

**Barnet Environment Centre**

**Safeguarding Policy**

**Introduction**Barnet Environment Centre is situated on a 7.5 acre nature reserve, which is open to the public for booked and organised events only. Friends of Barnet Environment Centre (FoBEC) is a registered charity providing the following:

* **Booked environmental education visits for school children** **aged 3 to 18:** Curriculum based school visits run throughout the academic year, led by our Educational Manager and supported by teachers, parents and volunteers.
* **Booked visits for youth organizations:** A youth group may engage in an activity (e.g. pond dipping) or complete a nature reserve project.
* **Organisedevents for the local community**: Open Days offering refreshments, children’s crafts and activities, nature walks led by our Education Manager, and self-guided walks for the general public.
* **Volunteer working parties:** Volunteers attendevery Monday 1.30-3.30pm, and the first Sunday of each month 10am-12.30pm, to maintain the nature reserve. Make a Difference Days are held approximately twice per year, for volunteers to work on a nature reserve project.

Policy Statement
Friends of Barnet Environment Centre (FoBEC) is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for the above activities, where everyone feels respected and valued. The purpose of this policy is to help ensure that all visitors, volunteers, children under 18, adults at risk, and contractors have positive experiences and stay safe when visiting the Environment Centre and Nature Reserve.

The wellbeing and welfare of children and adults at risk is paramount. A child is any person under the age of 18. An adult at risk is a person aged 18 or over, who has needs for care and support, and is/may be unable to protect themselves against abuse, significant harm, exploitation or neglect (due to disability, illness affecting their mental or physical health, substance misuse, or frailness connected to age).

We recognise that some people have additional needs, disabilities, and added vulnerabilities. All children and adults at risk have the right to protection from abuse, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, race, religion or beliefs. We will take any concern or allegation of abuse seriously, and respond appropriately to all concerns/disclosures.

Scope
This Policy is applicable to the Board of Trustees, all volunteers, Contractors (there are no employees of this charity and each trustee is a volunteer), and all visitors. This Policy is approved and endorsed by the Board of Trustees, and is available to members of the public on request.

School and youth visits are booked and come to the Environment Centre under the charge of their own responsible adults. The school or youth group will have a safeguarding policy, which, under most circumstances, would assume primary consideration should a ‘safeguarding’ issue arise (See Appendix C, FLOWCHART). Those booking the visits with FoBEC to be made aware of this.

 **Legal Framework** **and supporting documents**This Policy has been developed with guidance from The Charity Commission ‘Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees’ (October 2019), Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership, and information from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

**Related policies and guidance**
We have a Code of Behaviour that applies to all Trustees, volunteers, contractors, and visitors (see Appendix A). Other relevant policies and procedures which FoBEC implements relate to risk assessments, recruitment (including taking up references) and support of volunteers, problem solving, equal opportunities & diversity, health & safety, and DBS requirements. These are available on request to relevant persons, and are separate to the Safeguarding Policy.

**Responsibility for the implementation of our Safeguarding Policy, Code of Behaviour, and reporting procedures**

* FoBEC will take all reasonable steps to minimize risk of harm to all volunteers, contractors and visitors, having appropriate regard to any children and adults known to be at risk.
* The entire Board of Trustees has overall accountability for this Safeguarding Policy and its implementation. All Trustees and volunteers are made aware of theSafeguarding Policy and Code of Behaviour. Safeguarding is everybody’s responsibility.
* Our Safeguarding Officer is Geoff Lee (with assistance from Ruth Barrett in his absence).
* Where there is a safeguarding concern/disclosure, the individual who hears or observes a concern must follow the ‘How to report a safeguarding concern’ procedure (see Appendix C, FLOWCHART). Not responding to a safeguarding concern is not an option.
* The BEC Safeguarding Officer (and/or Assistant Safeguarding Officer) will respond on a case-by-case basis, considering and prioritising the welfare of any child or adult at risk at all times. Depending on the nature of the concern, they may share information with/seek advice from external agencies/the local authority/police, as appropriate (see Appendix C, FLOWCHART).

### **Implementation Procedures**

### We will seek to keep all volunteers, contractors, and visitors, including children and adults at risk, safe by:

* Keeping policies and procedural guidelines appropriate, up to date, and accessible. This Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees.
* Our Safeguarding Policy and Code of Behaviour are accessible to the public on request.
* In all volunteering events a young person or adult known to be at risk will work within sight of not less than two other volunteers.
* FoBEC has an appointed Safeguarding Officer (with Assistant Safeguarding Officer responding to any safeguarding concerns in his absence).
* We have clear processes for addressing any safeguarding concerns or allegations (see Appendix C, FLOWCHART).
* Where a Trustee, volunteer, contractor, or visitor identifies a safeguarding concern, they will follow the ‘How to report a safeguarding concern’ procedures (see Appendix C, FLOWCHART).
* Where any of the above volunteer hear a disclosure relating to possible abuse, they should listen carefully, refrain from asking leading questions, and reassure the child/adult they are right to report the concern, and never promise confidentiality or to keep secret what they are told.
* They will make a written record of the disclosure/incident, documenting what was said, the date, time and location. Any documentation of safeguarding concerns reported will be stored securely, and will be separate from the more public “Incident” book held at the Centre.
* An allegation against a Trustee, contractor, or volunteer will be reported to the Safeguarding Officer, or the Assistant Safeguarding Officer as appropriate.

