

Belfast Boys' Model Bursary Fund (BBMBF) Policy & Procedure Manual

Policy Title: SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Approved By: The Board of Trustees

Date Approved: 19th January 2026

Date: Annually

Applies To: All Trustees, Directors, Officers, Volunteers, Contractors and Representatives of BBMBF

1. Overview of this Policy

The Belfast Boys Model Bursary Fund (BBMBF) is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and young people who engage with our programmes, activities, and services.

This policy sets out the principles, responsibilities, and procedures that ensure a safe, respectful and protective environment at all times.

Although BBMBF does not provide services that routinely involve children, there may be occasions when young people attend BBMBF-organised events (e.g., awards ceremonies, mentoring sessions, or public functions). The Board therefore adopts this policy to ensure full compliance with legal and ethical responsibilities.

Rationale

All trustees involved with Belfast Boys' Model School Bursary Board have primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of all pupils, who participate in Bursary Board activities. The Bursary Board aims to provide a caring, supportive community and a safe environment for all pupils, in line with the Pastoral Care policy of Belfast Boys' Model School. We value the pupils as individuals with their own unique talents and abilities and aim to ensure that they all can achieve their potential through positive and rewarding experiences.

Purpose

Our child protection policy and procedures are developed in accordance with the Department of Education's guidelines and the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (2005) and amendments (2008). Safeguarding and Child Protection – A guide for schools DE 20/07/04. It is reviewed annually and amended in response to new legislation, policy change, or in response to learning from an adverse event. Any policy revisions are passed to the Board of Trustees for approval. We seek to ensure that the pupils are safeguarded and protected by ensuring that all adults involved are appropriately recruited, that they are alert to possible signs and symptoms of child abuse and familiar with internal procedures of the home schools around reporting arrangements.

The issue of possible child abuse is not ignored by any member of the Board and necessary action is taken to report suspicions or disclosures of this to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection in Belfast Boys' Model School. Trustees are made aware of types of possible abuse and how to identify the signs/symptoms in pupils. Effective training in recognising the signs/symptoms of possible significant harm is delivered to enhance confidence in responding to pupils and reporting to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

We recognise the impact on children of living in an abusive family setting. This policy is informed by the following legislation, guidance and procedures:

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- DE 'Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection' (1999)
- Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order (2003)
- Co- Operating to safeguard Children (2003), (2016)
- Gender recognition Act 2004
- Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and prevention in partnership with Education and Libraries (NI) order 2003
- The Area Child Protection Committees' (ACPC) Regional Policy and Procedures (2005) and amendments (2008)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/contents/enacted
- The Sexual offences (N I) Order 2008
- Safeguarding Board Act NI 2011 www.safeguardingni.org
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- DE 'E Safety Guidance' 2013
- Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy 2013-2020
- FGM Protection Orders July 2015.
- Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016
www.legislation.gov.uk/rua/2016/4/schedule/1
- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016

The central thrust of The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 is that *the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration* in all decision concerning the child. This is also reflected in Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – *the best interests of the child shall be of primary consideration*. The code is based on a hierarchy of principles when dealing with a young person, that states, “the fundamental principle in childcare law and practice is that the welfare of the child must always be the paramount consideration in decisions taken about him or her.” The ‘paramountcy’ of the child principle underpins our Child Protection policy and procedures, and this is detailed in the Safeguarding in Schools document. Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools. A guide for schools – 2017/04

Key Principles of CP Circular 2017/04

The following principles should underpin all strategies, policies, procedures, practice and services relating to safeguarding children and young people.

- The child or young person's welfare is paramount.
- The voice of the child or young person should be heard.

- Parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility and families helped to stay together.
- Partnership.
- Prevention.
- Responses should be proportionate to the circumstances.
- Protection.
- Evidence-based and informed decision making.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Trustees and Board Members
- Directors and Officers
- Employees (if any)
- Consultants, Contractors and Advisors
- Volunteers
- Any individual representing BBMBF in the course of its work

It covers all interactions with children or young people under the age of 18.

