



Britain Yearly Meeting

Online safeguarding policy

Version 4

Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) is committed to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk (also known as vulnerable adults) we encounter in our online activities. We aim to apply the same rigorous level of safeguarding protection online as we do in person.

We are committed to creating safe virtual spaces in our communications, gatherings and online events. This policy statement demonstrates this commitment, which aligns with our core values and provides staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to online safety.

We expect staff and volunteers to comply with our *Expectations of volunteers and BYM staff* guidance (see **Appendix 2**) online as well as in person. Staff and volunteers working in connection with BYM events and anyone who uses a @quaker.org.uk email address or other email address managed by BYM, must follow the *Acceptable use policy* (see **staff intranet** or **Appendix 1**).

Scope

This online safety policy encompasses communications between our staff and volunteers, and children, young people (under 18) or adults at risk, including emails, video meetings and online events. This means protection from online harm such as:

- bullying and harassment
- sexual exploitation and grooming
- discrimination and abuse on the grounds of any protected characteristic
- sharing of illegal and inappropriate imagery
- cyberstalking
- impersonation and hacking
- disinformation and misinformation
- the oversharing of personal information
- financial abuse such as exerting improper pressure with regard to a person's finances

Guidance specific to social media is signposted elsewhere in this document.

Definitions

'Online safeguarding' means safeguarding involving the use of electronic devices and applications to communicate and access the Internet. In practice, it means protecting

children, young people and adults at risk from harm in the online environment, particularly at our organised online events, through the implementation of effective technical solutions, advice and support as well as procedures for managing incidents.

An 'adult at risk' is someone who may be in need of help because they have care and support needs. They may be unable to stop someone else from harming or exploiting them.

Responding to an online incident or disclosure at an event

In the event of an incident or disclosure of such abuse, staff/volunteers will deal with it the same way as other safeguarding incidents, following the guidance in the *BYM safeguarding policy*.

The key principles remain the same, whether online or face to face; the welfare of the child or young person or adult at risk is paramount. If anyone has a concern about a child, young person or adult at risk they will act without delay, assess the urgency of the situation and follow our [safeguarding procedures](#).

Further advice on dealing with an incident can be obtained from the BYM Safeguarding Officer at safe@quaker.org.uk or from the safeguarding agency Thirtyone:Eight telephone helpline: 0303 003 1111. See also **Appendix 4** for an online safety incident flowchart.

Online behaviour guidelines for staff/volunteers

In order to uphold Quaker safeguarding principles, our volunteers and staff will adhere to the following guidelines:

- We will ensure all our activities support all our children, young people, adults at risk, staff and volunteers to stay safe online.
- We will risk-assess all online events to make sure appropriate safeguards are in place. See **Appendix 3** for the *Risk assessment – Yearly Meeting 2021*.
- We will maintain clear and open relationships with parents and/or carers regarding communication with them and their children or young people. Any exceptions to this will be carefully assessed and risk-managed by at least two staff/volunteers.
- We will be clear and explicit with children, young people and adults at risk about information that we need to share and why.
- We will be friendly and professional in our communications, not over-familiar or personal.
- We will not share personal information or request or respond to any personal information from a child or young person or adult at risk, other than that which might be essential as part of the role we are carrying out on behalf of Quakers.
- Staff members will use electronic communications only to communicate with those attending young people's events (11-18s) and in such circumstances will abide by the guidelines set out by the service provider; for example, WhatsApp may only be used by those aged 16+. Any electronic communication with 0-11s will be through their parent or guardian.
- Volunteers will not communicate with young people by mobile phone or email unless with a young person who is a member of a planning team and with parental consent and a staff member copied in to the message, or forwarded a copy as soon as practicable. More information can be found on the Children & Young People (CYP) social media guidance (see link below).

