**XXXX Area Meeting - Safeguarding Policy and Arrangements**

This document sets out the policy of XXXX Area Meeting concerning the safeguarding of all in meeting, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults. It includes a framework for our Local Meetings to establish safeguarding arrangements.

**Safeguarding Policy**

**We are committed to promoting and supporting Local Meetings which:**

* ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse;
* are youth-friendly and child-friendly and nurture their positive development;
* enable children and young people to be active contributors to the life of the meeting;
* encourage any adult who may be vulnerable to lead as independent a life as possible, to choose how to lead their life, and to be an active contributor to the life of the meeting;
* protect children, the young and vulnerable persons from actual or potential harm;
* enable and encourage concerns to be raised and responded to openly and consistently.

**We recognise that:**

* the welfare of children, the young and vulnerable persons is paramount;
* everyone who is vulnerable in our meetings (regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity) has the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
* abuse of the young or vulnerable can occur in all communities and is most likely to occur within families and by people known to the young or vulnerable person;
* working in partnership with children, the young or vulnerable, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of children, the young and vulnerable persons.

**We will endeavour to safeguard all, especially children, the young and vulnerable people by:**

**In all our activities:**

* valuing, listening to and respecting them;
* fostering and encouraging best practice for working with children, the young and vulnerable people, in co-operation with statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities.

**In selecting volunteers, following recommended practice from Quaker Life in:**

* ensuring all necessary checks are made to promote the safe selection of volunteers working with children, the young and vulnerable people;
* providing supervision, support and training.

**In our publicity:**

* sharing information about good safeguarding practice with all those in our meetings, including children, parents, and all those working with them.

**When concerns are raised, following XXXX procedures in:**

* responding without delay to every concern raised that a child or young person may have been harmed, or be at risk from harm; or about the behaviour of an adult or child;
* working with Quaker and appropriate statutory bodies during an investigation into child abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of the meeting;
* challenging any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.

**In our care:**

* ensuring that support from overseers is offered to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse;
* ensuring that support from overseers is offered to any member of our meeting against whom an allegation is made.
* ensuring, in partnership with Quaker and other bodies, that support from overseers is offered for any member of our community known to have offended against a child or young person, or to pose a risk to them, and that appropriate measures are adopted in safeguarding for our meetings.

**Safeguarding Arrangements**

These arrangements are to establish guidance for Local Meetings in XXXX so that all concerned can have confidence that safeguarding arrangements follow good practice.

1. XXXX ’s safeguarding policy is prepared by XXXX Trustees and approved by XXXX minute.
2. XXXX shall subscribe to the Churches’ Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS), which provides a 24 hour helpline for guidance during an incident.
3. Local Meetings in XXXX shall use the agency recommended by Britain Yearly Meeting (currently Due Diligence Checking Ltd (DDC)) to carry out Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. The Verifier for checks is normally the Local Meeting Clerk or Assistant Clerk. Any other Verifier shall be appointed by minute of the Local Meeting, and a copy of the minute sent to the appropriate person (currently Michael Booth) at Friends House.
4. XXXX is to appoint a Safeguarding Coordinator and a Deputy, and each Local Meeting is to appoint a Safeguarding Officer.
	1. The XXXX Safeguarding Coordinator has required duties which include:
		1. acting as an advocate for children and vulnerable adults;
		2. reporting concerns of abuse to the statutory authorities, and acting independently in doing so;
		3. overseeing the implementation of safeguarding policies;
		4. ensuring that policies are regularly reviewed.
	2. The XXXX Safeguarding Coordinator is the focal point for receiving and circulating to Local Meeting Safeguarding Officers information from Quaker Life and other Quaker bodies about safeguarding.
	3. DBS checks shall be carried out as required by the CCPAS and Quaker guidance where possible using the DDC online application service. The XXXX Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy shall have access to all DBS records for XXXX .
	4. XXXX shall offer and fund training so that the XXXX Safeguarding Coordinator and the Local Meeting Safeguarding Officers can do their work confidently. This training shall be under the care of XXXX Elders and Overseers.
5. Each Local Meeting is responsible for developing appropriate safeguarding arrangements and approving them by minute.
	1. Any reported incident must be raised through the XXXX Safeguarding Coordinator and in consultation with the CCPAS helpline, and documented as soon as possible.
	2. Appropriate information about safeguarding and on the reporting of concerns shall be provided to children and members of each Local Meeting.
6. Each Local Meeting Premises Committee must advise users of their Meeting House of the requirement for them to have appropriate safeguarding arrangements.

**Annual Review and Report**

The safeguarding policy and arrangements shall be reviewed annually by XXXX Trustees.

The XXXX Trustees’ Annual Report shall include a report from the XXXX Safeguarding Coordinator.

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