3. Policy Statement

BBMBF believes that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children have the right to protection from physical, emotional, sexual and online abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility - not just designated staff.
- Any concerns regarding the safety or wellbeing of a child must be taken seriously and acted upon without delay.

BBMBF will:

- Promote a culture of safety, inclusion and respect.
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent harm.
- Maintain clear reporting structures.
- Co-operate fully with statutory agencies when required.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Board of Trustees

- Holds ultimate accountability for safeguarding within BBMBF.

- Ensures the policy is implemented, reviewed and updated.

4.2 Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

BBMBF appoints a **Designated Safeguarding Officer**, responsible for:

- Acting as the primary point of contact for safeguarding matters.
- Managing reports, concerns or disclosures.
- Liaising with social services, police or relevant authorities when required.
- Maintaining secure safeguarding records.

Designated Safeguarding Officer: Mary Montgomery OBE

4.3 All BBMBF Representatives

Every representative must:

- Read and comply with this policy.
- Report concerns immediately following the procedures below.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Act respectfully and avoid behaviours that could be misinterpreted.

5. Code of Conduct

All Trustees, volunteers and representatives interacting with children must:

- Treat every child with dignity and respect.
- Act as positive role models.
- Avoid one-to-one situations unless in an open/public environment.
- Never take a child alone in a car or private space.
- Never share personal contact information with a child.
- Not communicate with children via personal social media.
- Never engage in physical, sexual or inappropriate conduct.
- Never ridicule, demean or intimidate a child.

6. Types of Abuse

For the purposes of this policy, “abuse” includes:

- **Physical Abuse** - hitting, shaking, misuse of medication, etc.
- **Emotional Abuse** - threats, humiliation, persistent criticism.
- **Sexual Abuse** - engaging or encouraging sexual activity.
- **Neglect** - failing to meet a child’s basic needs.
- **Online Abuse** - grooming, exploitation, or harmful digital behaviour.

7. Responding to Concerns or Disclosures

7.1 If a child makes a disclosure

Do:

1. **Listen calmly** without interruption.
2. **Take the disclosure seriously.**
3. **Reassure the child** that they did the right thing by speaking up.
4. **Record the facts** as soon as possible.
5. **Report immediately** to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Do NOT:

- Promise confidentiality.
- Ask leading questions.
- Confront any alleged perpetrator.
- Delay reporting.

8. Reporting Procedures

Any safeguarding concern - no matter how small - must be reported **within 24 hours**.

Steps:

1. Contact the **Designated Safeguarding Officer**.
2. Complete a **Safeguarding Concern Form** (DSO will provide).
3. DSO reviews, records and determines next steps.
4. If immediate danger is suspected, **contact the Police (999) or Gateway/Children's Services** immediately and then notify the DSO.

All records are held confidentially and securely.

9. Information Sharing

BBMBF will only share information when:

- Required by law
- Necessary to protect a child
- Requested by statutory agencies

Confidentiality is respected, but child safety always takes precedence

10. Training

BBMBF will ensure that:

- Trustees and key personnel receive safeguarding awareness training.
- Anyone likely to interact with children understands their responsibilities.

11. Photography, Filming & Social Media

Where children may be photographed or filmed at BBMBF events:

- Consent must be obtained from a parent/guardian.
- Images must be used only for legitimate BBMBF purposes.
- Children must not be identified by full name without explicit consent.

12. Recruitment & Vetting

BBMBF does not routinely recruit roles involving direct work with children.

However, should such roles arise:

- Appropriate AccessNI/DBS checks will be undertaken.
- References will be verified.
- Roles will include clear safeguarding responsibilities.

13. Review and Monitoring

This policy will be:

- Reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees
- Updated as required to reflect legislation, best practice or structural changes
- Circulated to all Trustees and volunteers after each update

14. Related Documents

- BBMBF Code of Conduct
- BBMBF Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement
- BBMBF Data Protection & Confidentiality Policy

Reporting & Incident Management Procedures