- When communicating electronically with a person we know to be an adult at risk, we will always copy in a responsible person from within our organisation (this could be a more senior colleague, team leader or safeguarding coordinator/lead) to achieve maximum transparency in our dealings with that vulnerable person.
- In our authorised email communications with children and young people, we will only communicate specific information relating to the work of the organisation; we will not use email communications as a tool for building one-to-one relationships.
- We will only use equipment provided by the organisation to communicate with children, young people and adults at risk. An exception to this would be the necessity to use a home computer if working from home with no access to a work computer. CYP Staff will not use their personal mobile phones to contact children or young people.
- We will not delete records of electronic contact with individuals or groups of children, young people or vulnerable adults, including text messages and emails. This is a requirement of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) and will be reviewed when the enquiry is complete. See also the 'Acceptable use policy' (**Appendix 1**) and 'CYP retention policy and safeguarding retention guide' (**Appendix 7**).
- We will always respect a person's right to confidentiality unless abuse or harm is suspected or disclosed.
- When using electronic communications with young people, contact will take place between 9am and 9pm on non-school days. Exceptions can be made in circumstances such as an emergency, for an online event or for notification of a short-notice change of plans in agreement with a team leader or other responsible person.
- We will not use visual communications (Skype, Zoom, etc.) to communicate with children and young people, unless for a specific pre-planned event, which will be supervised by trained staff and volunteers. All national events have a staff member attached to provide professional support and guidance to volunteers.
- Where practicable, staff and volunteers will use headphones at online events for the purposes of confidentiality.

How to use Zoom safely

We generally use Zoom as the platform for our online events. Zoom should only be downloaded from the company's website <https://zoom.us/download> as downloads from other websites may cause security issues. See **Appendix 6**.

Safe use of social media

This document does not deal with social media policy. Guidance on this topic is provided in the document: [Social media: Guidance for staff and volunteers \(PDF\)](#)

Consent for photographic images and videos online

This should be read in conjunction with [BYM CYP Use of Images Procedures and Guidance \(PDF\)](#).

- Permission will be obtained from parents/carers for use of images of children or young people on YQ Space or the main Quakers in Britain website. Images will only be used for the specific purpose for which permission was sought and granted. We will follow the BYM records management process with regard to retention and storage of these images. The CYP [Consent and information form](#) includes a section on consent for use of images on the internet.
- Photographs that include children or young people will be selected carefully to avoid them being easily identified.
- Full names will not be used on the website in association with photographs of children and young people.
- It is not appropriate to publish images of adults who are known to be at risk, unless for a specific and limited purpose which has been agreed by those with a caring responsibility for the person.
- Use of images will reflect a diversity of age, ethnicity and gender as far as possible.

Community Agreements

Yearly Meeting Gathering (18+), Junior Yearly Meeting (15-18's), Young People's Programme (11–15s) set out the expectations of those joining sessions, and must be agreed at the point of booking. See **Appendix 5**.

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Appendices

Most of the documents listed below are for internal use by staff, or are otherwise of negligible use to volunteers. However copies of all the documents below are available on request from safe@quaker.org.uk.

Below this list you will find *Expectations of volunteers and BYM staff* and *How to use Zoom safely* which volunteers may find useful.

1. *Acceptable use policy*: acceptable and unacceptable use of electronic devices and network resources at BYM (this relates to staff so is not included in this version of the policy)
2. *Expectations of volunteers and BYM staff working with children, young people and adults at risk* (see below)
3. *Risk assessment – Yearly Meeting 2021* (available on request)
4. Online incident/disclosure flowchart (available on request)
5. *Our community agreement* – Quaker practice at an online YMG ([available to download](#))
6. *How to use Zoom safely* (see below)
7. *Retention policy* and guidance (available on request)
8. *Invitation to volunteer* letter (available on request)

Appendix 2: Expectations of Volunteers and BYM Staff

Children and young people team members are asked to:

In their role

- understand their responsibilities and can work within the agreed procedures and protocols;
- work effectively with others and be willing to undertake training or update knowledge as required;
- understand the need for confidentiality as well as the need to share information respectfully and as necessary within the agreed communication structure of the team;
- promptly report any breach of these expectations or any safeguarding disclosures, concerns, allegations and suspicions to the Safeguarding coordinator.

In their relationships

- treat all equally with fairness respect, dignity and integrity;
- demonstrate empathy and put the needs of the child / young person before their own;
- act as a role model being aware of the impact they may have on others;
- establish safe, trusting relationships with children and young people;
- build relationships with children or young people who exhibit difficult behaviour by understanding the causes of and appropriate responses to such behaviour;
- maintain professional boundaries with children, young people and their carers.

