

British Physics Olympiad Trust

Child Protection Policy

reviewed January 2015

The BPhO Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead (formerly the Designated Child Protection Person (DCPP)) is Dr Sian Owen, the BPhO Administrator (contact through the Oxford office on the BPhO website). Alternatively, contact may be made with the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mr Robin Hughes, Chairman of the BPhO Trustees, through the Oxford Administration Office.

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1. Context

The British Physics Olympiad Trust is a charitable trust whose objects are

- The organisation of annual physics competitions in schools and colleges.
- The selection and support of a team to represent Britain at the International Physics Olympiad.
- To encourage the study of physics in Years 10-13 and to recognise and reward excellence in young physicists.

The Trust's activities consist of the setting of national physics competition papers for examination in the schools of students, the running of physics Olympiad training camps in preparation for the International Physics Olympiad competition, and student and teacher workshops. The furthering of an education in physics through the activities of the BPhO necessitates friendly and respectful social and professional contact between children and adults. Individual conversations and other forms of contact between children and adults are key components in the educational experience and training provide by the BPhO. However, adults must be aware that unguarded actions can be misconstrued as unprofessional conduct, with potentially damaging effects on individuals. The government policy on **promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children**¹ is something that everyone who comes into contact with children must be aware of. Consequently everyone who comes into contact with children (and their families) has a role to play in safeguarding children. The staff of the BPhO do not come into frequent contact, but nevertheless form part of the wider safeguarding system for children, for which there is statutory guidance that the BPhO follows².

¹ Keeping Children Safe in Education: DfE April 2014

² DfE guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013

2. Purpose

The purpose of the policy is:

- To protect children: the definition of a child under the *Children Act 1989* is a young person under the age of 18.
- To confirm and reinforce the high standards of personal and professional conduct required of a teacher or adult staff supporters of the BPhO.
- To ensure that adults have regard for the need to support students' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions.
- To require that teachers treat pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position.
- To ensure teachers have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities within the BPhO.
- To ensure that all show tolerance and the respect for the rights of others.

3. Policy Statement

The Trust is committed to practices which protect children from harm. For the purpose of this policy, the Trust's personnel include both its volunteer staff and employed staff. All such personnel who have unsupervised access to or contact with children are expected to:

- Recognise and accept their responsibilities to take appropriate action, working with the designated safeguarding leader as needed
- Develop awareness of the issues which can cause harm to children
- Use the procedure below to report concerns

The BPhO Trust will endeavour to safeguard children by:

- Adopting child protection procedures and a code of practice for all who act on behalf of the organisation
- Being alert to the medical needs of children with medical conditions
- Operating clear policies on drugs, alcohol and substance misuse
- Operate robust Health & Safety procedures.
- The BPhO has a designated safeguarding lead who will provide support to staff to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as children's social care.
- Dealing appropriately with every suspicion or complaint of abuse
- Reporting concerns to the relevant authorities
- Following carefully checks and procedures for recruitment and registration of staff and volunteers
- Ensure that where staff from other organisations are working with students, we have assurances that appropriate child protection checks and procedures have been followed on those staff.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through support and training.
- Operate procedures which, so far as possible, ensure that teachers and others who are innocent are not prejudiced by false allegations.
- All staff members should be aware of systems within the Trust which support safeguarding, including the child protection policy, the code of conduct and the designated safeguarding lead.

The Trust is committed to reviewing its Child Protection Policy and procedures at regular intervals.

4. Policy

It is the Trust's policy that:

