

BRIGHTON & HOVE HEBREW CONGREGATION SAFEGUARDING POLICY (2026)

The purpose of the BHHC Safeguarding policy is to develop a safeguarding ethos within the community to ensure that all members of the congregation, their families, and visitors are free to meet and pray in a safe environment. This will also create a setting where BHHC staff and volunteers feel safe to perform their duties in safety.

Brighton & Hove Hebrew Congregation asserts that all members of the community and visitors have the right to protection from abuse. We understand we have a duty of care to safeguard all members of the congregation, staff, volunteers, and visitors.

Activities undertaken by or on behalf of BHHC will be risk-assessed and reviewed for security and inclusion.

A condensed version of the Safeguarding policy can be obtained from the admin office.

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1. DEFINITIONS

In this document the following terms shall have the following meanings:

- “BHHC” means Brighton and Hove Hebrew Congregation
- “Protection Incident Record” means the record book or file of records, digital or otherwise, kept by BHHC
- “The BHHC Community” means the group of individuals who are Members or Friends of BHHC
- “The Board” means the Trustees as defined by the Articles of Association of BHHC
- “Designated Safeguarding Lead” means the individual appointed by the Board from time to time as such and described in Section 10
- “Employee” means any employee of BHHC
- “Participants” and “you” means all Employees, Volunteers, any individual within the BHHC Community and any individual participating in any BHHC activity
- “The Premises” means any premises which BHHC owns, licenses, uses or occupies for the purposes of its activities, including the Synagogue Offices and Synagogue at 29A New Church Road, Hove, BN3 4AD
- “Volunteer/s” means any individual/s helping with any activity involving children or young people
- “Other Venues” means premises which are used by Participants in connection with any BHHC activity including for example residential homes, care homes and the homes of individuals
- “you” means any Participant/s

2. INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of everyone within BHHC and within the BHHC Community.

These policy guidelines are for the use of anyone taking part in the activities of BHHC, including all Employees, Volunteers, Individuals within the BHHC community and visitors. We will make them available to everyone.

BHHC recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within the legal framework of the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004. Under the terms of the Children Act 2004 anyone under the age of 18 years is considered to be a child/young person.

It is difficult to acknowledge sometimes that abuse can happen within a place of worship but any community group or organisation working with children is vulnerable. It is the responsibility of everyone within BHHC and within the BHHC community to put the welfare of children and young people first and to recognise behaviours that can put children at risk.

BHHC is aware that many children and young people are the victims of different kinds of abuse and that they can be subjected to social factors that have an adverse impact upon their lives, including domestic violence, substance misuse, bullying, child prostitution and ritualistic abuse. BHHC aims to create a safe environment within which children and young people can thrive and adults can work with the security of clear guidance.

3. DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD AT BHHC

The Designated Safeguarding Lead at BHHC is Rachelle Silver.

Her contact details are available on the BHHC website under the Safeguarding page, and may be found through the BHHC admin office.

If you have a safeguarding concern to disclose, ensure you email Rachelle with the subject header "Safeguarding" to the email address provided.

Safeguarding email: safeguarding@bhhc-shul.org

4. TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION

4.1. If you feel that the abuse is life-threatening – dial 999

If you feel that any child or young person may be being abused, and that this abuse is life-threatening:

- You should immediately dial 999 and ask for the Police and Ambulance services. You should then follow their instructions.
- Do not become involved in the incident or put yourself at risk.
- Do not discuss the incident with those involved or with any bystanders. This is because any discussion may contaminate the evidence and may interfere with the police investigation.
- Make a detailed written recording of the incident as soon as possible. This should include date, time, place, who was present and a factual account of what happened and what action was taken.
- Report the incident to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at BHHC.
- If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not available, or if they are implicated in some way, report the incident to the Deputy Safeguarding Lead or the BHHC Board Chair.

4.2. If you feel that the child or young person is not in immediate danger

If you consider that the child or young person is not in immediate danger, but you have a feeling of concern about them:

- You should report the incident to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not available, or if they are implicated in some way, report the incident to the Deputy Safeguarding Lead or the BHHC Board Chair.
- Make a detailed written recording of the incident as soon as possible. This should include date, time, place, who was present and a factual account of what happened and what action was taken.

