

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom

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Policy for Safeguarding Children



(Picture © Bahá'í World Centre)

VERSION OCTOBER 2010 (Updated June 2021)

Among the signs of moral downfall in the declining social order are the high incidence of violence within the family, the increase in degrading and cruel treatment of spouses and children, and the spread of sexual abuse. It is essential that the members of the [Bahá'í] community . . . take the utmost care not to be drawn into acceptance of such practices because of their prevalence. They must ever be mindful of their obligation to exemplify a new way of life distinguished by its respect for the dignity and rights of all people, by its exalted moral tone, and by its freedom from oppression and from all forms of abuse.¹

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the UK

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The Assembly also represents the Bahá'í communities of the Isle of Man and the Channel Island

¹ Universal House of Justice, 24 January 1993, to an individual believer quoted in *Antidotes to Domestic Violence* by Dr Michael Penn, an article in *The Bahá'í World: 2003-2004* (2005: page 148).

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How to Use This Policy

General Background

What follows is the National Spiritual Assembly's Policy for Safeguarding Children latest edition (version October 2010). As this policy differs significantly from previous versions changes are not highlighted as in previous versions. The policy has been drawn up with professional and legal guidance and should be studied and applied by those responsible for young people at Bahá'í events, residential or otherwise. To avoid repetition, all children and young people aged 0-18 are referred to as children in this document. "A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday." (Children's Act 1989, 2004)

The main section sets out the steps that must be taken as stipulated to safeguard and protect children and safeguard the name of the Faith. The steps are universally applicable, i.e. they must be followed where people over the age of 18 have substantial access to children at Bahá'í events and where young people over 16 have a training role. Other aspects could apply to any of us at some time or another, depending upon the role we are playing: we should all be aware of their existence as of now and apply them when necessary. There are various supplementary documents to the policy which relate only to the specific activities they deal with and are available on request to those who are responsible for the conduct of such activities.

The National Spiritual Assembly regrets that the present state of the world makes such procedures necessary. However it would be a great mistake to think that because we are Bahá'ís we need not concern ourselves with this matter. The procedures are necessary to protect children and those working with them, and the good name of the Faith.

Appendices & Supplementary Materials

The Appendices are all listed in the contents table and contain useful additional information or guidance. They need to be read as carefully as the main document so that we are all aware of their existence and significance.

There are also ten sets of supplementary material relating to particular aspects of the Policy. The most important of which concern (1) how to respond to a child reporting possible abuse, (2) how to recognise the signs of abuse, (3) when to tell the local authority, and (4) the use of the internet, images of children and mobile phones. The materials are set out in a way that is convenient for event organisers. Senior agencies of the Faith should ensure that all organisers are provided with and encouraged to use the materials appropriate to them. These supplementary materials are only available on request from the National Office or the Office for Safeguarding Children.

The basic Policy and its Appendices are available either from the National Spiritual Assembly's Office for Safeguarding Children (OSC) at their email address, from the National Office or downloaded from the National Assembly website UK Baha'i Downloads. **Appendix I** spells out the details for obtaining these and other background material, which help explain and/or present the thinking behind the policy as well as a special Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Document.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Definitions

Child Protection involves recognising signs of physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect and acting on it to protect children.

Safeguarding Children involves keeping children safe from a much wider range of potential harm and looks at preventive action, not just reaction. This will include safe staff recruitment, risk assessments, safer caring practices, etc. Child Protection is a component of Safeguarding Children.

Safeguarding Children is now considered “everybody’s business”. It is the main focus of this document. Protection, except for the first stages of noticing the signs and notifying the appropriate agencies, is the role of a different agency of the National Assembly: information and advice about how to proceed once abuse has been identified as having taken place must be sought from the Office for Safeguarding Children. In an emergency please use the contact details on page 13 in order of appearance.

Universal House of Justice Ridván Message 2000

The values that the House of Justice wishes us to uphold are clear:

. . . In the current state of society, children face a cruel fate. Millions and millions in country after country are dislocated socially. Children find themselves alienated by parents and other adults whether they live in conditions of wealth or poverty. This alienation has its roots in a selfishness that is born of materialism that is at the core of the godlessness seizing the hearts of people everywhere. The social dislocation of children in our time is a sure mark of a society in decline; this condition is not, however, confined to any race, class, nation or economic condition--it cuts across them all. It grieves our hearts to realise that in so many parts of the world children are employed as soldiers, exploited as labourers, sold into virtual slavery, forced into prostitution, made the objects of pornography, abandoned by parents centred on their own desires, and subjected to other forms of victimisation too numerous to mention. Many such horrors are inflicted by the parents themselves upon their own children. The spiritual and psychological damage defies estimation. Our worldwide community cannot escape the consequences of these conditions. This realisation should spur us all to urgent and sustained effort in the interests of children and the future . . .

Children are the most precious treasure a community can possess, for in them are the promise and guarantee of the future. They bear the seeds of the character of future society which is largely shaped by what the adults constituting the community do or fail to do with respect to children. They are a trust no community can neglect with impunity. An all-embracing love of children, the manner of treating them, the quality of the attention shown them, the spirit of adult behaviour toward them--these are all among the vital aspects of the requisite attitude.

UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights ■ International Covenant of Human Rights ■ Convention on the Rights of the Child

The National Spiritual Assembly endorses the values expressed in UN and other documents as set out below:

We recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and vulnerable adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”. We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.”

Working Together to Safeguard Children (© Crown 2015)





The Government stipulates: “...faith-based organisations provide a wide range of activities for children and have an important role in safeguarding children and supporting families. Like other organisations that work with children they need to have appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children...”

Working Together to Safeguard Children (© Crown 2018)

“Every Voluntary, Charity, Social Enterprise, faith-based organisation and private sector organisation or agency should have policies in place to safeguard and protect children from harm. These should be followed and systems should be in place to ensure compliance in this. Individual practitioners, whether paid or volunteer, should be aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and protecting children from harm, how they should respond to child protection concerns and how to make a referral to local authority children’s social care or the police if necessary.”

Aims and Responsibilities

To fulfill all of the above, the National Spiritual Assembly will:

-  endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above and the guidance of the Universal House of Justice as expressed in its Ridván Message of 2000 (see above).
-  provide ongoing safeguarding training for all its workers and regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
-  ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and all other relevant legislation, and that be welcoming and inclusive.
-  support all those working in whatever role to safeguard children in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and vulnerable adults.

