



**Model
Safeguarding Policy
and
Procedural Guidance
for
Parishes**

This document has been produced through the assistance of the
Bradford Safeguarding Children Board and Education Bradford

(NAME OF CHURCH)

Safeguarding children is the responsibility of us all

(Name of Church) recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within the legal framework of the Children Act 1989. Anyone under the age of 18 is considered to be a child/young person.

It is difficult to acknowledge sometimes that abuse can happen within a church but any group or organisation working with children needs to be alert to the possibility of abuse occurring. It is the responsibility of us all to put the welfare of children and young people first and to recognise behaviours that can put children at risk.

We are aware that many children and young people are the victims of different kinds of abuse and that they can be subjected to social factors that have an adverse impact upon their lives, such as domestic abuse or substance misuse.

We aim to create a safe and respectful environment within which children and young people can thrive and churches can operate with the help and security of clear guidance.

These guidelines are for the use of all clergy, volunteers paid staff and visitors. The guidelines can be shared with the parents and carers of the children and young people to whom we offer a service.

We are committed to:

- ⊕ The care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children and young adults
- ⊕ The safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- ⊕ The establishment of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is a culture of 'informed vigilance' as to the dangers of abuse.

Protecting All God's Children 2010

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARISH

Each Parish should:

- ⊕ Adopt and implement a safeguarding children policy and procedures, accepting as a minimum the House of Bishop's policy on Safeguarding Children but informed by additional diocesan procedures and recommended good practice, while being responsive to local parish requirements;

Appoint at least one coordinator to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures. The coordinator must ensure that any concerns about a child or the behaviour of an adult are referred to the diocesan safeguarding adviser. The coordinator should either be a member of the PCC or have the right to attend and should report at least annually on the implementation of the policy in the parish. It should not be the incumbent or [their spouse](#).

[FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH CHILD PROTECTION COORDINATOR IS AVAILABLE ON THE DIOCESAN WEBSITE \[www.westyorkshiredales.anglican.org\]\(http://www.westyorkshiredales.anglican.org\)](#)

- ⊕ Consider appointing someone, different from the coordinator, to be a children's advocate.

- ⊕ Display in church premises where children's activities take place, the contact details of the coordinator or advocate along with the telephone numbers for Childline and Parentline Plus. N.b. see 'Children in Church' on the Diocesan website.
- ⊕ Ensure that all those authorised to work with children are appropriately recruited according to safer recruitment practice, and are trained and supported:
- ⊕ Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children undertaken in the name of the parish;
- ⊕ Review the implementation of the safeguarding children policy, procedures and good practice, at least annually;
- ⊕ If appropriate, in rural parishes or parishes held in plurality, consider joining together to implement policy and procedures, whilst remembering that legal responsibility will continue to rest with the individual parishes;
- ⊕ If working with Local Ecumenical Partnerships [LEPs] agree which denomination or organisation's safeguarding children policy to follow, including where to seek advice in urgent situations. This decision should be ratified by the Bishop and other appropriate church leaders in the partnership;
- ⊕ In the event of a specific safeguarding concern, ensure that all the LEP partners are notified.

GOOD PRACTICE

- Everyone is responsible for children while on these premises and must make sure that health and safety guidelines are adhered to;
- Everyone working with children should be encouraged to attend basic child protection training;
- Wherever possible steps should be taken that a worker is not left alone with a child;
- Try to avoid Situations where visitors are allowed to wander around the premises unaccompanied when children and young people are present;
- Appropriate adult child ratios should be observed at all times;
- People working with children should be alert to strangers frequently waiting outside a venue with no apparent purpose. Children should not be collected by people other than their parents unless notification has been received;
- If a child is not collected after a session it is reasonable to wait approximately half an hour for a parent or carer to arrive. If the parent or carer cannot be contacted, Social Services or the police should be contacted and asked to assist.
- Careful consideration will need to be given to ensure the safety of children as they leave the premises;
- Appropriate Health and safety guidelines must be adhered to for all visits and trips;
- All activities must be risk assessed and properly insured;
- All vehicles hired for outings must be insured, roadworthy and fitted with seatbelts;
- All drivers should travel with at least one escort. Drivers and escorts should have up to date DBS checks and been subject to appropriate recruitment procedures. All drivers and escorts should agree to abide by these guidelines;
- A roll call will be taken at the start of the journey and again before commencing the return journey; if travelling in more than one vehicle, children will be encouraged to travel in the same vehicle there and back;
- The leaders of trips will carry the contact numbers for the home organisation and emergency services in the event of an alert being necessary;
- If a child goes missing on a trip, staff should instigate an immediate search. If the child cannot be found within half an hour, the appropriate security staff and police should be notified;
- If, having notified the security staff and police, the child cannot be found, the parents/carers will be notified immediately

- The care of the remaining children is paramount. It is imperative that they return to the home site as quickly as possible, while a senior leader remains at the visit to coordinate contact between security staff and the child's parents/carers.

