

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in the church

Policy and Guidelines for the care of children and young people

- **As members of Orchard Baptist Church, we are committed to the nurturing, protection and safety of all, especially the young and vulnerable.**
- We are committed to supporting our parents and families.
- **We recognise that child protection is everybody's responsibility.** It is the duty of each church member to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children, and the duty of each church member to respond to concerns about the well-being of children and to report any child abuse disclosed, discovered or suspected. The church will fully co-operate with any statutory investigation into any suspected abuse linked with the church.
- **The church is committed to supporting and training those who work with young people.** The church will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children, whether paid or volunteer.
- We will review this policy annually.
- We have appointed **child protection Coordinators** for the church to whom any concerns for a child or any child protection matters should be addressed, and **an administrator** who will oversee the implementation of the policy and procedures on behalf of the church.
- We are committed to following the agreed procedures and to following guidelines given by the Home Office Code of Practice *Safe from Harm*, and *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government 2010).the guidelines published by the Baptist Union in its booklets *Safe to Grow* and *Safer recruiting to work with children ,young people and vulnerable adults*
- A copy of the policy statement will be displayed permanently on the noticeboard in the church.

Safeguarding children forms

All team members working with children and young people's groups will be required to sign a form to say that that they have no convictions which would prevent them from working with children and that they will keep to the guidelines. They will also be required to apply to the Disclosure and Barring Service for a record. The person nominated as the child protection Administrator will keep confidentially information given.

Each person should fill in an update form annually as circumstances change and it ensures people are reminded of the importance of these issues.

Definitions of abuse

Physical injury: Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child, including deliberate poisoning and suffocation.

Sexual Abuse: Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This includes no-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect: Where adults fail to care for children and protect them from danger, seriously impairing health and development.

Emotional abuse: The persistent, emotional, ill treatment of a child that affects their emotional and behavioural development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or that they are given responsibilities beyond their years. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment.

Organised abuse: Where there is sexual abuse by more than a single abuser and the adults concerned appear to act in concert to abuse children and/or where an adult uses an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for sexual abuse.

Recognising signs of abuse

The following signs may or may not be indications that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered. It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more indicators is not in itself proof that abuse is actually taking place. It is also important to remember that there might be other reasons why most of the below are occurring.

Physical signs of abuse:

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur to the body in places that are not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Neglect- under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care etc
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse

Emotional Signs of abuse

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging. Also depression/aggression, extreme anxiety
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

Indicators of possible sexual abuse

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders- anorexia, bulimia

Responding to Concerns

What to do if abuse is suspected or disclosed?

Everyone has his or her part to play in ensuring the safeguarding of children within the church.

If the behaviour of a child gives any cause for concern –

If an allegation is made in any context about a child being harmed –

If the behaviour of any adult (including colleagues and members of the public) towards children causes you concern –

Do not dismiss your concerns

Do not normally confront the adult about whose behaviour you have concerns

Do not take responsibility for deciding whether or not child abuse is actually taking place

Do not investigate allegations

Do not act alone

Do not take sole responsibility for what has been shared or any concerns you may have

Do follow the church's procedures for responding to concerns.

How to respond to a child wanting to talk about abuse

Do	Don't
Listen and clarify	Minimise what is said
Give support	Show shock, alarm or disapproval
Explain what happens next	Question or push for information
Take action	Offer false reassurance

Helpful things to say:

- I believe you (or show acceptance of what the child says)
- Thank you for telling me
- It's not your fault
- I will try to help you
- This doesn't make me think of you any differently

Don't say:

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Don't tell anyone else

Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (on rare occasions it may not be safe for the child to return home and police and/or social services have to take immediate action).

Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed.

Procedures for Responding to Concerns

STAGE 1 – RECORD AND REPORT

Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what the child said and when s/he said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand; include the child's name, address, date of birth (or age if the date of birth is not known). Include the nature of the concerns/allegation/disclosure and a description of any bruising or other injuries that you may have noticed. Record the dates and times of these events and when you made the record. **Keep all handwritten notes even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept safely for an indefinite period.**

The report should be made within 24 hours of the concern being raised and should be kept secure and confidential and made available only to:

- the Safeguarding Coordinators
- the church minister as far as this is consistent with the welfare of the child concerned and possible pastoral responsibilities to any others involved
- representatives of the professional agencies

If concerns arise in the context of a children's group, the worker who has the concern may in the first instance wish to talk through their concern with their group leader. However, such conversations should not delay a report being made to the Safeguarding Coordinator. It should be clear that the duty remains with the worker to record and report their concerns to the Coordinator but the leader also has a duty to report the concern to the Coordinator.