Where there is not an emergency, it is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to make a referral to those agencies, not the responsibility of individuals within the BHHC Community. The Designated Safeguarding Lead may discuss your concerns with the Rabbi or a member of the Board.

4.3. In the event that a child makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult or another child or young person

You should:

- Listen to them and/or closely observe their presentation and behaviour.
- Let them know that you take what they are saying seriously.
- Do not attempt to question or interview them yourself because this could be later interpreted as leading.
- Do not make statements about what has been said or attempt to fill in any gaps.
- Let them know that you will need to tell someone else in order to help them. Do not promise to keep what they tell you a secret.
- Report the incident to the DSL for BHHC. If the DSL is not available, or if they are in any way implicated, report the incident to the Board Chairperson who will have received training in safeguarding generally. Contact details for the Chairperson are available from the synagogue admin office.
- Make a detailed written report of the incident as soon as possible. This should include date, time, place, who was present and a factual account of what happened and what action was taken.

5. RECOGNISING SIGNS OF ABUSE

It can often be difficult to recognise abuse. The signs listed in these guidelines are only indicators and many can have reasonable explanations. Children may behave strangely or seem unhappy for many reasons, as they move through the stages of childhood or their families experience changes. It is nevertheless important to know what would indicate that abuse is taking place and to be alert to the need to consult further.

Someone can abuse a child by actively inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse can take place within a family, in an institutional or community setting, by telephone or on the internet. Abuse can be carried out by someone known to the child or a complete stranger.

Some of the categories of recognition:

- A. Physical Abuse
- B. Emotional Abuse
- C. Sexual Abuse
- D. Neglect

A. Physical Abuse:

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Physical signs of abuse may include injuries to any part of the body, the regular occurrence of unexplained injuries, confused or conflicting explanations of how the injuries were sustained. Behavioural signs of physical abuse may include furtive, secretive behaviour, uncharacteristic aggression or withdrawn behaviour, compulsive eating or loss of appetite, or sudden loss of coordination.

B. Emotional Abuse:

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional damage is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though emotional abuse may occur alone.

It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or “making fun” of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

These may include interactions that are beyond the child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may include seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Behavioural signs of emotional abuse may include emotional indicators such as low self-esteem, unhappiness, fear distress and anxiety, behavioural indicators such as attention seeking, appearing withdrawn or insecure. Signs of radicalisation such as displaying extreme views can also be a proper cause for concern.

C. Sexual Abuse:

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touch outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming children in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Physical signs of sexual abuse may include awkwardness in walking or sitting down, tiredness, stomach pains, regression, aggression. There may be no recognisable signs of sexual abuse but these guidelines may indicate where abuse may be present.

Behavioural signs of sexual abuse may include extreme variations in behaviour (e.g. anxiety, withdrawal or aggression) sexually provocative behaviour that is incompatible with the child's age and understanding, drawings which are sexually explicit (this can be indirect disclosure).

D. Neglect:

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers).
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Physical signs of neglect on a child may include abnormal growth (failure to thrive), being underweight or overweight, ill or ill-looking, having an unkempt dirty appearance, smelly, hunger, listlessness.

Behavioural signs of neglect may include attachment disorders, indiscriminate friendliness, poor social relations, poor concentration, and low self-esteem.

Although evidence of neglect is frequently cumulative, it can be identified by the conditions in which a child/young person lives.

6. CODE OF CONDUCT AND GOOD PRACTICE

This section of the safeguarding policy is designed to provide a code of conduct and good practice guideline for adults working with or participating in activities with children and young people

We expect that adults will not:

- Treat children and young people in a patronising way.
- Allow allegations to go unreported.
- Develop inappropriate relationships such as contact with children and young people that are not a part of the work of the project and agreed with the manager or leader. Sexual relationships between any adult member of staff or volunteer and a child or young person who is taking part in BHC activities represent a serious breach of trust and are not permissible in any circumstances.
- Let children and young people have your personal contact details (mobile number or email address, or home address).
- Act in any way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive.
- Make inappropriate promises to children and young people, particularly in relation to confidentiality.
- Make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people.
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts.
- Touch any child or young person on any part of their body unless offering emergency first aid in which case another member of staff should be present.
- Believe that child abuse does not take place within the Jewish Community.