THE POLICY

Rationale

In order to protect young people, and safeguard the good name of the Faith in these debased times, certain procedures must be followed for people over the age of 18 acting on behalf of the Faith who have substantial access to children at Bahá'í events. The DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) policy assumes that persons under 18 years old (hereafter referred to as children) are potentially vulnerable and therefore need to be protected from abuse. It is also essential that their health, safety and well-being be protected at all times. Please read through the following policy very carefully as it contains vital information. If you need to discuss any points mentioned, please do not hesitate to contact your Regional Bahá'í Council through its secretary or the OSC at osc@bahai.org.uk

The Core of the Safeguarding Policy

The National Spiritual Assembly's policy is that persons working in any Bahá'í activity in the UK must have a valid Enhanced DBS disclosure if they have 'substantial access' to a child.

Substantial access means:

- * **they are regularly caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of a child or children. This means that they alone are responsible for that child, even if only for a minute or two.**
- * **they are routinely in a position of authority in relation to that child. For example, as a children's class teacher, or a junior youth animator, a tutor, a project coordinator etc.**

Bahá'í activities and events in this context include children's classes, junior youth groups, junior youth camps, children's camps, youth conferences, community schools, summer schools and other residential events, activity weekends, Training Institute courses, study circles, conferences and conventions. However this list is not exhaustive.

There are, for example, special factors that Local Assemblies have to consider:

Local Spiritual Assembly members and DBS Disclosures: Members of Assemblies are to obtain a Disclosure if they are responsible for the running of events, courses and activities for children, youth and vulnerable adults, even if they do not have direct contact with members of those groups as a result of their oversight of the activities. The position applied for on the DBS Application form will be 'Children's Activity Supervisor'.

Local Spiritual Assemblies: Local Spiritual Assemblies are encouraged to place such responsibilities, if at all possible, only on the shoulders of those who already are involved directly in work with these groups and therefore have a Disclosure.

It is the responsibility of the Bahá'í administrative body organising an event to follow these procedures. If they have any queries they should contact the National Office. It is also essential that all child-related activities take place under the auspices of a Bahá'í institution or recognised Bahá'í agency, e.g. a Local Spiritual Assembly or a cluster co-ordinator.

Independent Persons responsible for child protection issues It is also essential that all major Bahá'í events and residential schools appoint two adult Independent Persons, one of each gender, (both must be DBS checked and have their names on the list of Accredited Children's Tutors), to whom children or concerned adults may go with issues of any kind relating to those under the age of 18. These persons should be trained in how to deal with allegations of abuse should they occur: for details of how to go about this please contact the OSC. This might simply involve explaining to any child who comes into contact with the organisation for more than just the odd occasion their right to talk with an independent person, and then giving them the name and contact arrangements. *[Please see Appendix B 'Appointing Independent Persons and ...' and Appendix D Safe from Harm: Section 1 note 2.]*

Parental Consent Form (PCF): Wherever under-18s participate in core activities (children's classes, junior youth groups, study circles, Bahá'í activities/residential events etc) a parental consent form should be used systematically. For a PCF, please email osc@bahai.org.

The Core of the Safeguarding Policy ctd

The Residential Schools Committee for England has put together Codes of Practice on the following: Child Protection; Disability Discrimination Act; Health and Safety; First Aid plus a First Aid Report Form and a Parental Consent Form. There is also an Unaccompanied Young People Code of Practice and School Guardianship form included in the guidance from the Working Party of the North East of England Bahá'í Summer School Booking pack 2010. This guidance is available from OSC.

If you are involved in the running of such an event and are not clear what needs to be done in this respect please contact the OSC.

However, persons from abroad who wish to serve as children's class teachers or junior youth animators may be granted 'substantial access' for ONE session (i.e. ONE children's class or junior youth session) without having a clear DBS Disclosure provided someone with such a valid DBS Disclosure is with them at all times. i.e. they must never be left in sole charge. More than one session requires that they be on the list of accredited tutors with a valid disclosure. *Any exceptions to this will need to be referred to the OSC for their agreement. All such people will need to have completed a Volunteer Statement.*

Persons visiting a class occasionally (that is no more than THREE times a year and for no more than TWO hours each time) to observe, to gain some practice, or to contribute a special session such as a workshop or craft activity, do not require a DBS check provided they are supervised at all times by an adult with a valid DBS certificate. *(Please read the full guidance in the National Assembly's 'Keeping Children Safe' policy under, 'Are there any exceptions to the rule that you need a DBS to teach a children's class or junior youth group?' and available from the OSC: osc@bahai.org.uk and*

Valid DBS Disclosure

People who anticipate having 'substantial access' to a child/children should apply for and receive a valid DBS Disclosure before actually being in a position of 'substantial access'.

A minimum of 8 weeks should be allowed, having posted the completed and checked form to the DBS, before expecting the Disclosure Certificate to arrive.

List of People considered competent to work with children

The National Spiritual Assembly will maintain a list of people (Accredited Children's Tutor list)

- * who are members of the Bahá'í community of the United Kingdom (see footnote²)
- * who have gone through the appropriate training and selection procedures,
- * who have a current DBS Enhanced Disclosure, and
- * who are safe to work with children.

There is no implication that people not on the list are therefore by definition incompetent and unsafe. It is simply that, if we are not to appear negligent, we have to go through a process that will, as far as humanly possible, guarantee that people in charge of our children are positively vetted to be safe rather than just assumed to be so.

We cannot use anyone not on this list to look after our children and young people. Those organising events must assure themselves that people used to look after children and young people are on the Accredited Children's Tutor List (ACTL). There can be no exemptions from this requirement unless people from abroad are involved or persons visiting a class occasionally (see above).

Their name needs to actually be on the ACTL before they are given substantial access (i.e. take up the position of authority over children as a tutor, project coordinator, children's class teacher or animator for junior youth).

- * Anyone not on the list discovered to be serving in any of these positions of authority and interacting with under 18s as part of that activity needs to be requested to stop immediately and wait for his or her inclusion on the list.
- * To check if someone is on the list, please contact the OSC list administrator: june.gumsley@bahai.org.uk

² Given the emphasis of the Plan on openness to all this criterion is not strictly applied and people working closely with us who are not Bahá'í are, when appropriate, included in the Accredited Children's Tutors list. When in doubt consult the OSC.

The Core of the Safeguarding Policy ctd.

As the disclosure process works differently in different parts of the U.K. and the list is maintained by the National Assembly for England and Wales only, people authorised to work with children in Scotland and Northern Ireland can be allowed to do so in England and Wales: it will be advisable to check with their Bahá'í Council before finalising arrangements.

All activities involving under 18s require ONE DBS checked person (so long as adult child ratios are adhered to) but it is best practice to have TWO DBS checked people who are legally adults present and who are on the Accredited List to care for their health, safety and well-being during the activity. 'Caring for' them is defined as being immediately available to help them in any way they should need.