<p>If a child is considered to be in imminent danger of harm a report should be made immediately to the police or Social Services (see page 14 for relevant numbers).</p>
--

STAGE 2 – REVIEW AND REFER

The duty of the Coordinator on receiving a report is to REVIEW the concern that has been reported and to REFER the concern on to the appropriate people.

The duty to REVIEW

The Safeguarding Coordinator:

- should take account of their own experience and expertise in assessing risk to children
- must take account of other reports that may have been received concerning the same child, family or adult
- may speak with others in the church (including the Minister) who may have relevant information and knowledge that would impact on any decision that will be made
- such conversations should not lead to undue delay in taking any necessary action.
- may consult with other agencies to seek guidance and advice in knowing how to respond appropriately to the concerns that have been raised.

The duty to REFER

The Safeguarding Coordinator will make a decision concerning to whom the report should be referred. He or she may:

- refer back to the worker who made the initial report, if there is little evidence that a child is being harmed, asking for appropriate continued observation
- refer the concern to others who work with the child/children in question asking for continued observation
- refer to the adult about whom the concern has been raised
 - This may be the parent/carer of the child or it may be one of the children's workers. If there is any question at all of possible sexual abuse or serious physical abuse the Coordinator should never address the adult directly but should refer their concerns to the police or Social Services. To do so may place the child at more risk, or could make any statutory investigation difficult to pursue because the child may be intimidated.
- Make a formal referral to the local Social Services Department
- All original reports should be retained safely and securely by the Coordinator and a written record should be made of the actions taken.

STAGE 3 – REPORT AND SUPPORT

Responsibilities in stage 3 of the process are shared by the Safeguarding Team and the Minister.

The duty to REPORT

Whenever a formal referral is made to Social Services the Designated Person should

- report the referral to the Safeguarding Administrator

- report the referral to the Minister
- report the referral to the Regional Minister of the local Association

In certain circumstances the Safeguarding Administrator acting on behalf of the trustees may also need to make further reports, for example to the Charity Commission.

If an allegation is made against someone who works with children, the allegation should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO is located within Children's Services and should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

If a worker has an allegation made against them they should step down from all church duties until the incident has been investigated.

If a worker has been removed from their post or would have been removed from their post because of the risk of harm that they pose to children and young people, there is a statutory duty to report the incident to the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

If a worker in the church has been accused of causing harm to children or young people this would be classed as a serious incident that should be reported to the Charity Commission in the annual return by those churches that are registered with the Charity Commission.

A record should be kept of all safeguarding incidents and should be considered in the annual review of the church's safeguarding policy.

The duty to SUPPORT

Once concerns, suspicions and disclosures of abuse have been addressed, the church continues to have a responsibility to offer support to all those who have been affected: child, other family members, Church worker/volunteer, Safeguarding Team, Ministers/ Leadership Team.

When a known offender is present

The church should be a community that is welcoming and open to all. It is a place for people who have failed and for people in need. Those who have abused children in the past are to be included in this welcome. However, the gospel imperative to welcome the sinner needs to be set alongside the gospel imperative that the protection of children must be paramount.

Where someone attending the church is known to have abused children, then whilst extending friendship to the individual, the church in its commitment to the protection of all children will meet with the individual and discuss boundaries that the person will be expected to keep. It may be appropriate to draw up a formal contract between the church and the person who has abused. This might also state that the abuser or alleged abuser (until such time as the allegation has been cleared or proven) must decline offers of hospitality from church members where there are children present in the home.

Respecting children and young people

The church will adopt a code of behaviour for all who are appointed to work with children and so that all children and young people are shown the respect that is due to them.

Good Practice Guidelines for Behaviour Management

Leaders and Helpers should:

- Treat all children with respect and dignity. Use age appropriate language and tone of voice. Be aware of your own body language and invading a person's personal space.
- Listen well to children. Be careful not to assume you know what a child is thinking or feeling. Listen to what is spoken and how it is said. At the same time, observe the body language to better understand what is being said.
- Do not engage in any of the following:
 - ◆ invading the privacy of children when they are using the toilet or showering
 - ◆ rough games involving physical contact between a leader and a child
 - ◆ sexually provocative games
 - ◆ making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child, even in 'fun '
 - ◆ scapegoating, belittling, ridiculing, or rejecting a child.