We expect that adults will:

- Ensure that, whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others.
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy/encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and carry enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like.
- Recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people.
- Operate within the principles described in this guidance and any specific procedures.
- Be aware of the vulnerability of children and young people when visitors are in the premises or other venues.

- You should be alert to strangers frequently waiting outside the premises or other venues with no apparent purpose.
- Be aware that children should not be collected by people other than their parents or a known adult family member unless notification has been received.

7. ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS, THE BHC COMMUNITY AND OTHER PARTICIPANTS

The BHC Community needs to be aware of the possibility that allegations of abuse will be made against members of the BHC Community, employees, or volunteers. Allegations will usually be that some kind of abuse has taken place. They can be made by children and young people, and they can be made by other concerned adults. Allegations can be made for a variety of reasons.

Some of the most common are:

- Abuse has actually taken place.
- Something happens to a child that reminds them of an event that happened in the past, and the child is unable to recognise that the situation and the people are different.
- Children may misinterpret your language or your actions because they are reminded of something else.
- Some children know how powerful an allegation can be. If they are angry with you about something they can make an allegation as a way of hitting out.
- An allegation can be a way of seeking attention.

All allegations should be brought to the attention of the DSL without delay.

In cases where the allegation is made against the DSL, or where the DSL is unavailable, the complainant should approach the BHC Board Chairperson who will have received training in safeguarding generally. The Chairperson's contact details are available in the synagogue office.

In cases where for some reason neither of the above steps can be taken, the complainant should take the following action him or herself:

- Make sure that the child in question is safe and away from the alleged abuser.
- Use the reporting procedures in the area where the child lives. This is likely to be East or West Sussex or Brighton and Hove. Contact the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership or Board for the area where the child lives (contact the parents or carers of the child if advised to do so by the social worker/officer in charge or the allegations).

- Irrespective of any investigation by social workers or the police, the alleged abuser should be prevented from working with children until the outcome of any investigation is clear.
- Consider whether the alleged abuser has access to children anywhere else and whether these organisations or groups need to be informed.

All incidents should be investigated internally after any external investigation has finished, reviewing organisational practice and putting in place any additional measures to prevent a similar thing happening again.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

The BHHC will follow the guidance of the Brighton and Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Government's guidance so far as information sharing is concerned.

Where there are concerns that a child or a young person might be at risk of significant harm, information may need to be shared without consent.

BHHC will be committed to finding a balance between the child's or young person's right to confidentiality and the importance of information sharing in order to protect the child or young person.

Information sharing with outside agencies will only take place in order to protect a child/young person from what appears to be abuse.

Information must be shared:

- When a child or young person discloses or an Employee/Volunteer/member of the BHHC has serious concerns that they have or may have been abused physically, sexually, psychologically or emotionally, and inaction could place them back in the same threatening situation.
- When other children or young people are considered to be at risk, for example, if other children in the family are subject to the same threatening situation.
- If any other person under 18 years is considered to be at risk of harm, and disclosure could prevent them from being harmed.

- Where there is a serious concern that a child or young person might cause immediate violence or physical harm to themselves or others, e.g. suicide threats, sexually abusing another young person, serious eating disorders, intent to wound either themselves or others, self-harming.
- When a child or young person is not in a fit state to make rational decisions or take responsibility for their actions e.g. where excessive amounts of alcohol or drugs have been consumed, or where serious psychiatric/mental breakdown is suspected.
- When there is serious concern that a child or young person will take a major risk which will cause them to be in immediate danger.
- In cases of disclosure of acts of terrorism, there is a legal obligation to inform the Police.
- When an allegation of misconduct is made against a Volunteer or Employee.

At all times where possible, the young person should be kept informed of what is happening and support should continue to be offered. If we judge that a situation requires us to breach confidentiality, wherever possible we will do this with the consent of the young person involved. However, it may be necessary to breach confidentiality without prior consent having been obtained if:

- The young person's consent is unobtainable e.g. they run off.
- There is a legal obligation to breach confidentiality.
- We believe the young person is no longer able to take responsibility for their actions.