- All personnel working on behalf of the Trust accept responsibility for the welfare of children who come into contact with the Trust in connection with its tasks and functions, and that they will report any concerns about a child or someone else's behaviour, using the procedures laid down.
- All school and college staff members should be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.
- There is a designated safeguarding lead within the Trust who will take action following any expression of concern, and the lines of responsibility in respect of child protection are clear.
- The designated safeguarding lead knows how to make appropriate referrals to appropriate child protection agencies, and is provided with training if appropriate.
- All those who are involved with children and young people on behalf of the Trust should adhere to the Code of Practice in relation to children.
- Information relating to any allegation or disclosure will be handled as soon as possible, and there is a procedure setting out who should handle information and the time-scales for reporting it.
- The Children Act 1987 states that the "welfare of the child is paramount". This means that considerations of confidentiality which might apply to other situations should not be allowed to over-ride the right of children to be protected from harm. However, every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned when an allegation has been made and is being investigated.
- The Trust's policy on duty of care towards children will be referred to or included in recruitment, training, moderation and policy materials where appropriate, and the policies are openly and widely available to staff and actively promoted within the organisation.
- A culture of mutual respect between children, and those who represent the Trust in all its activities will be encouraged, with adults modelling good practice in this context.
- All staff, volunteers and anyone in paid or unpaid work on behalf of the Trust with unsupervised access to children will be checked appropriately.
- It is part of the Trust's acceptance of its responsibility of duty of care towards children that anybody who encounters child protection policy concerns in the context of their work on behalf of the Trust will be supported when they report their concerns in good faith.

5. Code of Practice

The BPhO expects that all personnel (both volunteers and paid staff) will be made aware of this Code of Practice and adhere to its principles in their approach to all children.

- All one-to-one meetings with individual children should take place in publicly accessible areas, and it is important that no more time should be spent alone with children than is necessary. Preferably use a room with vision panels in the door, ideally keeping the door open, and ensure that a colleague knows that a meeting is taking place. If you are concerned by anything during such a meeting, record your concerns immediately in writing and communicate them directly to the safeguarding lead person.
- In residential training camp events, a staff member may not enter a student's room unaccompanied unless there is an emergency. Two adults should be present if entry is deemed necessary.
- It is important not to have physical contact with children and this should be avoided. Apologise immediately if there is accidental physical contact.
- Avoid sitting or standing in close proximity to a pupil, except as necessary to check work.
- In the case of practical work, where showing an experimental or practical technique may require close working, explain the intended action to the student, and do not proceed if the pupil appears apprehensive or uncomfortable.
- It is not good practice to take children alone in car journeys, however short.
- Do not make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child, even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted.

- Do not address students by using language which may be interpreted as aggressive, demeaning, mocking or insulting.
- Retain at all times an appropriately warm and supportive yet detached professional relationship; you are there in the role of an adult teacher, not a friend.
- Avoid displays of affection either personally or in writing, including messages in greetings cards, private emails or networking sites.
- Personal mobile phone numbers will be exchanged between adults and students for the purpose of keeping in touch, but they are to be used for organisation of the teaching activities and should not be used for the purpose of social engagement.
- There may be occasions when a distressed student needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age and gender appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation. If the staff member involved believes that such action could be misinterpreted, the designated safeguarding lead should be informed of the situation and the circumstances should be recorded as soon as possible.
- It is important not to deter children from making a ‘disclosure’ of inappropriate action through fear of not being believed, and to listen to what they have to say. Guidance on handling a disclosure is set out in this document. If this gives rise to a child protection concern it is important to follow the Trust’s procedure for reporting such concerns, and not to attempt to investigate the concern yourself.
- Remember that those who abuse children can be of any age (even other children), gender or ethnic background, and it is important not to allow personal preconceptions about people to prevent appropriate action taking place.
- Good practice includes valuing and respecting children as individuals, and the adult showing appropriate conduct – which will always exclude bullying, shouting, racism, sectarianism or sexism.
- Volunteers are advised to be cautious about accepting friend requests via social media from under-18s, and instead direct students to the generic BPhO Facebook page and twitter feeds.
- Images of pupils and staff are classed as personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998 and using images for publicity purposes will require the consent of their parents.
- Anyone taking photographs should be mindful of privacy, individual dignity and any ambiguity issues with regard to the image. Photographs of students should never be taken or kept secretly. All staff should be able to justify having any images of children in their possession and generally the images should be deleted from the device as soon as possible.

Sources of further help and information about good practice include

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/safeguardingchildren> and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/>, telephone 0808 800 5000.