When it is necessary to control and discipline children, this should be done without using physical punishment, shouting or name calling. Discipline is about our relationship with children not our mastery of them. (A situation may, however, arise where a child needs to be restrained in order to protect them or a third person.)

Ways of dealing with discipline:

- Chastise the individual/group – criticise the behaviour not the person
- Move the offender to a less volatile situation - change the group activity
- Remove the child to a calm space away from others. Stay with them until they have cooled down, but keep the time-out short.

Do not respond to or encourage excessive attention-seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature.

Minor incidents/offences should be dealt with immediately on the spot. This prevents escalation and enables major offences to be seen as major. If the above mentioned procedures fail to bring about the desired result, refer the issue to the Safeguarding Coordinator.

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally. Allegations and incidents of bullying should be reported to the Safeguarding Coordinator.

Workers should not normally plan to be alone with children, on church premises. This may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room. On occasions when one to one work with a child is required this should take place with appropriate supervision and accountability structures in place.

Make sure another adult is present if, for example, a young child has soiled their underclothes and needs to be thoroughly washed. If possible, the child's own parent or carer should be called in to carry out such a task.

Leaders and Helpers should:

Only invite young people to your home, or on trips, in groups, and always make sure another adult is present. The Administrator should be notified of any trips for children which take place in the name of Orchard Baptist Church. Parental permission must always be sought for such an event.

Not give lifts to young people on their own, other than for short journeys. Ensure that if transporting children that you have the correct insurance cover for passengers. When possible, ensure you have parental permission.

Not share sleeping accommodation with young children if you take a group away.

Be aware of any physical contact they may have with young people and record it when necessary. For instance, if they need to stop a fight, administer First Aid, give a hug to a child who is distressed, remove a child from danger, or protect themselves or others from attack.

Not use physical punishment when controlling or disciplining children.

Keep a log book. If any significant incidents take place a record should be kept in the Church Incident Book. Enter the names of both children and adults present and anything of note which you observe, e.g. details of any fights broken up by the workers, allegations made by young people, incidences where a child is asked to leave. All workers who witnessed, heard or responded in any way should record details, and sign and date the entry.

Abuse of Trust

Relationships between children and their leaders/helpers can be described as 'relationships of trust'. The leader is someone in whom the child has placed a degree of trust, this may be because the leader has an educational role, is a provider of leisure activities, or even is a significant adult friend.

It is also not acceptable for a leader/helper to form a romantic relationship with a child with whom they have a relationship of trust.

While by no means restricted to young leaders, those who are in their early adult years will need to be particularly aware of the need not to abuse their position of trust in their relationships with other young people who are not much younger than themselves.

Good Practice Guidelines with Colleagues

If you see another member of staff acting in ways, which might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them or to one of the Safeguarding Team about your concerns. Leaders and helpers should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows all workers to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour.

Electronic Communication

Electronic communication has become enormously important and popular over the past ten years. It is an easy way to communicate with young people in particular. However, there are dangers associated with electronic communication that call for vigilance:

electronic communication is often an extremely informal mode of communication which can create the potential for communication to be misunderstood

because of the informal style of electronic communication, workers can easily cross appropriate boundaries in their relationships with young people

some adults who are intent on harming children and young people choose to use electronic communication as a way to meet and 'groom' children.

These are guidelines are written to try to maintain healthy and safe relationships between adults and children:

Electronic communication must never become a substitute for face to face contact with young people.

Parents or carers and children and young people themselves have the right to decide if a worker is to have email addresses or mobile phone numbers etc.

Workers should only use electronic means of communication with those children and young people from whom appropriate consent has been received.

Direct electronic communication with children of primary school age is inappropriate and should be avoided.

Only workers who have been appointed under the church's agreed procedures should use any electronic means of communication to contact children or young people on behalf of the church or one of the church's organisations.

Contact with children and young people by electronic communication should generally be for information-giving purposes only and not for general chatter.

Workers should not share any personal information with children and young people, and should not request or respond to any personal information from the child or young person other than that which is necessary and appropriate as part of their role.

Workers should be careful in their communications with children and young people so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives: clear, unambiguous language should be used and the use of unnecessary abbreviations should be avoided.