Use of premises by other organisations

- In the event that a room or rooms on the premises are used by other organisations, the letting agreement should ensure that the hiring organisation works to approved child protection procedures and/or that they read and agree to abide by these guidelines.

RECOGNISING SIGNS OF ABUSE

It can often be difficult to recognise abuse. The signs listed in these guidelines are only indicators and many can have reasonable explanations. Children may behave strangely or seem unhappy for many reasons, as they move through the stages of childhood or their families experience changes. It is nevertheless important to know what could indicate that abuse is taking place to be alert to the need to consult further.

Someone can abuse a child by actively inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse can take place within a family, in an institutional or community setting, by telephone or on the Internet. Abuse can be carried out by someone known to a child or by a complete stranger.

If you are worried about a child it is important that you keep a written record of any physical or behavioural signs and symptoms. In this way you can monitor whether or not a pattern emerges and provide evidence to any investigation if required.

Examples and definitions of the different type of abuse are enclosed in Appendix A.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR CONCERNS?

In the event that a child makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse by an adult or another child or young person, it is important that you:

- Listen to them and/or closely observe their presentation and behaviour;
- Let them know that you take what they are saying seriously;
- Do **not** attempt to question or interview them yourself;
- Let them know that you will need to tell someone else in order to help them. **Do not promise to keep what they tell you secret;**
- Inform your designated child protection officer and/or the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser as soon as possible;
- Make a written record of the incident or events.

Sometimes you may just feel concerned about a child but do not know whether to share your concerns or not. In this situation you should always raise your concerns with your

designated child protection officer or the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, who will decide what to do next.

The responsibility for investigating allegations of abuse, whether they result from the disclosure of a child or the concerns of an adult, lies with social workers and the police. It is normally the responsibility of your designated child protection officer to make a referral to these agencies, but if you judge the situation to be an emergency and/or you require advice in the absence of the designated officer, you must report your concerns directly, using the contacts listed at the back of these guidelines.

Social Services will advise you when or whether to inform the child's parents or carers about any concerns. If they decide to pursue a child protection investigation, you should:

- Work closely and collaboratively with all professionals involved in the investigation, in order to keep the child safe;
- Attend a child protection conference if you are invited. You will be asked to provide information about your involvement with the child, which is why it is important to keep records of your concerns;
- Attend any subsequent child protection review conferences.

! PRACTICE TIPS!

You can find more detail about the identification of abuse and what to do about it in the booklet, "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused". This is available from the DfES website, www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF OR VOLUNTEERS

Organisations that work or come into contact with children and young people need to be aware of the possibility that allegations of abuse will be made against members of their staff or volunteers. Allegations can be made by children, young people, parents and they can be made by other concerned adults. Allegations can be made for a variety of reasons. Some of the most common are:

- Abuse has actually taken place;
- Children can misinterpret your language or your actions because they are reminded of something else

All allegations should be brought to the notice of (designated child protection officer) immediately. In cases where the allegation is made against this person, the complainant should approach a more senior official or take the following action him or herself:

- Make sure that the child in question is safe and away from the person alleged to have abused a child;
- Contact social services in the team relevant to where the child lives (see section 7);
- Contact the parents or carers of the child if advised to do so by the social worker/officer in charge of allegations;
- Irrespective of any investigation by Social Service or the police, you should follow the appropriate disciplinary procedure; consideration must be given as to whether the member of staff or volunteer should be suspended from duty while the investigation is carried out;

- Consider whether the person has access to children anywhere else and whether those organisations or groups need to be informed;
- Act upon the decisions made in any strategy meeting.

All incidents should be investigated within the organisation after any external investigation has finished, reviewing practice and putting in place any additional measures based on lessons learned.