6. Role and responsibilities of the Designated safeguarding Lead

The BPhO Trust has appointed a designated safeguarding lead who is responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children. In addition the leader of a residential summer school or camp may act as a DSL for the purposes of the camp. Contact details for the designated safeguarding lead are at the front of this Policy document; contact can also be made via the Trust’s website. The Trust will provide appropriate training for the designated safeguarding lead.

The role of the designated person is to:

- know which outside child protection agency (police, social services, health services) to contact in the event of a child protection concern coming to the notice of the Trust (for a list of local councils and contacts see <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/D11/Directories/Localcouncils/AToZOofLocalCouncils/index.htm>.)
- ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing under confidential cover
- liaise with police, local social services and health services and other agencies as appropriate

- keep relevant people within the Trust informed about any action taken and any further action required
- ensure that a proper record is kept of any referral and action taken, and that this is kept safely and in confidence

The role of the designated safeguarding lead is, in addition, to:

- provide information and advice on child protection within the Trust
- advise the Trust of child protection training needs
- review the operation of the child protection policy regularly to ensure the procedures are working and that it complies with current best practice.

7. Procedure for reporting concerns

All suspicion or complaints should be of abuse should be reported to the designated safeguarding lead. Staff or volunteers could have their suspicion or concern raised in a number of ways, the most likely of which are:

- the conduct of a member of the Trust's personnel
- a child 'disclosing' abuse
- bruising or evidence of physical hurt, which may or may not be accompanied by
- unusual behaviour by a child.

If a volunteer or member of staff has such concerns they should be reported to the DSL. Concerns about a specific child should be reported immediately to the DSL and confirmed in writing within 24 hours. Delay could prejudice the welfare of a child. If the concerns relate to the conduct of a member of staff these should be reported to the DSL at the earliest opportunity. The DSL will consider the report and either refer this immediately to the authorities or, after taking appropriate advice (which is likely to involve the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) with informal discussions, initially on a "no names" basis on a borderline case, and may include discussing the circumstances on a confidential basis with the NSPCC), decide not to refer the concerns to the authorities but will, however, keep a full record of the concerns.

8. Definitions of abuse

Physical abuse is any action which may cause physical harm to a child either as the result of a deliberate act or the omission or failure to act to protect.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making a child feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

Sexual Abuse

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 any sexual contact with a young person under the age of 18 where the adult is in a position of trust can be construed as abuse even if the young person consents to, or indicates their consent to the contact.

In general sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. It may involve physical contact, including rape or oral sex, or non-penetrative acts such as fondling. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, and by other young people. It also includes non-contact activities such as involving children in watching or taking part in the making of pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in inappropriate ways.

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. It may involve failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or failing to ensure that a child gets appropriate medical care or treatment.

9. Recruitment and selection procedures

Appropriate recruitment and selection procedures for staff and volunteers in the context of child protection have been adopted by the Trust and include the following:

New volunteers

- The Trust will maintain a register of volunteers and will reserve the right to ask for proof of identity.
- For those volunteers whose work will bring them into contact with children or who will have a management responsibility in relation to those whose work does bring them into such contact, requirement of a declaration of previous convictions and submission to formal criminal records bureau check, together with the issue of a copy of the Child Protection Policy and details of the designated safeguarding lead and how to contact them.
- For current schoolteachers in England, an online update check through the DBS Update Service will be made with the volunteer's agreement, along with some form of identification and verification of current employment.
- A clear guarantee that disclosed information will be treated in confidence, including adherence to the Disclosure and Barring Service code of practice (see [https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service.](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service))
- At least one representative from the Trust meeting with every new volunteer where appropriate.
- Written references where appropriate.

10. Responding appropriately to a child making an allegation of abuse

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully to what is said.
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets.
- Tell the child that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it.
- Allow the child to continue at his/her own pace.
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Tell them what you will do next, and with whom the information will be shared.
- Record in writing what was said, using the child's own words, as soon as possible – note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that you sign and date the record.
- It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies, following a referral from the designated child protection person in the organisation.
- Do not investigate further, but report what has been revealed to you.
- Preserve evidence: all evidence, for example, scribbled notes, mobile phones containing text messages, clothing, computers), must be safeguarded and preserved.

