



The Governor General's Youth Award - Bahamas

Safeguarding Policy

Policy, Procedures and Processes

GGYA
7-1-2024



Safeguarding Policy

The Governor General's Youth Award (GGYA) has zero tolerance for harassment or exploitation toward Award participants, staff, volunteers, and associated organizations. GGYA strives to uphold the highest possible standards of safeguarding and believes that the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable persons is paramount in all that we do.

The purpose of the GGYA Safeguarding Policy is three-fold.

- To prevent abuse or misconduct from occurring
- To provide procedural actions to follow upon an issue arising.
- To provide transparency and accountability through regular reporting procedures

1. By implementing this Safeguarding Policy, GGYA are committed to.

- I. Ensuring the safety, interests and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults are considered in all activities and that their rights, wishes, and feelings are respected.
- II. Respecting the rights, wishes and feelings of the children, young people, and vulnerable adults with whom GGYA, our Award Centre and associated organizations' work.
- III. Promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and their protection within the GGYA.
- IV. Taking all reasonable, practicable steps to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm, neglect, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and to promote their health, wellbeing, and human rights.
- V. GGYA will not tolerate discriminatory practices based on age, gender, disability, race, religion, or other issues that make up our diverse community.
- VI. GGYA believes all people should be able to participate in the work of the Award free from bullying, fear or intimidation and threats.



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- VII. GGYA incorporates a Whistleblower Policy to protect anyone coming forward with information necessary for Leadership to know. Complaints or concerns will be addressed privately, without fear of recrimination or retaliation.
 - VIII. Utilizing the GGYA Photo / Media Image consent ensures Award Participants are not exposed to social or other media without explicit consent of the parents/ guardian or responsible adults for permission. This consent applies to photographs taken by Award Centres, Volunteers and GGYA staff.
 - IX. Providing Trustees, Staff, Volunteers, as well as children, young people, vulnerable persons, and their families, with the overarching principles that guide GGYA's approach to child protection.
2. GGYA is licensed subject to a set of standards set by The Duke of Edinburgh Award. These standards require staff and volunteers working with participants to be vetted for suitability in compliance with Organizational Policies and local laws. To this end, GGYA agrees to and shall take all necessary actions to promote and prioritize the safety and wellbeing of participants by.
- I. Ensuring that GGYA and Adults in the Award understand and comply with the GGYA Code of Conduct. This Code of Conduct explicitly defines what is expected of individuals representing GGYA and the part of the organization or Award Centre to which they belong.
 - II. Annually, each Adult in the Award must sign the Code of Conduct and comply with **all** requirements to participate in delivery of the Award. This includes providing an updated Police Background Check annually and immediately informing the National Director if they are charged with any crime throughout the year.
 - III. Ensuring that all Adults in the Award understand their roles and responsibilities regarding the protection of children, young people and vulnerable people and complete the required annual training for this purpose.
 - IV. Taking appropriate action if an Adult in the Award observes, suspects, or receives a disclosure of harm, neglect, physical, sexual, emotional abuse, bullying, threatening or other exploitation of children.



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- V. Reviewing Bahamian Child Protection Laws, Standards, guidelines, legislation, and mandatory reporting laws annually. Making any necessary revisions to the GGYA Code of Conduct or internal policies as required by law.
- VI. Using GGYA Safeguarding Procedures to share concerns and relevant information with the National Director and, following discussion, agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families, and carers appropriately.
- VII. Using GGYA Safeguarding Procedures to manage any allegations against Board members, Management Council, staff members, volunteers, or programme participants.
- VIII. Maintaining detailed and accurate records of all Safeguarding concerns and securely storing such records as confidential information for an appropriate amount of time as detailed in the Safeguarding Procedure section of this policy.
- IX. Appointing a Safeguarding Lead at Board Level. The role of the Board Level Safeguarding Lead (BSL) is to provide support to the Organizational Safeguarding Lead at Board level. It is the role of the BSL to ensure that Safeguarding Policies for GGYA remain current, that any local or national legislative changes are reflected in the Policy. The BSL ensures that any changes required by the Foundation are incorporated into the Safeguarding Policy.
- X. Appointing a designated Safeguarding Lead as a daily point of contact on a day-to-day operational level. The role of the Operational Safeguarding Lead (OSL) is to be the point of contact in relation to Safeguarding reports and any subsequent action for Management Council, Staff, Volunteers and Programme Participants. The OSL works to resolve, escalate and report safeguarding issues that arise within GGYA. The OSL gives regular updates to the BSL regarding all matters related to Safeguarding within the GGYA.



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This Policy applies to anyone working on behalf of GGYA including the National director, Board of Trustees, paid staff, volunteers, partner agency staff and program participants.

This policy is based on legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in The Bahamas. The full Child Protection act of The Bahamas is available from [Child Protection \(bahamas.gov.bs\)](https://www.bahamas.gov.bs/Child-Protection)

All GGYA Safeguarding Documents can be accessed on the website bahamasggya.org

Violation of the Code of Conduct or Safeguarding Policy is grounds for immediate dismissal from the Award.

Nominated Safeguarding Leads

- **Nominated Day to Day Operational Safeguarding Lead (OSL)**
 - Name: Jacquetta Maycock, National Director
 - Telephone: (242) 326-1760
 - Email: Director@bahamasggya.org

- **Nominated Board Level Safeguarding Lead (BSL)**
 - Name: Deborah J. Fair, GGYA Trustee
 - Telephone: (828) 776 0747 or (242) 557 3294
 - Email: debjfair@gmail.com



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Code of Conduct – these points relating to safeguarding are included in the Code of Conduct signed by all Award Centers, Volunteers and Staff.

