

## **Policy for Child Protection ..... STANDARD POLICY.....**

Adopted by St. Peter's Church, Ropley.

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Definitions of Terms**

For the purposes of this Child Protection Policy, all references to:

'*child*', '*children*', '*young person*', '*young people*', – whether singular or plural – are used interchangeably and are taken to refer to those under 18 years of age.

'*workers*', '*staff*', '*volunteers*', '*helpers*' are used interchangeably and are taken to refer to anyone interacting with children on behalf of The Church

'*child abuse*' refers to any of the recognised forms of abuse – physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect.

### **WHY WE HAVE A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

➤ *A Child protection policy will help protect **children**.*

A child protection policy helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and, although no procedures or processes can offer complete protection for children, following these procedures and implementing a policy minimises the risk to children from abuse and exploitation.

➤ *A Child protection policy will help protect **workers***

A child protection policy clarifies what The Church requires in relation to the protection of children. It sets out standards of behaviour for project staff and volunteers when they are working with children and what to do if they notice, or are told about, inappropriate behaviour in others.

➤ *A Child protection policy will help protect **The Church**.*

A child protection policy is a statement of intent that demonstrates The Churches commitment to safeguard children from harm. Child protection policies will help move The Church towards best practice in this area and deter those who would wish to abuse children from seeking to work with children on behalf of The Church.

## **POLICY ISSUES: MISSION STATEMENT**

The PCC recognises the importance of its ministry with children and young people and its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to the church's care. The welfare of the child is always paramount.

As part of its mission, the Church is committed to:

The safeguarding, care and nurture of children and young people within our church community and who participate in any activity of the church;  
Safe recruitment, supervision and training for all the children's/youth workers within the church.

Responding without delay to every report or cause for concern that a child or young person for whom it is responsible may be or may have been harmed in any way;  
Full cooperation with statutory agencies during any investigation into allegations concerning abuse of a child or young person in the church community;

Providing informed pastoral care to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse; The management and supervision of any member of the church community known or thought to pose a threat to children or young people.

## **CHURCH POLICY**

The PCC recognises the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children and young people. It also recognises that children and young people can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. The PCC has therefore adopted the procedures set out in this document (hereafter "the policy").

The PCC is committed to on-going child protection training for all those who work with children and youth people and will regularly review the Policy and procedures.

## **DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE**

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

### **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

### **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may

involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

## **SEXUAL ABUSE**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non penetrative acts (oral sex). They may include non 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 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**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and /or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE**

Recognising possible signs of abuse

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

### **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 that 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\*

## **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\*

## **EMOTIONAL SIGNS OF ABUSE**

Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.  
Also depression, aggression or 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

\*These signs may indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming, mostly by cutting, burning, self-poisoning. Approximately 20,000 are treated in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year.

## **RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE**

Under no circumstances should a children/youth worker carry out their own investigation into the allegation or suspicion of abuse. The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should:

Discuss concerns with the Director for Safeguarding and Inclusion . Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with church procedures and kept in a secure place.

The PCC will support the Co-ordinator / Deputy Co-ordinator in their role, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.

All reports or concerns must be treated seriously.

## **APPOINTMENT, SUPPORT, SUPERVISION & TRAINING OF LEADERS & WORKERS**

The PCC will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised appropriately.

### **APPOINTMENT OF WORKERS**

The Church has a robust recruitment procedure, including: all prospective workers will be asked to complete an application form and apply for an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure and be registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority

The procedure for appointment will be:

Informal discussion

Completion of application form and a self declaration of any criminal record

References taken up, if appropriate

Check the person is registered with the ISA (from 10/09)

An application is made to the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) for an enhanced Disclosure Receipt of the Disclosure from the CRB

Meeting with Children's Work Overseer/Youth Work Overseer

Allocation of worker into children's/youth work

Contract completed, if appropriate

The Child protection Co-ordinator and/or Children's Overseer, Youth Leaders and/or the PCC will make a judgement on whether or not it would be appropriate to appoint a person.

Workers will be given a contract on appointment.

### **SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION**

All workers will be provided with appropriate support and supervision within their roles.

### **TRAINING**

All workers will be expected to undertake regular training and The Church will ensure that appropriate opportunities are made available.

### **SUPPORT TO THOSE AFFECTED BY ABUSE**

The PCC is committed to offering pastoral care and support to those attending the church who have been affected by abuse.