11. Use of Photographic Equipment by Staff and Volunteers

The Trust will only permit photographs, videos or other images of young people to be taken at events organised under the BPhO Trust with the written consent of their parents/guardians. The Trust will take all reasonable steps to ensure these images are used solely for the purposes for which they are intended.

Staff or volunteers or others who have concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography should report their concerns to the event organiser and these should be recorded in the same manner as any other child protection concern.

12. Dealing with Allegations against Staff

All staff must be aware of the BPhO's Child Protection Policy and the policy regarding allegations against staff. If, at any time, staff have a concern about appropriate conduct in any aspect of the BPhO they should contact the designated safeguarding lead or the Chairman of the Trustees (the deputy designated safeguarding lead) as appropriate.

Allegations of unprofessional conduct may arise at any time. Professionalism and vigilance is required of all staff to ensure the safety of children in our care. This guidance applies to all staff working in conjunction with the BPhO.

13. Guidance on levels of DBS disclosure

Level	Description	Examples
None	No contact with children or young people; attendance at a public occasion; short-term contact with children or young people under supervision.	Guest lecturer and visitors at training camps, under supervision; helpers at Team training events under supervision. Exam paper writers and checkers.
online update check through the DBS Update Service	There is no requirement to obtain an enhanced DBS check if, in the three months prior to working with the BPhO, the applicant has worked in (a) a school in England in a post which brought them into regular contact with children or in any post in a school since 12 May 2006, or (b) in a college in England in a position which involved the provision of education and regularly caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children or young people under the age of 18.	Current schoolteachers in England. Scotland has a PVG disclosure. A copy of the school DBS certificate is accepted, emailed from the school email address, or in some cases, certified by the school secretary from a school email address.
Standard: a check of the Police National Computer (PNC) records of convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings		Regular communications (contact at a distance) with children or young people; occasional and irregular contact with children or young people.
Enhanced with barred list information: for people working in regulated activity with children. This adds checks of the DBS Children's Barred List to the enhanced check.	Extended or overnight supervision or contact with individual children or young people including by individual electronic mail; direct management or supervisory responsibility for an individual having contact with children or young people.	Chairman; Trustees; Designated Child Protection Persons; team leader, deputy and observers for IPhO and all overseas competitions; co-ordinator of mentoring; mentor; member of administrative staff; supervisor or resident assistant at 'camp' or summer school.

14. Example of a record indicating the information that should be noted.

(This is an adjusted version of the form written by one of our supporting schools.)

(To be completed by a member of staff)

Remember:

- Ask "open" questions and not leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer.
- However, do not investigate yourself.
- Listen carefully and keep an open mind.
- Do not take a decision as to whether or not the alleged abuse of neglect has taken place.

Please complete in black pen

- (a) Date
Time
Place
Member of staff present
and position
Student (full name)

- (b) Before proceeding have you reassured the child that you are there to help them but you cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality? Have you explained that in some cases you may be able to keep it a secret, but that you may need to pass the information on to the designated safeguarding lead, Dr Sian Owen, who will ensure the correct action is taken?

Please tick:-

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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- (c) Ask the child to explain their concern or allegation and record details of the matter in the box below. Use a separate sheet if necessary and then attach to the form.

A non-exhaustive list of the details to be included:-

- What was said or done, by whom, to whom and in whose presence,
- When the incident took place and where.

(d) Any other additional comments, remarks or evidence

Details may include, for example, any concerns you may have about signs of abuse, emotional ill-treatment or neglect from outside of the current event.

Please also include a note of any other evidence, for example, written notes, items of clothing or mobile phone messages relating to the matter.

Any suspicion or complaint of abuse must be reported to the designated safeguarding lead *Dr Sian Owen*, or in their absence, to the deputy designated safeguarding lead *Mr Robin Hughes*.

It is also acceptable for a member of staff to directly contact the local safeguarding authority as described in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*³.

DO NOT investigate the matter, as this could prejudice the investigations of outside agencies.

Where the concern or allegation is made against the designated safeguarding lead, or the deputy designated safeguarding lead, one of the other BPhO Trustees.

³ Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges: Keeping Children Safe in Education. DfE April 2014

