

Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction and Purpose Khalsa Foundation is a Sikh religious charity registered in England and Wales, adopting a foundation constitution model where its committee of Trustees holds voting rights. The charity's objects are **"TO ADVANCE THE TEACHING AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE SIKH RELIGION FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC WITHIN ENGLAND AND WALES"** and **"THE RELIEF OF NEED AND POVERTY AND THE ADVANCEMENT IN LIFE BY PROVIDING, EDUCATION, TRAINING, RECREATION AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES, ADVOCACY AND ADVICE, PARTICULARLY FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE SOCIALLY OR ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED"**.

This Safeguarding Policy is rooted in the fundamental Sikh principles of **Seva (selfless service), Equality, Respect for all individuals, Protection of the vulnerable, and Promoting social justice and community welfare**. The policy aims to ensure **consistency, transparency, and accountability** in the charity's activities and decisions.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- **Protect children and vulnerable adults** who receive the charity's services.
- Provide **Representatives** (volunteers, trustees) with overarching principles that guide their approach to safeguarding.
- Ensure a **safe, inclusive, and respectful environment** that reflects the core values of Sikhi, ensuring dignity and mutual respect for all participants in its activities, events, and programs.
- Foster a **culture that encourages open communication**, where individuals are listened to and treated with dignity and respect.

The charity maintains a **zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment**.

2. Scope This policy applies to all Trustees/committee members, regular volunteers in leadership or decision-making roles, and individuals involved in financial or strategic decisions for the charity. It also applies to charity representatives, such as volunteers, and trustees delivering services or support.

3. Definitions

- **Charity:** Khalsa Foundation.
- **Child or Children:** Any person under the age of 18.
- **Vulnerable Adult(s):** Any person aged 18 or over who has **care and support needs due to mental or physical disability, age, illness, or other factors, and who is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect that may make them unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation**. This definition aligns with the Care Act 2014. Examples of adults at risk include those with learning difficulties, physical impairments, sensory impairments, mental health needs, age-related frailty, dementia, brain injuries, or drug/alcohol problems.
- **Abuse:** A **violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons which may result in harm**. It can be a single act, repeated acts, or multiple acts, or an act of neglect or failure to act. Abuse involves the misuse of power and control and can occur in any relationship, perpetrated through deliberate intent,

negligence, or ignorance. For children, abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm.

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** An individual appointed by the committee to be responsible for safeguarding awareness and implementing the Safeguarding Policy. For Khalsa Foundation the contact for the DSL is safeguarding@khalsafoundation.org.
- **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy DSL):** (TBC).
- **Representatives:** Persons representing the charity at the charity's events.
- **Trustees/Management Committee:** The group of individuals who have general control and management of the charity's administration and ultimate responsibility for safeguarding matters.
- **Connected Person:** As defined in the Charity Commission's model constitution, this includes a child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, brother or sister of the charity trustee; a spouse or civil partner; a business partner; controlled institutions; or corporate bodies where the trustee or connected person has a substantial interest.

4. Safeguarding Principles Khalsa Foundation is committed to upholding the **Sikh principles** in all its activities. We believe that **no child or vulnerable adult should ever experience abuse**. Our approach to safeguarding is guided by the six principles enshrined in the Care and Support Statutory Guidance:

- **Empowerment:** Ensuring person-led decisions and informed consent.
- **Prevention:** Taking action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality:** Least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection:** Providing support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Partnership:** Services working with their communities.
- **Accountability:** Ensuring accountability and transparency. These principles reinforce 'Making Safeguarding Personal', focusing on the needs, wishes, and opinions of those at risk, and supporting them to manage concerns themselves wherever possible.

5. Categories and Indicators of Abuse Abuse and neglect can take many forms. Staff and volunteers should be aware of the following categories and remain alert to any concerns:

- **Physical Abuse:** Includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint, force-feeding, and unlawfully depriving a person of their liberty.
 - *Indicators may include:* unexplained injuries, cuts, scratches, or bruising, burns, fractures, unattended medical problems, flinching at physical contact, fear, or reluctance to undress.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Includes rape, sexual assault, sexual acts without consent or under pressure, incest, inappropriate touching, exposure of genitals, coercion into pornography, or denial of sexual life to consenting adults. Sexual relationships where one person is in a position of trust, power, or authority may also constitute abuse.
 - *Indicators may include:* unexplained STIs or infections, being subdued/withdrawn, changes in sexual behaviour/outlook, pain/bleeding in genital/anal area, torn/stained/bloody underclothing, or pregnancy in someone lacking capacity to consent.
- **Psychological/Emotional Abuse:** Includes threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation, or unreasonable withdrawal of services/support.
 - *Indicators may include:* untypical ambivalence/passivity, anxiety/withdrawal, low self-esteem, changes in behaviour (e.g., continence problems), restricted

visitors/phone calls, being locked in a room, or denial of access to aids/equipment.

- **Financial and Material Abuse:** Includes theft, fraud, exploitation, coercion related to financial affairs (wills, property, inheritance, transactions), misuse/misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits, and withholding money.
 - *Indicators may include:* changes in living conditions, lack of money/food, unexplained loss of financial documents, sudden changes in wills, unexplained withdrawals, disparity between assets/income and living conditions, or suspicious interest from new acquaintances.
- **Neglect and Acts of Omission:** Includes ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health/care/support/educational services, withholding necessities (medication, nutrition, heating), and failure to intervene in dangerous situations, particularly when the person lacks mental capacity to assess risk. This can be intentional or unintentional.
 - *Indicators may include:* inadequate heating/lighting, poor physical condition/appearance (e.g., pressure ulcers, soiled clothing), malnutrition/dehydration, inability to access medical care, lack of privacy/dignity, or exposure to unacceptable risk.
- **Discriminatory Abuse:** Includes discrimination based on race, faith, religion, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, and other forms of harassment, slurs, or similar treatment. Also includes not responding to dietary needs, not providing spiritual support, or excluding someone from activities because they are "not liked".
 - *Indicators may include:* a person rejecting their own cultural/racial background or beliefs, or complaints about unmet needs.
- **Organisational Abuse (formerly Institutional Abuse):** Mistreatment, abuse, or neglect by a regime or individuals in a setting where the adult lives or uses services (e.g., a hospital or care home). Occurs when routines, systems, and regimes result in poor or inadequate standards of care, violating dignity, privacy, choice, independence, or fulfilment.
 - *Indicators may include:* unnecessary/inappropriate rules, lack of stimulation, inappropriate staff behaviour, or restriction of external contacts.
- **Domestic Abuse and Violence:** Behaviour by a person (A) towards another (B) if A and B are aged 16 or over and personally connected, and the behaviour is abusive. This includes physical, sexual, violent, threatening, controlling, coercive, economic, psychological, or emotional abuse. This definition includes 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM), and forced marriage.
- **Modern Slavery:** Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour, and domestic servitude. Involves movement, control (through harm/threat/fraud), for the purpose of exploitation.
 - *Indicators may include:* distrust of authorities, fear/anxiety, psychological trauma, acting as if instructed, injuries from assault/control, documents held by others, lack of medical care, isolation, substance misuse, forced labour/sexual services, or poor living conditions.
- **Self-Neglect:** A wide range of behaviour threatening one's own health and/or safety, such as failure to provide adequate food, water, clothing, shelter, or neglecting personal health, hygiene, surroundings (including hoarding), safety precautions, or misuse of drugs/alcohol. It differs as no third party is involved.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Trustees/Management Committee Responsibilities:

- Ensure **policy implementation and regular review**.
- Provide **training and guidance to volunteers**.
- **Investigate reported incidents**.
- Maintain **confidential records of all incidents**.
- Take **appropriate action to prevent reoccurrence**.
- Are collectively responsible for **ensuring the charity's resources are properly managed and accounted for**.
- **Declare the nature and extent of any interest**, direct or indirect, in a proposed or existing transaction or arrangement with the CIO.
- **Absent themselves from discussions** where a conflict of interest may arise between their duty to the CIO and any personal interest, and **must not vote or be counted as part of the quorum** on such matters.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) - safeguarding@khalsafoundation.org:

- Lead in ensuring the charity has **appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard children and vulnerable adults**.
- **Promote the safety and welfare** of children and vulnerable adults receiving services.
- Ensure the charity provides **adequate time, funding, training, resources, and support** for the DSL to fulfil responsibilities.
- Ensure **good Safeguarding policies and procedures** are in place, and **review/update them annually**.
- Ensure all committee members, volunteers, children, vulnerable adults, and their parents/carers are **aware of safeguarding procedures and how to report concerns**.
- **Receive, document, and securely store information** regarding concerns.
- **Lead on assessing, clarifying, and taking appropriate actions** in cases of safeguarding concerns.
- **Consult with statutory agencies** (e.g., local authority, police, DBS) and **make formal referrals as necessary**.
- **Inform the committee promptly of serious incidents** and liaise on reporting to the Charity Commission.
- Maintain awareness of legal duties to report concerns and ensure compliance.
- Organise **regular safeguarding training**.
- Provide **regular safeguarding reports to the committee**.
- Act as the **main point of contact** for safeguarding matters.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy DSL) - TBC:

- Supports the DSL and acts in their absence.

Volunteers:

- **Actively promote a positive, inclusive environment**.
- **Recognise and report potential bullying or harassment**.
- **Respond promptly and sensitively to concerns**.
- **Support those who may be experiencing difficulties**.
- **Maintain confidentiality and show compassion**.
- Expected to **embody the principles of Sikhi in their conduct**.
- **Maintain the highest standards of personal and professional behaviour**.
- **Protect the dignity and well-being of all participants**.
- Act as **positive role models** within the community.

- **Always work in sight of other adults.**
- **Avoid one-to-one situations with children or vulnerable adults.**
- **Ensure at least two responsible adults are present during activities.**
- **Report any concerns immediately to designated safeguarding leads.**
- **Must NOT engage in prohibited conduct (see Section 8.3).**

Participants:

- **Treat others with respect and kindness.**
- **Report any incidents of bullying or harassment.**
- **Support peers who may be experiencing difficulties.**
- Understand and adhere to the organisation's values.

7. Legal Framework and Compliance This policy is created based on key UK laws and guidance that protect children and vulnerable adults, including but not limited to:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991)
- Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR (Regulation (EU) 2016/679)
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012)
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Care Act 2014 (specifically sections 42-47 and 68 regarding adult safeguarding enquiries)
- Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners (HM Government, July 2018)
- Charity Commission Guidance and other relevant government guidance (e.g., Serious Incident Reporting guidance).

Khalsa Foundation operates as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), which is a legal form specifically for charities created by the Charities Act 2011. As a CIO, it can own property, employ staff, and enter into contracts in its own name. Unlike companies, CIOs do not have to register with Companies House, but **all CIOs must register with the Charity Commission.**

8. Safeguarding Procedures

8.1. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns All representatives have a responsibility to report any concerns about the safety or well-being of a child or vulnerable adult.

- Concerns must be reported **immediately.**
- All concerns, disclosures, or suspicions of abuse should be reported to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** of the concerned venue, Gurdwara and/or **Khalsa Foundation UK DSL** immediately.
- If the DSL is unavailable, the concern should be reported to the **Deputy DSL.**
- If the concern involves the DSL or a trustee/committee member, the report should be made to **another trusted member of the trustee/committee**, depending on the severity of the concern.
- Reports will be handled **confidentially and professionally.**
- The charity's complaints policy and process will be followed for reporting, investigation, and resolution. Any individual can make a complaint by contacting the Charity by email

(info@khalsafoundation.org) or speaking to a Trustee/Committee member in person, followed up in writing. Complaints should be made as soon as possible after the event, ideally within 3 months.

8.2. Responding to a Disclosure or Concern When a safeguarding concern is raised, representatives must follow these steps:

- **Listen and Reassure:** If the concern comes from the person affected, listen carefully without interrupting or questioning in detail. Provide reassurance that their disclosure will be taken seriously.
- **Do Not Promise Confidentiality:** Inform the person that their disclosure will need to be shared with others who can help protect them (DSL, and external authorities if necessary), as safeguarding prioritises protecting the individual from harm. The welfare of the child must always be of paramount consideration.
- **Record the Concern Immediately:** Document details including:
 - Date and time of the incident.
 - Name and role of the person making the disclosure.
 - What was said or observed (using the person's own words as much as possible).
 - Any actions taken following the disclosure.
- **Report Immediately:** Once documented, report the concern immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

8.3. Prohibited Conduct Trustees/Committee members, volunteers, and sevadars must **NOT**:

- Develop **inappropriate personal relationships** with participants.
- Engage in any form of **physical, emotional, or sexual misconduct**.
- Use **language or behaviour that could be considered offensive or discriminatory**.
- Share **inappropriate or unapproved materials**.
- **Breach the trust** placed in them by the community.

8.4. Investigation and Decision-Making Upon receiving a concern, the DSL will take the following actions:

- **Assess the Situation:** Determine the urgency and seriousness of the concern and if immediate action is required.
- **Referral to External Authorities:** If appropriate, the DSL will refer the concern to relevant external agencies (e.g., local social services, local LADO, police, DBS referral). This decision is based on the seriousness of the concern and potential risk. Complainants are encouraged to follow up concerns or make a direct referral to social services or police if not satisfied with the response.
- **Record Keeping:** All safeguarding concerns, actions taken, and communications must be **securely recorded and stored** in line with the charity's data protection policies.
- **Feedback to the Reporter:** If appropriate and safe, the person who reported the concern will be informed of the outcome to ensure transparency and clarity.
- The charity is committed to **thorough and fair investigation of all concerns**. The Charity will acknowledge receipt of a complaint within 10 working days and aim to resolve it within 90 days. If delayed, the complainant will be informed. The outcome will be communicated in writing, including steps taken to resolve and prevent recurrence.
- **Appeals:** If dissatisfied, the complainant has the right to appeal within 14 days of receiving the outcome. A senior member or panel not involved in the initial investigation will review it.

8.5. Managing Allegations Against a Representative In the event of an allegation of abuse against a representative (staff, volunteer, or trustee), the following steps should be taken:

- **Immediate Action:** The representative against whom the allegation is made **may be suspended from their duties, pending a full investigation.**
- **Internal Investigation:** The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure an internal investigation takes place following appropriate procedures.
- **External Investigation:** If the allegation is serious, the matter will be referred to external authorities for investigation (e.g., local LADO, police, DBS).
- Breaches of the Code of Behaviour may result in **immediate suspension, disciplinary action, potential referral to statutory agencies (police, social services), and removal from volunteer or committee positions.**

8.6. Support for Affected Individuals and Alleged Perpetrators

- **Emotional and Practical Support:** Children, young people, and vulnerable adults affected by abuse or neglect should be provided with emotional and practical support, including access to counselling and appropriate services.
- **Support for Families/Carers:** Where appropriate, families and carers of affected individuals should be supported and kept informed of safeguarding actions.
- Support for the **alleged perpetrator** will be provided on a case-by-case basis and may include mediation, counselling, temporary suspension, or permanent exclusion in severe cases.

8.7. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- All safeguarding records and personal data must be handled in compliance with the **Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR.** The charity collects little personal data, primarily contact details on a consent basis for event communication. It generally does not collect or process sensitive personal data.
- **Confidentiality must be maintained,** except where it is necessary to share information to safeguard the welfare of children or vulnerable adults under safeguarding laws or as required by law enforcement agencies. A concern for confidentiality must **never be used as a justification for withholding information when safeguarding a child/young person.**
- Information will be processed to manage potential conflicts of interest, ensure transparent governance, and protect the charity's interests.
- The charity is committed to adhering to data protection principles: lawfulness, fairness, transparency, purpose limitation, data minimisation, accuracy, storage limitation, integrity, confidentiality, and accountability.

9. Preventative Measures

- **Training and Awareness:** Regular safeguarding training will be provided for volunteers on recognising and preventing bullying. Relevant representatives will receive training appropriate to their role, including understanding signs of abuse, reporting concerns, and legal responsibilities. Age-appropriate workshops for participants will be conducted.
- **Code of Behaviour:** All representatives must adhere to the charity's Code of Behaviour, which outlines appropriate conduct when working with children and vulnerable adults.

This includes cultural sensitivity, respectful communication, and appropriate physical/digital interactions.

- **DBS Checks:** The charity will ensure that appropriate representatives undergo DBS checks to ensure their suitability to work with vulnerable groups.
- **Promotion of Sikh Values:** The charity will promote Sikh values of respect, equality, and compassion.
- **Regular Safeguarding Reviews:** The charity's safeguarding procedures and practices will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary to comply with current laws and best practices.

10. Policy Review This policy will be **reviewed annually by the Trustees** to ensure it remains up-to-date and effective. Amendments will be made to reflect changes in legal requirements and best practices.

11. Supporting Documents This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Khalsa Foundation Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Privacy Notice
- Financial and Internal Controls Policy

12. Contacts

Khalsa Foundation Safeguarding Leads:

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead:** safeguarding@khalsafoundation.org
- **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:** TBC

External Agencies (for reference where direct reporting may be necessary):

- Charity Commission: 0300 066 9197
- Disclosure & Barring Service: 03000 200 190
- Local Police (non-emergency): 101 (Emergency: 999)
- NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000
- Childline: 0800 1111
- Sikh Women's Aid: 0333 090 1220
- Sikh Helpline: 03000 3000 63, 07999 004 363