Electronic communication should only be used between the hours of 8.00 am and 10.00 pm

Official church e-mails to young people should be sent out with a church header and footer indicating to the young people that this is an official communication; this should also be copied to the church e-mail address.

Any photos or video taken on personal mobile phones should not be uploaded to social networking sites without parental permission.

Workers should not retain images of children and young people on their mobile phone.

Instant Messaging Services (IMS)

the use of instant messenger services should be kept to a minimum.

where a young person in need or at a point of crisis uses this as a way of communicating with a worker:

- significant conversations should be saved as a text file if possible, and
- a log kept of who and when they communicated.

Social Networking sites

If adults are intending to add young people to their social networking sites they must first have the permission of the parents of the young person.

Adults should not normally make 'friend requests' of young people.

It should not become expected behaviour that adults say yes to a young person when a friend request is received.

It is the adult's responsibility to ensure that all of the content on their site is appropriate for young people to see (including contents of photos uploaded).

All communication with young people should be kept within public domains.

All communications with young people should be transparent and open to scrutiny.

Remember – never alone and unseen is the basic rule of thumb in safeguarding young people - what does this mean for your activity with electronic communication?

Good Practice Guidelines Regarding Health & Safety

All leaders and helpers are responsible for being observant for any health and safety issues which may affect their group, for example:

- Access to the building should be safe and well lit.
- There should be adequate heating and lighting in the venue.
- Ensure there is enough space and appropriate activities for all children.
- Have a First Aid kit and phone available.
- Check the premises for hazards (e.g. piles of chairs etc).
- Check equipment for sharp edges or missing parts.
- No smoking should be permitted.
- Fire drills should be carried out at least annually.
- Any food should be prepared carefully and hygienically.

Risk Assessments

A generic written risk assessment will be carried out at the beginning of each academic year. This will cover the general week to week and Sunday morning activities. A specific risk assessment will be carried out by the youth leader for any other one-off youth activities which may take place throughout the year. Risk assessments will be made available to the Leadership Team.

Safe Premises

The church takes seriously its responsibility to ensure that the premises are safe for all who use them. The following checklist identifies guidelines to ensure the safety of all, especially children and young people:

- All doorways and passages to be kept clear at all times
- Emergency Exits to be clearly shown at all times
- The kitchen is out of bounds to children under 11 and to young people unless supervised by a parent or carer
- A First Aid Kit will be kept in the kitchen with a Report Book for all usage.
- Special care with safety will be taken when the baptistery is open

- Any hazards noticed should be notified to the person responsible for fabric for action to be taken

Ratios

When working with young people the following recommended minimum ratios apply:

Age range	Recommended minimum ratio for INDOOR activities	Recommended minimum ratio for OUTDOOR activities
0 – 2 years	1:3 (minimum 2)	1:3 (minimum 2)
3 years	1:4 (minimum 2)	1:4 (minimum 2)
4 – 7 years	1:8 (minimum 2)	1:6 (minimum 2)
8 – 12 years	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	2 adults for up to 15 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 8 additional children
13 years and over	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children

This does not take into account any special circumstances such as behavioural issues, developmental issues, disability and so on, which may mean an increase to the recommended ratio.

In calculating the ratios of workers to children, young leaders who are under the age of 18 should be counted as one of the children, not as one of the leaders/helpers.

Safeguarding concerns involving a Minister or any on the Safeguarding Team

Any safeguarding concerns involving a Minister should always be reported immediately to the Regional Minister of your local Baptist Association in addition to following the church's normal procedures. Any safeguarding concerns involving the Administrator for safeguarding the concern should be raised with the Safeguarding Coordinator or the Minister.

Safe recruitment, support and supervision of workers

The church will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children, whether paid or volunteer. All workers will be provided with appropriate training, support and supervision to promote the safekeeping of children.

Guidelines for the Appointment of Children's Leaders and Helpers

The Church should ensure that the following selection procedures have been followed:

- A written role description for each post
- All volunteers (both current and new) should complete an application form
- A discussion of the role with prospective volunteers
- Two references will be taken up (at least one should be from outside of the church)
- DBS will be applied for
- The volunteer should sign an undertaking to work within the agreed safeguarding policy and procedures
- Induction into the relevant procedures and ways of working will be undertaken (to include safeguarding training)

Administration of this process will be overseen by the Administrator, but may be carried out by others.

Until this procedure is completed workers must be supervised.

All leaders and helpers should have a calling to work with children which is recognised by the Church Leadership Team in discussion with the existing children's leaders and helpers.

