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## National Spiritual Assembly National Child Protection Procedures

19th January, 2003

SEVERAL YEARS AGO the National Spiritual Assembly issued Guidelines (now called Procedures) for the Protection of Children and Young People, saying at the time that it “regrets that the present state of the world makes such procedures necessary. However it would be a great mistake to think that because we are Bahá'ís we need not concern ourselves with this matter. The procedures are necessary to protect young people, those working with them, and the good name of the Faith.”

The Assembly realised the need to educate the community to take these Procedures seriously and for that reason they have been extended gradually, building upon the basic and mandatory requirements. All the Procedures have been publicised in the Bahá'í Journal UK and on NEWS, and shared with bodies such as Bahá'í Councils. Updates and new items have been made freely available and notified to the community.

The National Spiritual Assembly feels it is timely to remind the whole community, and not merely those most likely to be involved with events, about the existence of the Child Protection Procedures and Policy, and to make clear once again the need for strict adherence to them in all their aspects.

It is important to note that:

- They cover both children and young people – i.e. up to 18 years of age.
- They apply wherever there is an event held under the jurisdiction of a Bahá'í body where adults have “substantial access” to such young people. Those who have such access must then go through the Procedures and it is the responsibility of the Bahá'í body concerned to make sure this is done.
- “Substantial access” is a term not strictly defined but common sense tells that it covers teachers of children’s classes and youth classes, carers at children’s creches and activities, youth activity leaders and those assisting them, etc. If in doubt organisers must err on the side of caution and make sure the Procedures are followed.
- The requirement to follow the Procedures does not just apply to Bahá'í Community Schools and residential events such as Summer Schools. It applies to activities organised under the auspices of a Bahá'í body where there will be “substantial access” – which means community children’s classes, for instance, and local youth activities. Failure to follow the Procedures could have potentially very bad results.

All the documents are available from the National Office or electronically from [resources@bahai.org.uk](mailto:resources@bahai.org.uk) and if anyone has any queries about them and whether and how they apply in a given situation they should contact the National Spiritual Assembly.

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### Protection of children at residential events

16th January, 2003

THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY has issued a new section to be added to the

Procedures for the Protection of Children and Young People, dealing with action to be taken where certain concerns are raised at a residential event, community school etc.

To obtain a copy as PDF file please email: [resources@bahai.org.uk](mailto:resources@bahai.org.uk)

A hard (paper) copy is available on request from the National Office at 27 Rutland Gate, London, SW7 1PD.

Please specify that you are seeking Section E of the Procedures. Other parts are, of course, also available.

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## **Lifeblood of the Cause**

21st January, 2003

DEARLY LOVED FRIENDS

The National Spiritual Assembly concluded its recent meeting in London on a note of great excitement and optimism for the future development of the Cause of God in this country. As a community in the process of change and development, we can take heart from the fact that we have contributed our special share to the collective experience of the Bahá'í world during the opening years of the Five Year Plan, an experience that has been captured in such an inspiring and thrilling way by the Universal House of Justice in its January 17, 2003 message to the Bahá'ís of the World.

During its consultations this past weekend, the National Assembly finalised the detail of its budget for the financial year beginning February 1, 2003. This budget is based on a realistic projection of the income that can be expected from the three chief supporters of the National Fund – the Local Spiritual Assemblies, the Groups and the individual believers – and careful thought has gone into determining how the precious Lifeblood of the Cause is to be allocated to those activities in most need of support from it. The expenditure budget therefore reflects the approach to the reordering and reprioritisation of the work of the National Spiritual Assembly as outlined in the letter to the friends of January 16, 2003.

Further details of the national budget for 2003/2004 will be communicated by the Treasurer of the National Assembly in due course. In recognition of “the extraordinary opportunities of these precious days”, the National Spiritual Assembly is confident that its dearlyloved co-workers in these islands will continue to support the National Fund with exemplary generosity and sacrifice.

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## **Bahá'í education of children**

3rd February, 2003

DEARLY LOVED FRIENDS

The National Spiritual Assembly has now had the opportunity to consider the development of children's education in light of the processes of the Five Year Plan, and has concluded that it is both appropriate and timely to devolve full administrative responsibility for the Bahá'í education of children in the United Kingdom to the Bahá'í Councils.

The responsibilities of the Councils with respect to this vitally important area of the work of the Cause will now be as follows:

- the overall systematic pursuit and promotion of the Bahá'í education of children in line with the needs and requirements of the Five Year Plan
- the administrative responsibility with respect to the Bahá'í Community Schools hitherto discharged by the Children's Bahá'í Education Service
- the support of established local children's classes
- the special responsibility to ensure that the Child Protection and other compliance procedures and guidelines developed by the National Spiritual Assembly are applied in all appropriate circumstances

A consequence of this decision is that the Children's Bahá'í Education Service

A consequence of this decision is that the CHILDREN'S BAHÁ'Í EDUCATION SERVICE (CBES) has been disbanded with immediate effect. CBES has made an outstanding contribution towards the development of children's education in this country, and the National Spiritual Assembly remains deeply grateful for their dedicated and vigorous efforts in promoting and delivering high quality Bahá'í educational experiences for scores of children in these islands over a number of years.

A new agency, the Office of Bahá'í Education, has been created to be of service to the Bahá'í Councils in their educational responsibilities. Among the responsibilities of this new Office will be the provision of educational resources to the Councils as required, and the monitoring and evaluation of the use of curricula and related materials on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly.

In ensuring that our educational provisions respond to the critical needs of the Five Year Plan, especially through the development of children's classes at the level of the cluster – one of the three portals to entry by troops identified by the Universal House of Justice – the National Spiritual Assembly believes that we will now be better placed to further advance the process of entry by troops in this country.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,  
*National Spiritual Assembly*

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## **Pilgrimages postponed**

31st January, 2003

### DEARLY LOVED FRIENDS

The National Spiritual Assembly has been informed by the Department of the Secretariat at the Bahá'í World Centre that the House of Justice has decided to postpone pilgrimages, beginning with the group scheduled for 17 February 2003. It is intended that pilgrimages will recommence after International Convention unless circumstances dictate otherwise.

Other visits to the Bahá'í World Centre will also be restricted. The Bahá'í World Centre will continue to function as usual.

The National Spiritual Assembly asks the Friends not to waste energy on speculation and worry; nor should we be daunted by the world situation. At moments of crisis such as this, the needs and the opportunities for attracting ever larger numbers to the Faith are at their greatest. The three core activities of the Five Year Plan, *“portals for entry by troops”*, provide us with the means for attracting seekers, enrolling new believers and confirming them in paths of service to the Cause.

*“Let there be no doubt,”* writes the Universal House of Justice in its letter to the Bahá'ís of the World, dated January 17, 2003, *“that what we are witnessing is the gathering momentum of that process of the entry of humanity into the Cause by troops...”*

In the same letter the House of Justice concludes: *“Be assured of our heartfelt prayers in the Holy Shrines that Bahá'u'lláh may bless and confirm your endeavours to realize, to the fullest, the extraordinary opportunities of these precious days.”*

With loving Bahá'í greetings,  
*National Spiritual Assembly*

The members of the National Spiritual Assembly participated in an orientation seminar to study Book 7 of the Ruhi Institute from January 31 to February 2. The seminar, which was facilitated by Counsellor Larissa Tsutskova, was also attended by Counsellor Shahriar Razavi.

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