## **WORKING WITH OFFENDERS**

When someone attending the church or wishing to join the church is known to have abused children, the PCC will ensure an appropriate Agreement is put in place (where possible the Director for Safeguarding and Inclusion will work with statutory agencies to ensure known risks are identified and included) to supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care. The Agreement will detail the conditions under which the person may attend the church.

### **GOOD PRACTICE**

#### **HOW TO RESPOND TO A CHILD WANTING TO TALK ABOUT ABUSE**

Above everything else listen, listen, listen

Show acceptance of what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound)

Keep calm

Look at the child directly

Be honest

Tell the child you will need to let someone else know -don't promise confidentiality

Even when a child has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse

Be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell

Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen.

As soon as possible write down what has been shared (see "Making notes")

#### **DO SAY**

You have done the right thing in telling. That must have been really hard

I am glad you have told me

It's not your fault

I will help you

#### **DON'T SAY**

Why didn't you tell anyone before? I can't believe it!

Are you sure this is true?

Why? How? When? Who? Where? Never make false promises

Never make statements such as "I am shocked, don't tell anyone else"

#### **CONCLUDING**

Again reassure the child that they were right to tell you and show acceptance

Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know

what happens (you might have to consider referring to Social Services or the Police

to prevent a child or young person returning home if you consider them to be

seriously at risk of further abuse)

Contact the Diocesan Director for Safeguarding and Inclusion or The Church Safeguarding Officer.

Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed.

## **MAKING NOTES**

Make notes as soon as possible, preferably within one hour of the child talking to you. Write down exactly what the child said and when s/he said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (eg a description of the activity). Note if anyone else was present. Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all hand-written notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept for an indefinite period in a secure place.

## **TOUCHING**

- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.

- Touch should be instigated by / related to the child's needs, not the worker's.

- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child.
- Children are entitled to privacy to ensure personal dignity.
- Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others,

except in exceptional circumstances when they need medical attention.

- When giving first aid (or applying sun cream etc), encourage the child to do what they

can manage themselves, but consider the child's best interests and give appropriate help

where necessary.

- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact.
- Concerns about abuse should always be reported.

## **GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE**

What is discipline?

Discipline is the education of a person's character. It includes nurturing, training, instruction, chastisement, verbal rebuke, teaching and encouragement.

Why discipline?

It brings security, produces character, prepares for life, is evidence of love and is God's heart.

Dos and Don'ts of Discipline in Children's Work

### **Don't**

NEVER smack or hit a child

Discipline out of love NEVER out of anger. (Call on support from other leaders if you feel you may deal with the situation unwisely in your anger)

Do not shout in anger or put down a child/young person

### **Do**

Lay down ground rules eg. No swearing, racism or calling each other names, a respect for property

Keep the ground rules simple and clear, and make sure the children understand what procedure will be taken if they are not followed

Never reject a child, just the behaviour (Tell the child that you value him/her, but you are not willing to accept the behaviour)

Remember that each child is unique, special and individual, and each child needs a different method of being dealt with. We therefore need to be asking ourselves "Why is the child behaving like that?"

Work on each individual child's positives, do not compare them with each other, but encourage and build them up.

Help the child learn that they will be noticed more when they obey the rules, rather than when they break them. Try to create an environment of care and offer more tangible rewards, where each child feels that it is worth keeping to the rules.

## **CAMPS / RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITIES / OFF SITE ACTIVITIES**

From time to time activities may be arranged which will take place away from the usual meeting place and may include overnight stays. A comprehensive risk assessment of each activity will be undertaken and appropriate risk management measures put in place.

Parents / guardians will be given full details of all such activities and clear behaviour guidance will be issued to children prior to attending.

## **BULLYING**



Bullying of any sort will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Any such behaviour will be dealt with and those perpetrating the bullying will be made aware that such behaviour is not acceptable.

Children experiencing bullying in any situation will be offered support to address the issues.

## **STORAGE AND USE OF INFORMATION, AND IMAGES OF CHILDREN**

Specific procedures for the making, storage and use of images of children are available. No image will be taken, stored or used without the parent / carers permission.

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Modern communication technologies may be used as a means of communicating with children. Clear guidelines exist about how these will be used.

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It may, on occasions be necessary for children to be transported to or from events. A policy for the transport of children is available.

Incumbent: Churchwarden:

## **Policy for Child Protection**

This statement was agreed at the Parochial Church Meeting (PCC) held on.....

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Review - End of 2023

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