but then takes advantage), cuckooing (where people take over a person's home and use the property to facilitate exploitation or criminal gain), modern slavery, human trafficking, radicalisation to cause harm to individuals or society, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, peer-on-peer abuse or child-on-child abuse.

This list is not exhaustive but indicates that each and any allegation of abuse needs to be recorded, that a person may be suffering more than one type of abuse, and that advice should be sought from professional safeguarding bodies as to next steps when there is uncertainty or a lack of experience on the part of the referrer.

## APPENDIX 2 – SAFEGUARDING REPORT

*This form should normally be completed by the Designated Person for Safeguarding taking care that only necessary information is included, particularly when persons that may be informed are the subject of allegations.*

<b>Name of organisation</b>	<b>Boaters' Christian Fellowship</b>
<b>Contact details of organisation</b>	
<b>Name of Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS)</b>	
<b>Contact details of Designated Person for Safeguarding</b>	

<b>Name of concerned person or to whom disclosure was given</b>	
<b>Contact details of concerned person or to whom disclosure was given</b>	

### INDIVIDUAL OF CONCERN - CONTACT DETAILS

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Date of birth</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Phone number</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	

### DESCRIBE THE ALLEGATION

<b>What happened?</b> (Nature of concern / disclosure made – use the person's own words if known)	
<b>When did it happen?</b> (date, time)	
<b>Where did it happen?</b> (be as specific as possible on location)	
<b>Who was involved and in what way?</b> (everybody, including witnesses / bystanders – by description if personal details are not known)	

## DESCRIBE ACTIONS TAKEN ALREADY

<b>Have carers, parents or guardians been informed?</b>	YES	NO
(when and by whom?)		

<b>Has the DPS/DDPS been informed?</b>	YES	NO
(date and time)		

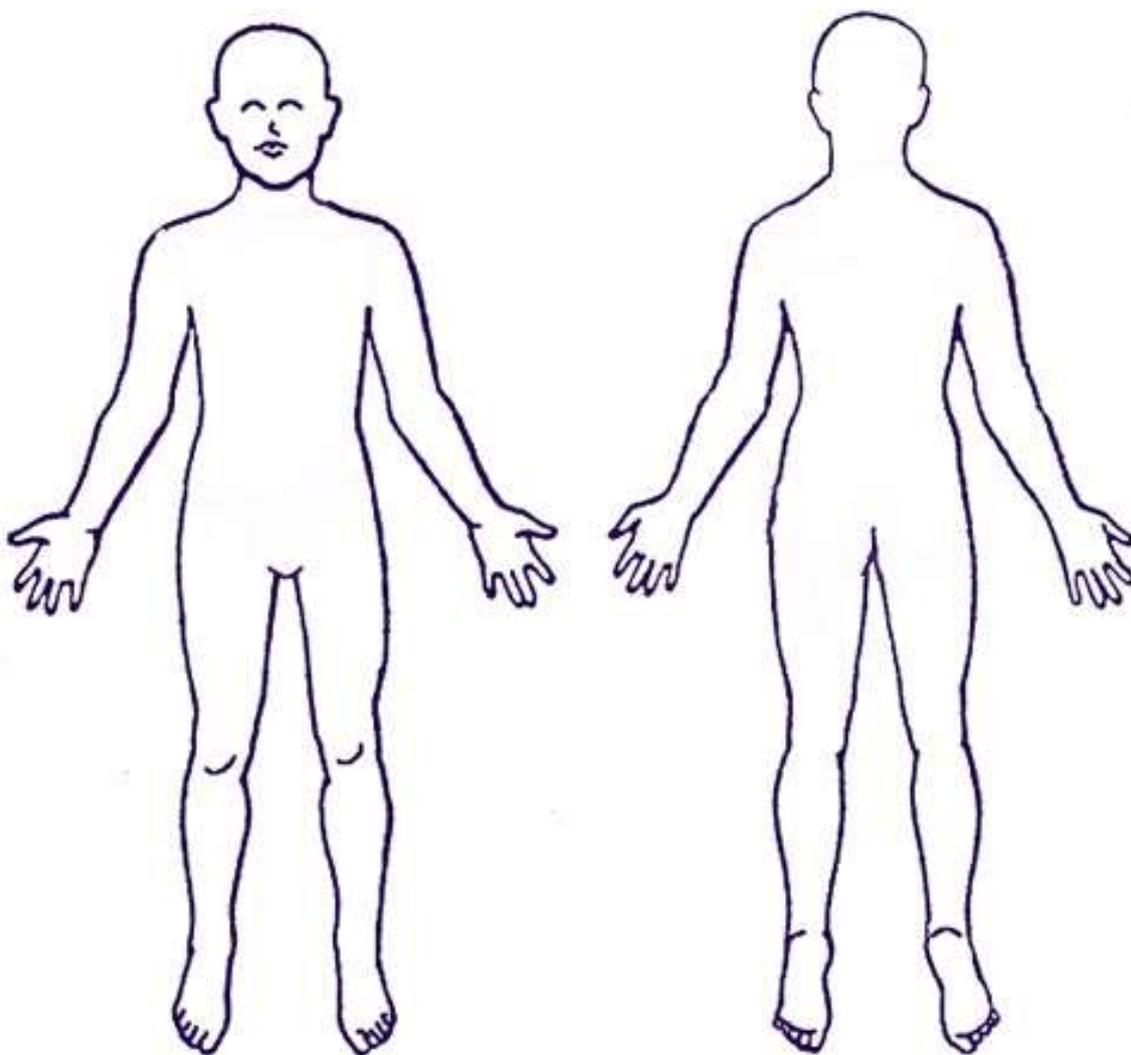
<b>Has advice been sought?</b>	YES	NO
(from whom – professional body /individual)		
(date and time)		