Informing parents:

Parents are normally informed. If a suspicion of abuse is required, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the LSCB does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent or family member is the likely abuser, or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure. In these cases, the question of informing parents will be dealt with by Social Services.

9. SAFE RECRUITMENT

The application of rigorous procedures for the recruitment of any Employees or Volunteers who come into contact with children, both directly and indirectly, can reduce the likelihood of allegations of abuse being made that are founded. As an absolute minimum, the following standards should be followed:

- All prospective Employees and Volunteers involved directly in activities with children should complete an application form which asks for details of their previous employment or volunteering activities and for the names of two referees.
- All prospective Employees and Volunteers involved directly with activities with children should have a new Enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check before they start employment at BHHC. Anyone who refuses to complete an Enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check must not be employed or allowed to participate in activities involving children or young people.
- Nobody should start work directly with children before references have been received. Referees should be reminded that references should not misrepresent the candidates or omit to say things that might be relevant to their employment.
- All appointments working directly children should be subject to an agreed probationary period.
- New Employees and Volunteers should be clear about their responsibilities and wherever possible, work to an agreed job description.
- All Employees and Volunteers working directly with children should receive regular training and be encouraged to attend child protection training.
- These guidelines should be available to everyone and fully discussed as part of an induction process.

10. REPORTING PROCEDURES WITHIN BHHC

If you feel that any child or young person may be being abused, and that this abuse is life-threatening:

You should immediately dial 999 and ask for the Police and Ambulance services. You should then follow their instructions.

The Reporting Procedure within BHHC for non-emergency situations and after an emergency has been reported to the Police/Ambulance is:

- Report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- If the DSL is not available or is implicated, report to the Board Chairperson of BHHC who will have received training in safeguarding generally.
- Make a detailed written recording of the incident as soon as possible. This should include date, time, place, who was present and a factual account of what happened and what action was taken.

11. IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

These procedures will only be effective if all Employees and Volunteers within BHHC and all individuals within the BHHC Community acknowledge and understand them.

BHHC will follow the checklist below and review regularly:

- Appoint the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Take steps to ensure that the BHHC Community is aware of the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead attends training where relevant and possible.
- Ensure that all Employees and Volunteers who have direct contact with children have access to a copy of this document, and know where to find other procedures and guidance.
- Ensure that all Employees and Volunteers who have direct contact with children and young people know what to do if they have concerns about a child.
- Ensure that all Employees and Volunteers whose role involves dealing directly with children and young people have Enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks.
- Ensure that all new Employees and Volunteers whose role involves dealing directly with children and young people have Enhanced DBS checks before they start work.

12. LOCAL AGENCIES, NATIONAL AGENCIES, EXTERNAL INFORMATION

If you think a child is at immediate risk, call 999 and ask for the Police.

All local authorities have a safeguarding children board, otherwise known as Local Safeguarding Children's Boards. This is a statutory body responsible for coordinating local work to safeguard and promote children's welfare. Each local board includes local authorities, health bodies, the police and others, including the voluntary and independent sectors. The LSCBs are responsible for local child protection policy, procedure and guidance.

In the case of Brighton and Hove, this is the Brighton and Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership (as of 2019). BHHC will follow the guidance of and collaborate with BHSCP. Further appropriate points of contact are listed on the following page:

- Brighton and Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership (BHSCP):
 - Office phonenumber: 01273 292379

- Brighton and Hove City Council
 - Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
 - Kay Whitcroft is the LADO for Brighton & Hove
 - Email: LADOenquiries@brighton-hove.co.uk

 - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):
 - Email: FrontDoorforFamilies@brighton-hove.gov.uk
 - Office phonenumber: 01273 290400
 - Emergency Duty Service (out of hours phone line): 01273 335905 or 01273 335906

- NSPCC:
 - Helpline: 0808 800 5000 (also consult the NSPCC website)

- Key statutory information
 - Working together to safeguard Children (Department for Education 2018 as updated 1st July 2022) is a national guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
 - <http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk>