**Safeguarding Policy for Gerrards Cross Community Association GXCA**

Effective Date: 11 February 2025

**1. Purpose and Commitment**

Gerrards Cross Community Association GXCA ("the Charity", "we", "our") is committed to the safeguarding and welfare of all individuals, especially children, young people, and vulnerable adults, involved in our activities. We aim to create a safe and welcoming environment where everyone can participate in activities without fear of harm, abuse, or neglect.

Our commitment to safeguarding includes taking proactive measures to prevent harm, ensuring that everyone within the Charity understands their roles and responsibilities in protecting vulnerable individuals, and ensuring that any concerns are reported and addressed swiftly.

This policy outlines our approach to safeguarding and the steps we take to protect everyone involved in our services and activities.

**2. Scope of the Policy**

This Safeguarding Policy applies to:

* All staff, trustees, volunteers, and any other individuals working or volunteering for the Charity.
* All events, activities, and services organised or supported by the Charity.
* All children, young people, and vulnerable adults engaged in any of our services or activities.

**3. Definition of Safeguarding**

Safeguarding refers to the actions we take to protect individuals from harm, abuse, and neglect, ensuring that their well-being and rights are respected and upheld. This includes:

* Protecting children and young people under the age of 18.
* Protecting vulnerable adults, such as older individuals or those with physical or mental health issues.
* Preventing bullying, harassment, and exploitation.
* Creating an environment in which individuals feel safe, supported, and empowered to speak out.

**4. Legal Framework**

This policy is informed by and complies with the following UK laws, regulations, and guidelines:

* **Children Act 1989 and 2004**.
* **The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**.
* **The Care Act 2014** (for adults at risk).
* **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)**.
* **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** (for handling sensitive personal data).
* **The Charity Commission’s Safeguarding Guidance**.

**5. Roles and Responsibilities**

Everyone involved with the Charity has a role to play in safeguarding. However, specific responsibilities are outlined as follows:

* **Trustees**: Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the Charity’s safeguarding policies are implemented, that the necessary resources are available for safeguarding efforts, and that staff and volunteers are appropriately trained.
* **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**: The designated person responsible for safeguarding is Chris Bishop, Vice-chair, Executive Committee GXCA. They will:
	+ Be the first point of contact for any safeguarding concerns or disclosures.
	+ Ensure that concerns are acted upon promptly and in line with this policy.
	+ Liaise with external authorities, such as the police or local authorities, if necessary.
* **Staff and Volunteers**: All staff and volunteers are responsible for:
	+ Treating all individuals with dignity and respect.
	+ Identifying potential safeguarding issues and reporting concerns immediately to the DSL.
	+ Completing any required safeguarding training.
	+ Following the Charity’s safeguarding procedures.

**6. Recruitment and Selection**

We are committed to ensuring that all individuals who work or volunteer with us are suitable to work with children, young people, and vulnerable adults. Our recruitment process includes:

* **Enhanced DBS checks** for all staff and volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults.
* **Safer recruitment practices**, including interviews and reference checks.
* Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and receive appropriate training before engaging in any direct work with vulnerable individuals.

**7. Safeguarding Procedures**

In the event that a safeguarding concern arises, the following procedures should be followed:

* **Reporting Concerns**: If anyone has concerns about a child, young person, or vulnerable adult’s safety or well-being, they should immediately report it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
* **Recording Concerns**: Any concerns or disclosures should be recorded in writing as soon as possible, using the Charity’s safeguarding reporting forms. These records should be clear, factual, and include details of the individual involved, the nature of the concern, and the action taken.
* **Responding to Concerns**: The DSL will assess the information and decide the appropriate course of action, which may include:
	+ Referring the matter to external agencies, such as the police or local safeguarding boards.
	+ Taking internal protective measures, such as suspending the individual(s) involved, pending further investigation.
	+ Offering support to the individual involved, such as providing access to counselling services.

In all cases, the welfare of the individual involved is our top priority, and all concerns will be treated with seriousness and urgency.

**8. Training and Awareness**

We are committed to ensuring that all staff, volunteers, and trustees are properly trained in safeguarding matters. This training will:

* Ensure all individuals know how to recognise signs of abuse or neglect.
* Equip staff and volunteers with the tools to handle safeguarding concerns appropriately.
* Be updated regularly and whenever there is a change in the law or guidance.

Staff and volunteers will be required to undergo safeguarding training as part of their induction and on an ongoing basis, with refresher training every two years or more frequently if needed.

**9. Reporting and Managing Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers**

In the event of an allegation against a staff member or volunteer, the following steps will be taken:

* The allegation will be investigated by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in a fair and transparent manner.
* If necessary, the individual accused will be suspended while the investigation takes place.
* External authorities (such as the police or social services) will be contacted if the allegation involves a criminal act or if there is significant concern for the safety of the individual involved.
* Any disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the Charity’s internal policies.

**10. Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is critical in safeguarding. Information relating to safeguarding concerns will only be shared with those who need to know, including:

* The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
* External authorities, such as local safeguarding boards or law enforcement, where appropriate.
* The individual involved, if appropriate and necessary.

However, in cases of immediate risk of harm, confidentiality may need to be breached to protect the individual.

**11. Review of the Policy**

This Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in law, guidance, or the operational context of the Charity. Feedback from staff, volunteers, and stakeholders will be incorporated to ensure the policy remains relevant and effective.

**12. Contact Information**

If you have any concerns or questions about safeguarding, please contact:

**Designated Safeguarding Lead**
Christine Bishop

Email: Chris@gxca.org.uk

Gerrards Cross Community Association (GXCA)
The Memorial Centre, 8 East Common, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire SL9 7AD
Email: Office@gxca.org.uk
Phone: [01753 883759](https://www.google.com/search?q=gxca&rlz=1C1ONGR_enGB1029GB1029&oq=gxca++&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOTIGCAEQRRg7MgYIAhBFGEEyBggDEEUYPDIGCAQQRRg8MgYIBRBFGEHSAQgxNjI5ajBqNKgCALACAQ&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)

By following this policy, we ensure that we are creating a safe and supportive environment for all individuals who engage with the Charity’s activities. We value every individual’s safety and well-being and are committed to providing a safeguarding environment that respects, supports, and protects all participants.

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