* The reason why two DBS checked adults are needed at all times is because should something happen to one of them, the other is available in the event of an accident/attack etc. Both DBS checked adults don't have to be in the same room (adult to child ratios permitting). The second DBS adult must be able to help within a couple of minutes at most and not require the other DBS adult to leave the vicinity of the room to call him or her.

* In the case of under 18s attending a residential event, it should be pointed out to them that there will be a responsible adult with DBS Disclosure within easy reach at all times for their own safety. This should be included in the pre-project information sent out ahead of time.

The list is held by the National Office and by Bahá'í Councils in England and Wales as well as the Training Institute and the OSC. If in doubt contact the appropriate agency of the Faith.

People who have been convicted of an offence against minors and identified as presenting a risk or potential risk to children, when known to the National Spiritual Assembly, will all have special arrangements with an agency of the Faith, usually their local Assembly, and organisers will be informed of any special arrangements that need to be made on their behalf when the need arises. This is one of the reasons why organisers will need to inform the OSC, and through them the pastoral system, of the names of all those attending residential events. Between them these two agencies have knowledge of all Bahá'ís subject to safeguarding arrangements. Failure to implement the Policy for Safeguarding Children to the letter in respect of official disclosure procedures could well give an abuser an opportunity to slip through the net of protection even if they are known to their National and Local Spiritual Assembly. They will not necessarily be known to you. We are not allowed by law to keep a list of such people as part of our vetting process nor are we allowed to publicise their names.

Official Disclosure Procedures

There are three different systems. These are the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in England and Wales, the Central Registered Body for Scotland (CRBS) in Scotland, and Access-NI in Northern Ireland. The CRBS and Access-NI fall under the jurisdiction of the appropriate Bahá'í Councils and are not discussed in detail in this document. However, the National Assembly expects the basic principle of vetting through the appropriate official body to be followed in all parts of the UK. The contact details are as follows:

ENGLAND & WALES

In England and Wales an Enhanced Disclosure is obtained from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). If you do not yet have this, or are uncertain about what you should be doing, please contact the National Spiritual Assembly at the National Office (telephone 020-7584-2566, email: nsa@bahai.org.uk) or the National Assembly's Office for Safeguarding Children at osc@bahai.org.uk

NORTHERN IRELAND

In Northern Ireland a check is obtained via Access-NI. Please contact the Bahá'í Council for Northern Ireland (email: bcni@bahai.org.uk).

SCOTLAND

In Scotland an Enhanced Disclosure via the PVG scheme or Enhanced Disclosure Scheme (if awaiting retrospective application to join the PVG scheme) is required via the Central Registered Body in Scotland (CRBS). The Council for Scotland is the Bahá'í registered body with CRBS and it is essential that friends make the application under its auspices. Full details are available from the Council Secretary, email: bcs@bahai.org.uk. If you are not clear as to the exact nature of these please contact the National Spiritual Assembly.

The Core of the Safeguarding Policy ctd.

Regardless of the exact disclosure system in operation where you live, there must always be one person present (so long as adult child ratios are adhered to) but it is best practice to have two people who are legally adults present and immediately available at all children's classes, junior youth groups and study circles for young people under the age of eighteen³. The relevant child safeguarding procedures apply throughout the UK. No one without an appropriate disclosure can work on behalf of the Faith with or near children anywhere in the UK.

The rest of this Section sets out the implementation of DBS procedures in England and Wales as an example of how the process works. It would make for too lengthy and complicated a document to deal with all the other variations.

For anyone working with children and young people and having substantial contact, an Enhanced DBS Disclosure is now essential. For instance, these would be people working as teachers or classroom helpers at a school or those running children's classes, junior youth groups either in their own home or someone else's home or in hired premises.

i. What Steps Must You Take as an Organiser?

These involve accessing an official register, the Accredited Children's Tutor list (see below). These must be used for anyone working with and having substantial contact with children whether at a school, a children's class, a junior youth group, a junior youth or children's camp, a residential school or a national annual event such as a conference or convention.

There must always be one person present (so long as adult child ratios are adhered to) but it is best practice to have two people who are legally adults present and immediately available at all children's classes, junior youth groups and study circles for young people under the age of eighteen. The two adults in a study circle with young people attending or a children's class or junior youth group must each have an Enhanced Disclosure and their names actually on the list of 'accredited children's tutors'. The Bahá'í Councils for Scotland and Northern Ireland will need to continue their procedures along these lines for invoking CRBS and POC(NI) respectively.

What follows are the basic steps for making use of the DBS system in England and Wales.

Organisers will need to check first of all whether the person they plan to use is already on the Accredited Children's Tutor list of those accepted by the institutions of the Faith for such work. If so they can move right ahead with their plans. If not the disclosure procedure must be invoked or checks made through the appropriate Council if the person comes from Scotland or Northern Ireland.

Volunteer Statement

The first step must be to ask all potential volunteers to complete the Volunteer Statement form (see sample in **Appendix E**). This gives people the opportunity to themselves disclose any information likely to be thrown up by the disclosure process. No one who discloses a child related offence at this stage should be considered for work with children or young people. Other offences need not debar someone from this work but when the disclosure process is complete an interview to make sure there is no risk will generally need to be undertaken before the person is allowed to work with children/young people. The National Spiritual Assembly has guidance as to how this interview should be handled which is available on request.

The Disclosure Process

The National Assembly, or their agents, will request an Enhanced Disclosure before anyone is offered an opportunity to work with children in a way that involves substantial access. Residential schools, children's classes and childcare at national events will, in general, be the main Bahá'í contexts that provide such opportunities. Also the study circle process will be used to ensure that people wishing to work with children are competent to do so (**Appendix C**).

³ The Protection of Children Scotland Act (2003), which covers disclosure matters and is a key element in the protection of children and young people, applies up to age 18. It is therefore appropriate that the NSA Procedures (which will be amended for Scotland to include the requirements of this Act) continue to apply up to age 18 in Scotland as elsewhere.

The Core of the Safeguarding Policy ctd.

However these events may not be the only ones and if you are not sure what is appropriate please contact the OSC. The individual concerned (not the organiser) will then apply to the DBS for an Enhanced Disclosure by telephone (see ii: *How to obtain a DBS Disclosure* and also **Appendix A** for an easily printable version).

Please note that an applicant needs the supporting documents with the DBS application form to be checked in his or her presence: in other words (s)he always has to be there when the documents are checked.

Applicants must arrange to meet someone in their vicinity who is on the list of trained document checkers, which is available from the National Office or from the Office for Safeguarding Children.

ii. How to obtain a DBS Disclosure

The way to obtain a DBS Disclosure described below applies whether this is a renewal or a first Disclosure.