The first priority of leaders and helpers should be their own spiritual welfare, and, therefore, they should receive teaching and be part of a worship service or homegroup regularly.

All leaders and helpers should set a good example for Christ in their personal lifestyle.

Meetings for leaders and helpers will be held approximately once per term, for support and planning.

However anyone may raise any concerns or suggestions regarding the ministry amongst children with any of the Safeguarding Team or Leadership Team at any time.

The Disclosure and Barring Service is a government-established agency to help with safer recruitment. Part of its function is to enable organisations appointing people to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults to have access to details of a person's criminal record before appointing them. All those involved in caring for, training or being in sole charge of young people will require an "enhanced disclosure" concerning their criminal record.

An application for a disclosure has to be counter-signed by a body that has registered with the DBS. The Churches' Agency for Safeguarding (CAS) has registered with the DBS on behalf of the Baptist Union (and other churches).

Disclosures cannot tell whether a person is suitable to work with children only indicate when a person may be unsuitable. Therefore references need to be taken up, a job description should be drawn up and some form of discussion should take place before a person begins their work in order that both the prospective worker and the church can be fully informed about what is involved.

It is expected that all those working with children will have an enhanced disclosure.

The minister will need to apply for a Disclosure.

These safeguards may sound unnecessary and irksome but experience in many churches has shown the need to be cautious about appointing those to work with vulnerable people. The aim is to ensure sound Christian people are appointed and that we avoid those who might abuse the position of trust they will be in to exploit those for whom they are responsible.

Summary of procedure for a new appointment

1. Write a simple job description, specify the age group and to whom the person is responsible. Make it clear that a CRB disclosure will be necessary.
2. The candidate should complete a church application form.
3. Take up references from someone who knows the person well; if the person has moved churches in the past 2 years then their previous church should act as a referee.
4. Meet with the candidate; use the time for gathering more information for both sides.
5. Make the appointment decision.
6. Check the candidate's criminal background: the candidate should be asked to fill in a DBS form. The Child Safety Policy Administrator will obtain forms to give to the candidate.
7. Ask the person to sign a volunteer agreement and offer training as appropriate.

To keep records up to date the church also has an "Update form" which all youth workers should fill in each year.

Young leaders under 18 years of age

In law young leaders under the age of 18 are children and cannot be treated as adult members of a team.

Training and mentoring will be given to ensure that the young leader is helped to develop and hone skills, attitudes and experience.

A young leader must be closely supervised by an adult leader at all times, and never given sole responsibility for a group of children.

When considering ratios of staff to children the young leader needs to be counted as a child, not a leader.

The Safeguarding Children Policy applies to a young leader just as it does to any other person.

The permission of parents or carers needs to be sought for the young leader just as you would for any other person less than 18 years of age.

If the young leader accompanies a group on a residential activity ideally they should have separate sleeping accommodation to both the adult leadership team and the children they are working with.

Young Leaders should not be given leadership responsibility for a group immediately below their own age - a gap of at least two years should be left.

Orchard Baptist Church Child Protection Policy:
Who To Contact

Orchard Baptist Church child protection Coordinators:

Richard and Julie Bolam

22 Chestnut Avenue,
Colchester
Tel: 512812

Concerns that abuse may have occurred must be reported to Richard and Julie who are nominated by the church to act on our behalf in referring allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities, or to Graeme Ross, church minister, if they are unavailable.

Hilary Hannan, as DBS Verifier, will administer the Safeguarding forms and act as the designated person for completing DBS forms. The church will comply with the DBS rules protecting the privacy of applicants and the handling and safekeeping of Disclosure information.

If the suspicions implicate any of the above named, or you feel they have not responded appropriately to your concerns, contact the numbers given below.

Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS)

www.ccpas.co.uk
0845 120 4550
PO Box 113, Swanley
Kent BR8 7UQ

Social Care Direct

Immediate Concerns In hours 0845 6037634
Out of hours 0845 6061212
Routine enquiries/referrals In hours 0845 6037627

Essex Police Child Protection Unit:

01206 717852
Essex County Council Initial Response Team (IRT)
0845 050 7666 (24 hours)
Non-emergency police contact number: 101

Childline:

Childline (a free 24 hour helpline for children)
0800 1111

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline

0808 800 5000 (free 24 hour service)

For further information regarding the church policy on child protection see the Hilary Hannan