

Guidance for Prospective Independent Persons - Bahá'í Residential Schools

There should be two designated Independent Persons (one male, one female) at Residential Schools and who are responsible for Child Protection issues and to whom children or concerned adults may go with issues of any kind relating to those under the age of 18. The Independent Persons must be DBS checked and have their names on the National Spiritual Assembly's list of Accredited Children's Tutors.

PRIOR TO ATTENDANCE

1. Please make yourself familiar with the National Assembly's 'A General Guide to the Safeguarding of Children'.
2. In addition, during the Residential School have available the following Supplementary Materials:
 - CPol Sup 1. Responding to Allegations of Abuse
 - CPol Sup 2. Definitions and Signs of Abuse
 - CPol Sup 3. What Happens When You Tell The Local Authority
 - CPol Sup 6. Guidance for Residential Schools
 - CPol Sup 10. Responding to Bullying and Self-harm Concerns

All the above policies are obtainable from osc@bahai.org.uk or downloaded from the National Assembly's UK Bahá'í Resources website at <https://bahaidata.com>

3. Please make yourself familiar with these documents, in particular pages 2 & 3 of CPol Sup 6. Guidance for Residential Schools, which outlines your duties and gives detailed advice on how to deal with allegations of abuse (also see CPol Sup 1. Responding to Allegations of Abuse & CPol Sup 10. Responding to Bullying and Self-harm Concerns).
4. Before going to the event, please find and note the 24-hour telephone number for the Children's Social Care Team or the Local Safeguarding Children's Board [LSCB] in the Local Authority Area where the school is to be held.

The Local Safeguarding Children's Board Designated Officer will be involved in any initial investigation of an incident, and will advise on whether the allegation is within the scope of their procedures. The Designated Officer will monitor or track any investigation, and if necessary liaise with other Child Care Teams in areas where the child/children live.

DURING THE EVENT

5. At the school please make yourself known to the organising committee. They should introduce the Independent Persons at an early stage to all children and adults in attendance.
- 6. In a medical emergency contact 999 for an ambulance, or if the child is in immediate danger contact 999 and ask for the police.**

Please note that some venues have their own internal security. Notify the venue's security team so they know where to direct the ambulance and /or police vehicle.

7. In the event of an incident, in theory the child should approach you directly.

Being familiar with CPol Sup 1. Responding to Allegations of Abuse, you will know the need to record such incidents using the words of the child. If the allegations are made to another person at the school, such as a guardian or animator, you should report the matter using their notes.

8. Having made your careful notes, refer to CPol Sup 3. What Happens When You Tell The Local Authority.

You, as the Independent Person, decide whether to contact the local Children's Social Care Team or similar. The Churches Child Protection Advisory Service [CCPAS] has been very helpful in advising on child protection at Bahá'í events. You may choose to contact the **CCPAS** 24 hour helpline on **0303 003 11 11 (Option 2)** or the **NSPCC** on **0808 800 5000** for advice.

- **CCPAS** Helpline Tel: **0303 003 11 11 (Option 2)** is available every hour of every day of the year, although out of office hours it is for **urgent** advice only.)
Website <http://www.ccpas.co.uk>
- **NSPCC** Tel: **0808 800 5000** Email: help@nspcc.org.uk Website: <http://nspcc.org.uk>

Extract from 'CPol Sup 1. Responding to Allegations of Abuse' page 4

'All of us will often experience difficulty in making appropriate judgements. The National Spiritual Assembly must emphasise that it sees no role for the Bahá'í institutions in investigating allegations or complaints of abuse. These must be dealt with by the professionals. You must turn to bodies such as the Local Authority directly. However you should report to the National Assembly that you have done so.'

9. Finally: Incidents are not common but it is essential to be prepared. Thank you for serving in this role.