Please note that only people who are actively planning to work or are currently working as a tutor/ teacher/ animator with children or with youth under the age of 18 should apply for a Disclosure. If, on the other hand, you are not yet working or planning to work with under 18's, then you should wait to apply for a Disclosure until you clearly intend undertaking such work.

To obtain (or renew) a DBS Disclosure:

1. Please contact the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) on 03000 200 190. (Opening hours: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays - closed Sunday and public holidays.) You may have someone with you to help but you should make the phone call yourself if at all possible. Tell the DBS that the level check you require is **Enhanced**.
2. The DBS will ask for the name of the organisation and its number. State that it is the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the UK and the organisation number is 20386500004. Explain that your job title is **either Child Workforce Children's Tutor** if the execution of your role is taking place exclusively in a **public setting and/or a home other than your own** or **Child Workforce Home-based Children's Tutor** if, at the time of applying, the execution of your role is taking place in **your home**, (n.b. this latter job title will also allow you to work in a public setting and/or another home). For Local Spiritual Assembly members with responsibilities for overseeing children's classes and members of, for example, a residential school logistics committee, the role title is **Child Workforce Children's Activity Supervisor**.
3. When you receive the form **please do not attempt to fill it in before meeting with a Document Checker** (see paragraph 4 below). The reason for this request is that the DBS has a strict approach and rejects forms where the information given is in any way unclear. Read through the information on the front page, which includes guidance notes. A useful online DBS application form guide is available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-application-forms-guide-for-applicants>. If the form does not have sufficient space for all your details a continuation document is obtainable from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-continuation-sheet>
4. An updated list of acceptable identity documents is obtainable from: <https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/documents-the-applicant-must-provide>
Please arrange to meet with a trained Document Checker (list available from osc@bahai.org.uk) and take the form and related identity documents to the meeting. **The DBS requires the documents to be checked in the presence of the applicant.** The Document Checker will guide you through the application process and then send the form to a countersignatory. Applicants can track the progress of their DBS application online by visiting: <https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/tracking-application-getting-certificate>. Applicants will need their DBS application form reference number and date of birth. It is neither necessary nor sufficient to carry a disclosure as proof of accreditation to work with children. The only criterion of suitability is having your name on the ACTL: it is this that organisers must check before making use of you.

The Core of the Safeguarding Policy ctd.

iii. How to subscribe to the Disclosure and Barring Service online Update Service

Anyone who applies for a DBS Disclosure can choose to subscribe to the online DBS Update Service (usually £13 p.a. but **free for volunteers**). The payment of the annual fee is an applicant's responsibility. The DBS outlines the benefits as follows: you are in control of your DBS certificate and can keep it up-to-date online; time and money are saved; one DBS certificate is all you may ever need: you take it from role to role within the same workforce and employers can check a certificate online.

The Office for Safeguarding Children **recommends as standard procedure** subscribing to the online Update Service, following the procedure below.

Guidance from the DBS website:

'You can subscribe to the Update Service at the same time as you apply for your next DBS check, using your application reference number. This number is printed on the DBS form or you can ask your employer or the checking organisation for it. Your application form must be received by the DBS within 28 days of subscribing.

'If you forgot to subscribe at this time you still have another opportunity when you receive your DBS certificate. To subscribe with your DBS certificate number you must do so within 30 days of the DBS certificate issue date.'

Further information on the online Update Service is available by visiting:

<https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service>

*[Note: Please read pages 24-27: **Appendix F** Policy on the Recruitment of Individuals Who Have a Criminal Record & **Appendix G** Policy on the Secure Storage, Handling, Use, Retention and Disposal of Disclosures and Disclosures Information]*

iv. Informing the Office for Safeguarding Children

Anyone who subscribes to the Update Service must inform the OSC immediately at osc@bahai.org.uk so that this information can be added to the National Assembly's Accredited Children's Tutor list (ACTL). A clear Enhanced Disclosure certificate along with name and contact details on the National Assembly's ACTL are requirements for working with under-18's within the Bahá'í community. Subscribers will receive an OSC renewal reminder letter every three years. On receipt of the letter anyone who intends to continue working with under-18's must contact the OSC directly as consent will be required to check online the status of his/her disclosure certificate.

Anyone who is no longer involved in under-18's activities only needs to contact the OSC if at some future date he/she wishes to resume activities. At this point, before working with under-18's can resume, consent will be required to check online the status of the individual's disclosure certificate prior to adding his/her details to the ACTL.

This guidance applies to England and Wales only. If you live elsewhere in the UK please check with your Council to determine whether or not comparable changes have been made to the system under its jurisdiction.

v. Disclosures 16 - 17 Year-olds

The minimum age for applying for a DBS Enhanced Disclosure is 16 years old and over at the time of application. 16 - 17 year olds who are involved in helping run children's classes and/or helping with Junior Youth Groups should be asked to apply for an Enhanced Disclosure. It will have to be made clear that such people, in fact all those under 18, are never to be left in sole charge of a class or group as they count towards the number of children present and are not considered, under law, as adults who can be given such responsibility. The DBS application process for 16 - 17 year olds is identical with that of an adult.

Please read '*Keeping Children Safe*' policy, page 3, '*What is the guidance for a youth aged 16 or 17?*'

The Core of the Safeguarding Policy ctd.

vi. Frequency of Disclosures

There will be many individual Bahá'ís who have responsibility for, or substantial access to children at a number of events. The question therefore arises – how often does one person have to obtain a Disclosure? Does carrying the procedure out once suffice for several events or a specific period of time? In order to ensure that the Child Guidelines are applied consistently and in a way that will ensure maximum protection the National Spiritual Assembly has decided, on the advice of the DBS and the rules of the Charity Commission, that the following rules apply.

- * If a DBS Disclosure is required because you are teaching or having substantial access to the children at Bahá'í schools, children's classes, etc which run on an academic year cycle, the procedure should be completed at the start of the year. It is the responsibility of organisers always to ensure that the DBS procedure is instigated in good time, i.e. ideally three but at least two months before the start of the year.
- * Everyone who continues to work with children and young people, with an Enhanced level of Disclosure, will be required to apply for a new Enhanced Disclosure every **three years** (unless they have subscribed to the online DBS Update Service see iii: *How subscribe to the Disclosure and Barring Service online Update Service*) before they can continue on the Accredited Children's Tutor list.
- * If a DBS Disclosure is needed for an occasional event (e.g. annual such as a residential school), then the Disclosure procedure must be instigated ideally three but at least two months in advance of the first such event in any three year period.

vii. Fully Operational

This system is now fully operation. If a school is to continue in England, Wales and Scotland an Enhanced Disclosure process must be completed for every person with substantial access to children. In Northern Ireland the Access-NI process must be completed. Failure to do so will almost certainly jeopardise a school/event's ability to continue running.