<b>Has a statutory safeguarding referral been made?</b>	YES	NO
(name of statutory safeguarding agency)		
(date and time)		
(method of contact – phone / online)		
(phone number / web address)		
(reference – case number / named individual)		

## OBSERVABLE INJURY BODY MAP

These diagrams are designed for the recording of any observable bodily injuries that may appear on the person. Please draw and label the type and rough extent of injury, e.g. bruises, burns, cuts, distortions (such as by fracture or internal injury) as clearly as possible on the diagram.

**NOTE: It is your job to listen, record and refer the allegation to the DPS or a professional or statutory body. It is not your job to investigate the source of an injury or to decide whether it is deliberate or accidental.**



Front

Back

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 3 – SUPERVISION OF GROUP ACTIVITIES

Boaters Christian Fellowship does not undertake regulated activity and ordinarily children and adults at risk will be the company of parents or carers with legal responsibility for them during group activities. Periodically BCF members do work alongside people and organisations who undertake regulated activity. The following table is therefore merely a guide to ensure the safety, primarily of children, in all group activities involving BCF members. **NOTE: no group activity will be undertaken by BCF members with fewer than two adults participating and supervising at all times.** Above that, the ratios in the table are a guide to the anticipated level of supervision required. For mixed groups supervision should ideally be provided by a balance of male and female supervisors.

Age range	Recommended minimum ratio for INDOOR activities	Recommended minimum ratio for OUTDOOR activities
0 – 2 years	1:3 (minimum two adults)	1:3 (minimum two adults)
3 years	1:4 (minimum two adults)	1:4 (minimum two adults)
4 – 7 years	1:8 (minimum two adults)	1:6 (minimum two adults)
8 – 12 years	Two adults for up to 8 children, then an additional adult for every 10 additional children	Two adults for up to 15 children, then an additional adult for every 8 additional children
13 years and over	Two adults for up to 20 children with an additional adult for every 10 additional children	Two adults for up to 20 children with an additional adult for every 10 additional children

## APPENDIX 4 – GUIDELINES FOR ONLINE SAFETY

### Electronic Communications

- People should opt in formally to receive electronic communication by providing relevant details to BCF. BCF's forms will include options to opt in or out of the different types of electronic communications.
- Electronic communication must never become a substitute for face-to-face contact.
- People representing BCF should not put any pressure on people to reveal their email address, mobile phone number, or any other contact details.
- There will be no direct electronic communication with children under age thirteen (Online Safety Act (2023)) and for children between age thirteen and eighteen, communication from BCF will be official, age-appropriate, with parental consent, and the parents or legal guardians will be copied in.
- Outbound e-mails from BCF will include a BCF header/footer showing this to be an official communication.
- Any in-bound communication to a member of BCF which causes concern should be notified to the Social Media Manager and DPS as appropriate.

### Mobile Phones

- Mobile phones vastly outnumber landline phones and telephone communications on behalf of BCF and between members should always be respectful and dignified.
- Mobile phone photos are subject to the same permissions as any other camera (see section 10).

### Social Media

- BCF's use of social media will be subject to the Social Media Manager's control.