### **Appendix A: Code of Behaviour**

* Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and adults known to be at risk at all times.
* Set a good example and act with integrity; you are likely to be seen as a role model and should adopt an approach that encourages mutual respect.
* Always respect an individual’s right to privacy and personal space.
* Be alert to inappropriate or potentially harmful behaviours within a group.
* Treat group members as individuals and value everyone’s comments and contributions.
* Always seek the consent of a child or adult if you need to touch them to administer first aid or to help with clothing.
* Respond sensitively to children or adults who are anxious or unsure about participation in any activities.
* Encourage a culture of openness where anyone feels able to report concerns or abuse.
* Immediately report any concerns you have about the welfare or safety of any child or adult at risk, or of inappropriate behaviour of other adults.
* Ensure participants are aware of who is responsible for the group.
* Be aware of the numbers and needs of participants. Adopt a going home or winding up procedure to minimise the chance of children or adults at risk coming to harm once the planned activities are complete.
* Ensure other adults attending a group (such as parents or carers) or family event recognise the need for appropriate behaviour.

### **You should not:**

* Rely on your good name to protect you from allegations.
* Be alone with a child or adult at risk, wherever possible. If a degree of privacy is required, inform another responsible adult on site beforehand, and aim to remain within sight or earshot of other people.
* Show favouritism within the group or be drawn into attention-seeking behaviour such as crushes or tantrums.
* Allow or engage in suggestive remarks, gestures or touching which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.
* Take photographs or film videos without consent. Always seek consent from a child’s parent/guardian and the child, or an adult (and their carer if appropriate) before taking any photograph or filming.
* Engage in rough or physical contact unless it is permitted within the rules of a game or activity.
* Smoke or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs whilst around children, young people or adults at risk, whether you are acting in a supervisory capacity or not.
* Swear or use inappropriate or explicit language.

**Appendix B: Signs and possible indicators of abuse**

There are four main types of abuse: emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. For further information on different types of child abuse, including possible signs and indicators, you can click on this link to the NSPCC website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/>

Unexplained significant bruising or other injuries, particularly those out of the ordinary

Uncooperative/aggressive behaviour

Development of nervous behaviour

Atypical or inappropriate behaviour

Tearfulness/ anger

Withdrawal, change in behaviour/psychological state, possibly more apparent in the presence of specific person or persons

Neglect or acts of omission

Self-harming

Self-neglect

Depression

Insomnia

Low self esteem

Change of appetite, weight loss/gain

**This Policy is reviewed every year and agreed by Trustees.**

**Reviewed and agreed by Trustees at the Trustees Meeting on 15th July 2025.**

**To be reviewed at Trustees Meeting in twelve months.**

 **APPENDIX C: How to report a safeguarding concern**

**Identify a safeguarding concern**

**Does this concern relate to a school visit?**

**Report the concern** to the School staff on site and/or the School Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately (just to the School DSL If the concern relates to the School staff on site).

The School’s designated safeguarding staff will respond to the concern raised.

Notify FoBEC Safeguarding Officer or Assistant.

**Does this concern relate to a youth organisation visit?**

**Report the concern** to the Youth staff on site and/or their Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately (just to the DSL if the concern relates to the Youth staff on site.)

The Youth organisation’s designated safeguarding staff will respond to the concern raised.

Notify FoBEC Safeguarding Officer or Assistant.

**Does this concern relate to an Open Day or volunteer session?**

**Report the concern** to FoBEC Safeguarding Officer, Geoff Lee 07890 512 575.

In Geoff’s absence, contact Ruth Barrett (Assistant Safeguarding Officer). Alternatively, speak to any trustee on site.

Document your concerns in writing. If the concern is urgent, report the concern first, and document in writing later (within 24 hours)

**The FOBEC Safeguarding Officer** (or Assistant Safeguarding Officer) will share concerns /seek advice from relevant agencies.

**If there is a serious concern about the welfare of a child under 18**, concerns must be shared with Barnet Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 020 8359 4066 (Monday to Thursday 9am-5.15pm, Fridays 9am-5pm) or 020 8359 2000 (emergency out of hours). A Duty Social Worker can offer advice over the phone regarding concerns raised. Guidance can be found via Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership <https://thebarnetscp.org.uk/bscp>

**Worried about a child?** Contact NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 500.

**Where a criminal offence has been/is likely to be committed**, or there is a risk of immediate harm, the police can be called via 999 for emergencies. Non-emergencies can be reported to police via 101 either by phone or online <https://www.met.police.uk/ro/report/>

**If there is a serious concern about the safety of an adult at risk**, advice can be sought from Barnet Social Care Direct on 020 8359 5000 (weekdays 9am - 5pm) or 020 8359 2000 (emergency out of hours).

This Policy is reviewed every year and agreed by Trustees.

**Appendix D: FoBEC personnel with DBS clearance.**

Ruth Barrett

Bernard Johnson

Dick Elms

Geoff Lee

Gill Jenkins

Liz Pearson

Tony Pearson

Peter Stern

Sandra Stern

Carol Wright

Kathy Johnson

Margaret King

Sally Gilman

John Gilman

Robyn Stern

Mel

All persons with Education Manager Responsibility.