viii. Contact Details

For further clarification and advice please contact the OSC:

Paula Withers (OSC Coordinator):

Email: wITHERSPaula@hotmail.com or
paula.withers@bahai.org.uk

Home Tel: 01865 776830

Mobile: 07788 143183

[Please email or text before phoning]

Sue Cave (OSC Member):

Email: sue.cave@bahai.org.uk

Home Tel: 01291 623402

Mobile: 07773 851152

Elizabeth Jenkerson (OSC Member):

Email: elizabeth.jenkerson@btopenworld.com

Home Tel: 01962 850167

Mobile: 07966 308870

Meera Arumugam (OSC Member):

Email: mqarumugam@gmail.com

Mobile: 07748185444

Appendix A

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Disclosure Application Process: Version for General Use (England and Wales) (Revised April 2018)

How to obtain a DBS Disclosure (This procedure can also be followed to renew a Disclosure)

Please note that only people who are actively planning to work or are currently working as a tutor/teacher/animator with children or with youth under the age of 18 should apply for a Disclosure. If, on the other hand, you are not yet working or planning to work with under 18's, then you should wait to apply for a Disclosure until you clearly intend undertaking such work.

If you have subscribed to the online DBS Update Service and received an Update Service ID, please email the Office for Safeguarding Children at osc@bahai.org.uk to renew your current DBS certificate. If not, please follow the procedure detailed below:

To obtain (or renew) a DBS Disclosure:

1. Please contact the DBS on 03000 200 190 (Opening hours: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. make the phone call yourself if at all possible. Tell the DBS that the level of check you require is **Enhanced**.
2. The DBS will ask for the name of the organisation and its number. State that it is the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the UK and the organisation number is 20386500004. Explain that your job title is either **Child Workforce Children's Tutor** if your execution of the role is taking place exclusively in a **public setting and/or a home other than your own** or **Child Workforce Home-based Children's Tutor** if, at the time of applying, the execution of your role is taking place in **your home** (n.b. this latter job title will also allow you to work in a public setting and/or another home). For Local Spiritual Assembly members with responsibilities for overseeing children's classes and members of, for example, a residential school logistics committee, the role title is **Child Workforce Children's Activity Supervisor**.
3. When you receive the form **please do not attempt to fill it in before meeting with a Document Checker** (see para. 4 below). The reason for this request is that the DBS has a strict approach and rejects forms where the information given is in any way unclear. Read through the information on the front page, which includes guidance notes. A useful online DBS application form guide is available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-application-forms-guide-for-applicants>. If the form does not have sufficient space for all your details a continuation document is obtainable from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-continuation-sheet>
4. An updated list of acceptable identity documents is obtainable from: <https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/documents-the-applicant-must-provide>
5. Please arrange to meet with a trained Document Checker (see accompanying list or email: osc@bahai.org.uk) and take the form and related identity documents to the meeting. **The DBS requires the documents to be checked in the presence of the applicant.** The Document Checker will guide you through the application process and then send the form to a countersignatory.

How to subscribe to the Disclosure and Barring Service online Update Service

Anyone who applies for a DBS Disclosure can choose to subscribe to the online DBS Update Service (usually £13 p.a. but **free for volunteers**). The payment of the annual fee is an applicant's responsibility. The DBS outlines the benefits as follows: you are in control of your DBS certificate and can keep it up-to-date online; time and money are saved; one DBS certificate is all you may ever need: you take it from role to role within the same workforce and employers can check a certificate online.

The Office for Safeguarding Children **recommends as standard procedure** subscribing to the online DBS Update Service following the procedure below.¹

Guidance from the DBS website:

‘You can subscribe to the Update Service at the same time as you apply for your next DBS check, using your application reference number. This number is printed on the DBS form or you can ask your employer or the checking organisation for it. Your application form must be received by the DBS within 28 days of subscribing.

If you forgot to subscribe at this time you still have another opportunity when you receive your DBS certificate. To subscribe with your DBS certificate number you must do so within 30 days of the DBS certificate issue date.’

Informing the Office for Safeguarding Children

Anyone who subscribes to the Update Service must inform the OSC immediately at osc@bahai.org.uk so that this information can be added to the National Assembly’s Accredited Children’s Tutor list (ACTL). A clear Enhanced Disclosure certificate along with name and contact details on the National Assembly’s ACTL are requirements for working with under-18’s within the Bahá’í community. Subscribers will receive an OSC renewal reminder letter every three years. On receipt of the letter anyone who intends to continue working with under-18’s must contact the OSC directly as consent will be required to check online the status of his/her disclosure certificate.

Anyone who is no longer involved in under-18’s activities only needs to contact the OSC if at some future date he/she wishes to resume activities. At this point, before working with under-18’s can resume, consent will be required to check online the status of the individual’s disclosure certificate prior to adding his/her details to the ACTL.

Further information on the online Update Service is available by visiting: <https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service>

N.B. This guidance applies to England and Wales only. If you live elsewhere in the UK please check with your Council to determine whether or not comparable changes have been made to the system under its jurisdiction.

¹ ‘The DBS definition of a volunteer is defined in the Police Act 1997 (criminal records) Regulations 2002 as: “Any person engaged in an activity which involves spending time, unpaid (except for travel and other approved out-of-pocket expenses), doing something which aims to benefit some third party and not a close relative.” To qualify for a free-of-charge criminal record check, the applicant must not benefit directly from the position the DBS application is being submitted for.’ The applicant must not:

- benefit directly from the position for which the DBS application is being submitted
- receive any payment (except for travel and other approved out-of-pocket expenses)
- be on a work placement
- be on a course that requires them to do this job role
- be in a trainee position that will lead to a full time role/qualification

Appendix B

Minimum Standards For Organised Teaching Projects

Appointing Independent Persons responsible for

Child Protection Issues

Programmes should designate two “independent persons”, one of each gender, (both adults must be DBS checked and have their names on the National Assembly’s list of Accredited Children Tutors) and to whom children or concerned adults may go with issues of any kind relating to those under the age of 18 - these persons should be trained in how to deal with allegations of abuse should they occur (contact OSC for advice). This might simply involve explaining to any child who comes into contact with the organisation for more than just the odd occasion their right to talk with an independent person, and then giving them the names and contact arrangements.

Additional Safeguards

- * Number of teaching project participants to be limited so that organisers are able to fully monitor attendees at all times. The number decided upon at the outset to be adhered to.
- * Attendees to be on an invitation only basis by designated committee.
- * Parents participating in a project to be discouraged from bringing children too young to join in: if they do so, they must assume responsibility for their children at all times.
- * Guidelines of behaviour to be made available in hard copy to attendees and parents: clarify that where the guidelines are broken attendees will be asked to leave the project.
- * Teaching projects to be limited to those over 16 and in the event that a younger child should wish to attend and participate in the project, the cluster agencies would first need to consult and give consent depending on the child’s personality, experience in teaching and background. Where under 18 year olds attend, DBS guidelines must be adhered to at all times and a guardian appointed to each child under 18 years old.
- * When attendees under 18 end up not participating as planned in the project programme, the project coordinator in consultation with the cluster agencies, should ask such persons to leave the project, informing their parents where appropriate and assisting them to return home.
- * To have a Council member and/or Auxiliary Board member in attendance and/or available to contact at all times during the project to consult concerning on the spot decisions.
- * Attendees should have completed at least one Ruhi book or be a trained/ experienced resource for that project.

Some examples of specific circumstances

Teaching teams – under 18s

When putting under 18s into teaching teams at a collective project, it is essential that they are put with an adult who is DBS checked. There needs to be another DBS checked adult immediately available to help them in the case of emergency too.

- * To ensure this happens, it is useful to put the under 18 into a team of four, which is sent to a geographical area which can break up into two groups of two when they arrive.
- * As long as the groups don't move more than five minutes walk from each other, and have each other's mobile phone numbers, this would be sufficient cover.

Advice for dealing with youth contacted through a project

- * Every effort should be made to make contact with parents within one day; an audit trail should be kept of progress and parents' contact details should be logged.
- * Bonds of friendship formed with parents are the best guarantee of safeguarding the interests of the junior youth contacted in the course of a project.
- * Relationships should be built with the local police force to make them aware of the purpose of the community building activity within the neighbourhood.
- * Where possible an institution such as the Local Spiritual Assembly should be involved with building this relationship.
- * Where under-18s are participating in community activities a parental consent form (PCF) must be used. For a copy please email osc@bahai.org.uk.

Home visits – under 18s

In the case of under 18s being invited into a house for the purposes of a home visit, it is essential that they are with a responsible DBS checked adult with another one no more than five minutes walk away.

Overnight stays – under 18s

In cases where under 18s need to stay overnight in a venue as part of a collective campaign, it is essential that there are at least two DBS checked adults with them in the venue at all times.

- * A designated adult with a current DBS Disclosure acts as guardian and main communicator with the household.
- * If one of the adults anticipates needing to leave the venue, even for a short period of time, there needs to be another DBS checked adult to cover them.
- * The same is true if a youth needs to leave the venue for any period of time. A DBS checked adult must be with them.
- * The reason for this is because the adults in this situation are in effect acting 'in loco parentis'. Safety is of paramount concern and comes before the youth's autonomy.
- * All youth participating who are aged 15, 16, and 17 or younger will be treated as a group and will be bound by the above rules whether their parents are in attendance or not.

Parents of under 18s in attendance

The above guidelines must be adhered to even if the parents of the youth are in attendance at the project/meeting/study circle/class venue.

Appendix C

Ensuring the Competence of Children's Class Teachers

The core of Book Three is preparing to pursue the path of service as children's class teachers. Ideally tutors for future children's classes should themselves be experienced as children's class teachers but such tutors may often be hard to find. If a Book Three group is comprised of people, none of whom intend to teach children's classes, then the Book Three tutor need have no qualification other than having completed the sequence of courses. This will hopefully alleviate the bottle-neck that would otherwise obstruct a large number of people moving up through the sequence of courses. The minimum requirement for children's class teachers is that they have completed Books 1, 2 and 3.

We will be demanding a great deal from inexperienced teachers, and so accompaniment is the key word for activities following Book Three. Ideally a new teacher will be accompanied during a visit to the family of each child, and during the first few lessons. Such accompaniment will provide support for the teacher and enable observation of the new teacher's competence in the field. The minimum requirement is for the new teacher to be accompanied on the home visit and one of the first three lessons.

The implications of this are that the institute coordinator needs to work with the children's class coordinator in order to allocate suitable tutors for a group and that part of the role of the children's class cluster coordinator is to accompany the new teachers into the field before they are added to the list of accredited teachers for children's classes. There will be a different track for those who just wish to move to Book Four and onwards, i.e. just a practice class with a more experienced teacher.

The OSC is still exploring the best way of introducing this fully. One of the challenges will be to identify the initial list of suitable teachers who could tutor and accompany future teachers.

Appendix D: Section 1

Extracts from *Safe from Harm*

A code of practice for safeguarding the welfare of children in voluntary organisations in England and Wales HMSO – 1993

“Safe from Harm” makes 13 recommendations. What follows is a distillation of those not covered fully in the policies the National Spiritual Assembly has devised but which are nonetheless very relevant to our situation within the Bahá’í community.

- 1) **Planning the Work:** The work of volunteers should be organised so as to minimise those situations where it may be possible for children to be abused. For instance, adults working alone with a child should only do so in an area that can be observed (Guideline Two). Organisations need to plan the work of all staff members so as to minimise situations where they might be tempted or able to abuse (Guideline Four). Volunteers should be given a clear and unambiguous idea of their role, including accountability, a supervisor and a description of their work. They should also be clear about their duty to prevent the abuse of all children in contact with the organisation (Guideline Five). The general availability of good management supervision is crucial. For example, if any child appears to be receiving exceptional treatment, the supervisor should explore the relationship further. Supervisors should also take or create opportunities for observing the member of staff while (s)he is working with children. Notes should ideally be kept of all supervision meetings.
- 2) **Appointing an independent person:** They also recommend that programmes should designate an “independent person” to whom children may go with any concerns of any kind - this person should be trained in how to deal with allegations of abuse should they occur. This might simply involve explaining to any child who comes into contact with the organisation for more than just the odd occasion their right to talk with an independent person, and then giving them the name and contact arrangements. For smaller local organisations it may be possible to persuade a respected figure in the community, who has demonstrated his trustworthiness, to undertake this task (Guideline Three).
- 3) **Selecting staff:** The general principle they suggest is to treat all would-be volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children (Guideline Seven). This includes obtaining at least one reference from a person who has experience of the applicant’s volunteering work with children. Where there is no prior experience they suggest obtaining a character reference (Guideline Eight). They argue that previous experience should be explored, and where known, should be analysed carefully (Guideline Nine), for example for significant gaps that might indicate a prison sentence and (Guideline Ten) to find out whether an applicant has any convictions for criminal offences against children.¹

¹ Please note: ‘On the 29 May 2013, legislation came into force that allows certain old and minor cautions and convictions to no longer be subject to disclosure. In addition employers will no longer be able to take an individual’s old and minor cautions and convictions into account when making decisions.’ [source: DBS Information for employers and applicants v2.3]. Please read Appendix F. Policy on the Recruitment of Individuals who have a Criminal Record on pages 24-25 of this policy and the following website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-filtering-guidance>

Appendix D: Section 2

Extracts from *Working Together to Safeguard Children*⁴

(© Crown 2018)

The guidance clarifies the core legal requirements, making it much clearer what individuals and organisations should do to keep children safe and promote their welfare. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that everyone who works with children has a responsibility to keep them safe.

This guidance applies to all organisations and agencies who have functions relating to children. Specifically, this guidance applies to all local authorities, clinical commissioning groups, police and all other organisations and agencies as set out in chapter 2.

This guidance replaces *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)*. Links to relevant supplementary guidance that professionals should consider alongside this guidance can be found at Appendix B of this guidance.

Chapter 2 – Organisational Responsibilities

Chapter 2 sets out the roles, responsibilities and duties of the different people and organisations that work directly with, and whose work affects, children and young people.

All organisations that provide services or work with children and young people should have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including:

- * a senior board level lead to take leadership responsibility for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements;
- * a clear line of accountability for the commissioning and/or provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- * safe recruitment practices for individuals whom the organisation will permit to work regularly with children, including policies on when to obtain a criminal record check;
- * clear policies in line with those from the LSCB for dealing with allegations against people who work with children;
- * if an organisation removes an individual (paid or unpaid volunteer) from work such as looking after children (or would have, had the person not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children, the organisation must make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service. It is an offence to fail to make a referral without good reason;
- * appropriate supervision and support for staff, including undertaking safeguarding training; and
- * have arrangements which set out clearly the processes for sharing information, with other professionals and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

⁴ This 2018 publication can be downloaded from the website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

Chapter 2 – Organisational Responsibilities etc.

The previous chapter set out how organisations and agencies should take a co-ordinated approach to ensure children are effectively safeguarded. A range of individual organisations and agencies working with children and families have specific statutory duties to promote the welfare of children and ensure they are protected from harm. These duties, as applied to individual organisations and agencies, are set out in this chapter. *(point 1)*

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations, agencies and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Local authorities should put in place arrangements to provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations and agencies on how to deal with allegations against people who work with children. Local authorities should also ensure that there are appropriate arrangements in place to liaise effectively with the police and other organisations and agencies to monitor the progress of cases and ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process. *(point 6)*

Individual organisational responsibilities (from Chapter 2)

In addition to these section 11 duties, which apply to a number of named organisations, further safeguarding duties are also placed on individual organisations through other statutes. The key duties that fall on each individual organisation are set out below. *(point 10)*

Voluntary, charity, social enterprise (VCSE), faith-based organisations and private sectors

Every VCSE, faith-based organisation and private sector organisation or agency should have policies in place to safeguard and protect children from harm. These should be followed and systems should be in place to ensure compliance in this. Individual practitioners, whether paid or volunteer, should be aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and protecting children from harm, how they should respond to child protection concerns and how to make a referral to local authority children's social care or the police if necessary. *(point 61)*

Every VCSE, faith-based organisation and private sector organisation or agency should have in place the arrangements described in this chapter. They should be aware of how they need to work with the safeguarding partners in a local area. Charities (within the meaning of section 1 Charities Act 2011), religious organisations (regulation 34 and schedule 3 to School Admissions) and any person involved in the provision, supervision or oversight of sport or leisure are included within the relevant agency regulations. This means if the safeguarding partners name them as a relevant partner they must cooperate. Other VCSE, faith-based and private sector organisations not on the list of relevant agencies can also be asked to cooperate as part of the local arrangements and should do so. *(point 62)*

Supplementary guidance on safeguarding issues is in Appendix B:

Further sources of information: Department for Education Guidance

- * **DfE** What to do if you are worried about a child being abused?
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused>
- * **DfE** Keeping children safe in education (*includes 'Dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and staff'*)
<http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- * **DfE** Safeguarding children from abuse linked to faith or belief
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-action-plan-to-tackle-child-abuse-linked-to-faith-or-belief>

It is essential that faith communities have in place effective arrangements for working with sexual and violent offenders who wish to worship and be part of their religious community. This should include a contract of behaviour stipulating the boundaries an offender would be expected to keep.

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements

Many of the agencies subject to the section 11 duty are members of the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), including the police, prison and agencies to manage the risks posed by violent and sexual offenders living in the community in order to protect the public and should work closely with the safeguarding partners over services to commission locally. (*point 56*)

Information on MAPPA can be found at www.mappa.justice.gov.uk

Appendix E

Voluntary Disclosure Form

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

All applicants are asked to complete this form and return to *(insert agency's address)*
.....in a separate sealed envelope

Role position (please tick one):

Child Workforce Home-based Children's Tutor

Child Workforce Children's Tutor

Your name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____ Email: _____

Voluntary Disclosure

I consent to a Disclosure and Barring Service check. I am aware that details of pending prosecutions, previous convictions, cautions, or bind overs against me will be disclosed along with any other relevant information which may be known to the police, Department of Health or the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Disclosures

Excluding motoring offences dealt with a fixed penalty and not court related, do you have any convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings that are not "protected" as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013) or are you at present the subject of a criminal investigation/pending prosecution?

[Note: Please read pages 24-27: Appendix F Policy on the Recruitment of Individuals Who Have a Criminal Record & Appendix G Policy on the Secure Storage, Handling, Use, Retention and Disposal of Disclosures and Disclosures Information]

YES NO (Please tick)

If yes, please give details including the nature of the offences

I understand and accept that making a false declaration is a serious matter that could lead to my membership privileges ("voting rights") in the Bahá'í community being suspended or removed.

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix F

Policy on the Recruitment of Individuals Who Have a Criminal Record

(Adopted March 2004: Reviewed April 2018)

- ❖ As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the UK and its agents (henceforth the National Assembly) complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. They undertake not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a certificate on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.
- ❖ The National Spiritual Assembly and those acting on its behalf use the DBS to ensure that all those applying for posts, whether paid or voluntary, are suitable candidates. All candidates will be treated fairly in the light of any information disclosed by this process and a conviction will not automatically bar them from employment in any capacity.
- ❖ The National Assembly is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services regardless of race, gender, religion, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.
- ❖ We have this written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders, which is made available to all DBS applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.
- ❖ We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills, and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications, and experience.
- ❖ We will request a DBS check only if the work involved in a post has been proved to require it because of the potential risks involved. **For those positions where a DBS check is required**, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs and requests for volunteers will contain a statement that **a DBS check will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.**
- ❖ Where a DBS certificate is to form part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential, cover to a designated person working for the National Assembly and we guarantee that this information is only seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

- ❖ We can only ask a person to provide details of convictions and cautions that the National Assembly is legally entitled to know about. When making decisions we will no longer be able to take an individual's old and minor cautions and convictions into account if these are 'filtered' and 'protected'. Filtering is the term that the DBS uses to describe the process which will identify and remove protected convictions and cautions so that they are no longer disclosed on a criminal record certificate issued by the DBS.¹
- ❖ Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced can be legally requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended), **the National Assembly can only ask a person about convictions and cautions that are not protected.**
- ❖ We make sure that all those working for the National Assembly or its agencies have been trained to assess whether or not an offence is relevant to the post. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- ❖ We will create an appropriate opportunity to discuss any offences or relevant considerations that might impact upon the interview outcome. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment/a volunteer post.
- ❖ We make every subject of a DBS certificate aware of the existence of the DBS Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.²
- ❖ We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a DBS check with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment/a volunteer post.
- ❖ **Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us.** This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-filtering-guidance>

The website directs applicants to the guidance and criteria which explains the filtering of old and minor cautions and convictions which are now 'protected' so not subject to disclosure to employers

² DBS Code of Practice: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice>

Appendix G

Policy on the Secure Storage, Handling, Use, Retention and Disposal of DBS Certificate and Certificate Information

General principles

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the UK and its agents (henceforth the National Assembly) comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of certificate and certificate information. The National Assembly also complies fully with its obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of certificate information and has a written policy on these matters, which is available to those who wish to see it on request.

Storage & Access

Certificate information is never kept on an applicant's personnel file and is always kept separately and securely, in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

Handling

In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997, certificate information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom certificates or certificate information has been revealed and we recognise that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

In addition, organisations that require retention of certificates in order to demonstrate 'safer recruitment' practice for the purpose of safeguarding audits may be legally entitled to retain the certificate. This practice will need to be compliant with the Data Protection Act, Human Rights Act, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and incorporated within the individual organisation's policy on the correct handling and safekeeping of DBS certificate information.

Usage

Certificate information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

Retention

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep certificate information for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints or be for the purpose of completing safeguarding audits.

If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep certificate information for longer than six-months, we will consult the DBS about this and will give full consideration to the General Data Protection Regulation, Data Protection and Human Rights of the individual subject before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

Disposal

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any certificate information is immediately suitably destroyed by secure means, i.e. by shredding, pulping or burning. While awaiting destruction, certificate information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack). We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the certificate or any copy or representation of the contents of a certificate. However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a certificate, the name of the subject, the type of certificate requested, the position for which the certificate was requested, the unique reference number of the certificate and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

Acting as an Umbrella Body

Before acting as an Umbrella Body (one which countersigns applications and receives certificate information on behalf of other employers or recruiting organisations), we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that they can comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice. We will also take all reasonable steps to satisfy ourselves that they will handle, use, store, retain and dispose of certificate information in full compliance with the DBS Code and in full accordance with this policy. We will also ensure that any body or individual, at whose request applications for certificates are countersigned, has such a written policy and, if necessary, will provide a model policy for that body or individual to use or adapt for this purpose.¹

DBS logo

The DBS logo is protected by crown copyright, the copying and use of the DBS logo is not permitted without prior approval of the DBS.

¹ DBS Code of Practice: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice>

Appendix H

Children's Activity Organiser's Checklist

(anybody under 18 counts as a 'child' for these purposes)

This form must be returned to the Office for Safeguarding Children (OSC)
no later than SEVEN days after the end of the event: osc@bahai.org.uk

ACTION ITEM	✓ or X	REASON FOR NOT DOING
All event organisers have read all the relevant guidance documents. <i>[For policies, consent forms & documents please contact the Office for Safeguarding Children: osc@bahai.org.uk]</i>		
The organisers have checked that all those working with children/young people are on the Accredited Children's Tutor's List (ACTL). <i>[NSA's Policy for Safeguarding Children]</i>		
The organisers have ensured that there were two people, who are on the ACTL, immediately available for a class/group etc. <i>[NSA's Policies for Safeguarding Children & Keeping Children Safe]</i>		
The organisers have ensured that for any major event there are two adult trained Independent Person, one of each gender and DBS checked and on the ACTL, to whom others can report problems. <i>[Guidance for Residential Schools]</i>		
The organisers have ensured that all consent and other forms have been filled in as appropriate. <i>[e.g., Voluntary Disclosure, Parental Consent, Guardianship forms. Supplementary Materials: Guidance for Residential Schools and Imagery, Internet & Mobiles]</i>		
The organisers have ensured that persons from abroad who served as children's class teachers or junior youth animators were granted 'substantial access' for ONE session only, unless the Office for Safeguarding Children had been consulted beforehand.		
RISK ASSESSMENT Obtain the schools/premises risk assessment. If necessary write a new one. <i>[Guidance for Residential Schools. Health & Safety Risk Assessment form & example template]</i>		
The organisers have ensured that the appropriate adult/child ratios were observed for the event following a risk assessment. <i>[Keeping Children Safe policy]</i>		
The organisers have ensured that the minimum standards (see Appendix B) have been observed if this was (or involved) a teaching event/activity. <i>[NSA's Policy for Safeguarding Children Appendix B]</i>		

Please complete the following details
Name (in full):
Official Position:
Agency:
Event:
Date:

Appendix I

OTHER RESOURCES

In addition to electronic copies downloadable from the National Assembly's UK Bahá'í Resources website (under Guidance/Safeguarding Children) at <https://bahaidata.com>, the documents and appendices of the **Child Safeguarding Procedures** are available from the National Office in hard copy or from the Office for Safeguarding Children as PDF files.

There is also a **General Guide to Child Protection & Safeguarding** policy available in electronic PDF format or hard copy.

There are supplementary policies relating to:

- how to respond to a child reporting possible abuse,
- how to recognise the signs of abuse,
- when to tell the local authority,
- document checkers' list,
- images of children, internet issues and mobile phones,
- appropriate procedures for residential and day care events including parental consent and guardianship forms and risk assessment templates,
- prospective independent person's guide for residential schools,
- responding to bullying and self-harm
- minimum DBS requirements for keeping children safe

The following appendices in this policy can be obtained as separate documents

- How to obtain a DBS Disclosure & Subscribe to the DBS online Update Service
- Policy on the Recruitment of Individuals Who Have a Criminal Record
- Policy on the Secure Storage, Handling, Use, Retention and Disposal of Disclosures and Disclosures Information
- Voluntary Disclosure Form
- Children's Activity Organiser's Checklist

For electronic copies, please email the OSC: osc@bahai.org.uk

For hard copies, please contact the National Office by post, phone or email:

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the UK

27 Rutland Gate

London SW71PD

Email: nsa@bahai.org.uk

Tel: 020-7584 256