- XI. All Adults in the Award are required to sign the GGYA Code of Conduct which includes a commitment to annual training to review safeguarding, child protection, mandatory reporting laws, standards & guidelines, and any national legislative changes regarding Child Protection.
- XII. If charged with any crime during the year, Adults in the Award must disclose that information to the National Director immediately and suspend all further activities with GGYA.
- XIII. Adults in the Award are to ensure the relationships they form with the Award Participants under their care are appropriate.
- XIV. Adults in the Award must model exemplary behavior for the Award Participants in their care.
- XV. Adults in the Award observe the rules established by the Award and their organization for the safety and security of the children, young people and vulnerable adults in their care.
- XVI. Adults in the Award recognize the position of trust in which they are placed.
- XVII. Adults in the Award must follow GGYA Safeguarding Procedures to report a safeguarding incident. Completion of a Safeguarding Report is required and must be submitted to the OSL, National Director as soon as possible. The OSL, National Director will give directions on what happens next.
- XVIII. Utilizing the GGYA Photo / Media Image consent ensures Award Participants are not exposed to social or other media without explicit consent of the parents/ guardian or responsible adults for permission. This consent applies to photographs taken by Award Centres, Volunteers and GGYA staff.



Safeguarding Procedures and Processes continued

Action in the event of a concern.

- **It is important to note that Safeguarding concerns should first be discussed with the National Director, safeguarding Operational Lead, however.**
- **Never delay emergency action to protect an Award Participant**
- **Always Protect the Participant's right to privacy.**
- **Always record in writing concerns about an Award Participant's' welfare, whether or not further action is taken.**
- **Always record in writing discussions about an Award Participants welfare**
- **At the close of any discussion, always reach clear and explicit recorded agreement about next steps if necessary.**
- **Submit any notes made to the National Director, Safeguarding Operational Lead using the GGYA Safeguarding Incident Report Form as soon as possible.**

XIX. Each Adult in the Award must follow the **GGYA Safeguarding Response Flow Chart** in response to a Safeguarding Policy Violation.

- a. Maintain detailed and accurate notes of the incident or disclosure.
- b. Inform the National Director at the earliest possible convenience. Contact with the National Director may be by telephone, email or in-person. Complete GGYA Incident Report form as soon as possible following the incident.
- c. Follow National Director's advice regarding next steps and/ or local reporting rules if appropriate (police report, report to social services)



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- XX. **When a Safeguarding Incident or Disclosure is observed or revealed.** This is the process by which children, young people or vulnerable people start to share their experiences of abuse with others. This can sometimes take place over an extended period – it is often a journey, not one act or action.
- a. Children may disclose directly (speaking to someone) or indirectly (through actions and behaviors) and sometimes they may start sharing details of abuse before they are ready to put their thoughts and feelings in order.
 - b. Not all disclosures will lead to a formal report of abuse, or a case being made, or a case being taken to court, but all disclosures should be taken seriously.
 - c. It takes extraordinary courage for a child to go through the journey of disclosing abuse.
 - d. It is vital that anyone who works with children and young people undertaking this journey can provide them with the support they need.

How to Respond to an Incident or Disclosure. Research helps us understand how adults can better respond to a child who is disclosing abuse. The three key skills that help a child feel they are being listened to and taken seriously:

- a. **Show your care, listen carefully:** Give your full attention to the child or young person and keep your body language open and encouraging. Show understanding and reassure them their feelings are important. Phrases such as 'you've shown such courage today' help.
- b. **Do not rush:** Respect pauses and do not interrupt the child – let them go at their own pace. Recognize and respond to their body language. And remember that it may take several conversations for them to share what has happened to them.
- c. **Gently reflect:** Make it clear you are interested in what the child is telling you. Reflect what they have said to check your understanding – and use their language to show it is their experience.



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If a child tells you they are experiencing abuse, it is important to reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you. Make sure they know that abuse is never their fault.

Action following a Disclosure. This is a difficult moment, however, by following the steps below, we can help in an orderly yet sensitive way.

- a. Never talk to the alleged perpetrator about the child's disclosure. This could make things worse for the child.
- b. Immediately following the disclosure, incident, or observation, follow the GGYA Safeguarding Reporting Flowchart to make a record immediately using the Safeguarding Incident report form. Include details and maintain absolute accuracy. Submit the report to the National Director, Operational Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.
- c. **Secure all documents related to the incident to maintain privacy and confidentiality.**

Useful Links and Accessible documents

Please visit bahamasggya.org to access this Safeguarding Policy, GGYA Safeguarding Incident Report Form, GGYA Flowchart of Safeguarding Reporting Procedure and GGYA, Adults in the Award Code of Conduct.

[GGYA SAFEGUARDING POLICY]

[GGYA SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT REPORT FORM]

[GGYA FLOWCHART OF SAFEGUARDING REPORTING PROCEDURE]

[GGYA ADULTS IN THE AWARD CODE OF CONDUCT]

[PhotoVideoConsent.pdf \(bahamasggya.org\)](#)

[IntlLeaderHandbook.pdf \(bahamasggya.org\)](#)

[FirstAidTrainingTopics.pdf \(bahamasggya.org\)](#)

[Child Protection \(bahamasggya.org\)](#)