In their methods

- be open, transparent and non-judgemental with proper regard for each individual's interests, rights, safety and welfare;
- listen carefully to those you are supporting;
- challenge appropriately situations where action is not being taken;
- recognise when they need support and seek it appropriately;
- recognise personal feelings about a situation and deal with them effectively;
- work in an open environment – avoiding private or unobserved situations;
- be aware of their power and responsibility for the welfare of the children and young people.

In their work

- attend planning and preparation meetings and the actual groups, at the agreed times;
- attend agreed team meetings, complete all preparation and return forms within stated times;
- request help and resources as needed but in time for this help to be forthcoming;
- ensure they have enough rest and refreshment to be able to meet responsibilities;
- note that in loco parentis and during online youth work sessions consuming alcohol or illegal substances is not acceptable, and that smoking in the presence of CYP is not acceptable;
- recognise that engaging in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relation to develop with someone you are responsible for in this position of trust is unacceptable;
- remember they are role models and keep to community agreements set for the event;
- abide by the CYP policies, procedures and guidance and be accountable to the CYP staff responsible for the event;
- recognise that if these expectations are not upheld, volunteers may not be able to continue with the role as agreed.

In their intentions

- build supportive relationship with volunteers;
- offer training and guidance on policies and procedures;
- provide support with planning, facilitation and resources as required;
- ensure prompt payment of expenses and provide accommodation and food as appropriate;.
- follow the process for handling of comments, suggestions and complaints;
- provide adequate insurance and conditions that meet health and safety requirements;
- recruit volunteers within the BYM recruitment and safeguarding policies.

Appendix 6: How to use Zoom safely

We generally use Zoom as the platform for our online events. Zoom should only be downloaded from the company's website <https://zoom.us/download> as downloads from other websites may cause security issues.

Setting the meeting up:

- Zoom automatically generates a password of 6 characters for each meeting, it is recommended that you make this 10 characters long.
- Each meeting has a unique ID. These should not be advertised publicly. For YMG Friends will have direct access to these through the event platform. For all other events these details should be emailed directly to participants, with a reminder not to share the details with others.
- When setting up the meeting, enable the waiting room feature.
- Disable participant screen sharing, in advance when you schedule the meeting. If others need to share documents, then have these emailed to you in advance.
- Turn off microphone and video when joining the meeting. Learn how to mute and unmute all (or individual) participants.
- Be aware of your environment, including your background. If there is anyone who will be in the room with you, ensure that the content of your session will not be confidential. If this is the case then you should ensure that you are in a private space away from members of your household.
- Ensure that you are appropriately dressed.

During the meeting.

- You will receive a notification of who is in the waiting room. To see further information click on the 'Manage Participants' button in the meeting toolbar. You should check names against the registration list for the session before allowing access. Access can be granted individually or to all of those in the waiting room. If in doubt you can communicate by message with those in the waiting room.
- Once everyone you are expecting has joined, you can select 'Lock Meeting'.
- Ensure that you do not record meetings as this requires GDPR consent.
- If you need to disable participant screen sharing, click on the up arrow next to 'Share screen' in the toolbar and then clicking on 'Advanced sharing options'. You can adjust this setting to 'Only Host'.
- Participants at YMG have been asked to uphold the 'Code of conduct'. Staff and volunteers should make themselves familiar with this and, should there be action that is in breach of this, please 'Remove' the participant (see below for how). You should also record who you removed and why you removed them – this information should be passed to Safe@quaker.org.uk.

How to remove an individual in the event of a problem/incident:

- You can 'Remove' a participant. In the participant menu, hover your cursor over the participant's name and a number of options will appear, including 'Remove'. Click this option. Then make sure that you lock the room so that they are prevented from returning.
- You can put 'Attendees On-Hold'. This means that the individual's video and audio connections are disabled momentarily. Click on video thumbnail and select 'Start Attendee On-Hold'.

Amended version for volunteers 14/07/2021(NJD/MM)