Support

It is important that you also develop support systems for the person who faces an allegation. If your place of worship/learning has a management committee, it could be that a member is nominated to fulfil this role. As well as providing support through listening and through prayer, this person could advise on appropriate outside help, such as counselling or legal services.

! PRACTICE TIPS!

Well functioning organisations encourage an environment where people feel safe to express their concerns about the practice of others. The term 'whistleblowing' is often used pejoratively; if a staff member, volunteer or visitor has concerns, they should not be victimised in any way for expressing them.

SAFE RECRUITMENT

The application of rigorous procedures for the recruitment of any staff or volunteers who come into contact with children, both directly and indirectly, can reduce the likelihood of allegations of abuse being made that are founded. As an absolute minimum, the following standards should be followed:

- All prospective workers (paid and unpaid) should complete an application form which asks for details of their previous employment and for the names of two referees;
- All prospective workers (paid and unpaid) who are eligible should have a new Disclosure and Barring Service [DBS]check before they start employment with you – anyone who refused to do so should not be employed;
- All prospective workers (paid and unpaid) should be interviewed to establish previous experience of working in an environment where there is contact with children and perceptions of acceptable behaviour;
- Nobody should start work before references have been received. Referees should be reminded that references should not misrepresent the candidate or omit to say things that might be relevant to their employment;
- All appointments to work with children should be subject to an agreed probationary period;
- New members of staff should be clear about their responsibilities and wherever possible, work to an agreed job description;
- These guidelines should be available to everyone and fully discussed as part of an induction process.

IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

These child protection procedures will only be effective if all staff and volunteers in your place of worship own and understand them. This checklist is designed to help you to go through that process:

- Identify designated child protection [or safeguarding officer] (CPO)
- Add CPO name and contact details to the policy
- Ensure CPO attends training on child protection and safeguarding and updates that training regularly
- Ensure all staff and volunteers have a copy of parish child protection procedures
- Ensure all existing staff and volunteers who have contact with children
Are recruited in accordance with diocesan guidance before they start work
- Ensure that the premises conform to health and safety guidelines
- Ensure that the premises and activities are risk assessed and adequately insured

- Ensure that any letting arrangements are bound by contracts that include
an agreement to adhere to the host organisation’s child protection procedures
- The parish child protection policy is endorsed by the PCC and is reviewed annually

For.....[signed on behalf of the PCC].....Date

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, and suffocating. It is against the law to discipline a child by deliberately doing any of these things. Physical abuse can also result when a parent or carer deliberately causes the ill health of a child in order to seek attention; this is called fabricated illness or Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy. Symptoms that indicate physical abuse include:

- Bruising in unusual places, such as the face or the back
- Finger mark bruising or grasp marks on the limbs or chest of a small child
- Bites
- Burn and scald marks; small round burns that could be caused by a cigarette
- Fractures to arms, legs or ribs in a small child
- Large numbers of scars of different sizes or ages

Children who have been physically hurt can be fearful of others. They may also wear clothes that cover most of their body in order to cover their injuries and be resistant to explaining how the injury happened.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse happens when a child's need for love, security, praise and recognition is not met. Some level of emotional abuse is involvement in all types of ill treatment of a child. Emotionally abusive behaviour occurs if a parent, carer or authority figure is consistently hostile, rejecting, threatening or undermining. It can also result when children are prevented from social contact with others, or if developmentally inappropriate expectations are imposed upon them. Symptoms that indicate emotional abuse include:

- Excessively clingy or attention-seeking behaviour
- Very low self esteem or excessive self-criticism
- Excessively withdraw behaviour or fearfulness
- Anxious behaviour, such as rocking, hair twisting or self harm
- Lack of appropriate boundaries with strangers; too eager to please
- Eating disorders

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing damage to their health and development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failing to protect a child from harm or danger, or failing to access appropriate medical care and treatment when necessary. It can exist in isolation or in combination with other forms of abuse. Symptoms of physical and emotional neglect can include:

- Inadequate supervision; being left alone for long periods of time
- Lack of stimulation, social contact or education
- Inadequate nutrition, leading to ill-health – a child may look too thin, too fat and/or undernourished
- Constant hunger; stealing or gorging food
- Failure to seek or to follow medical advice such that a child's life or development is endangered
- Repeated wearing of inappropriate clothing for the weather

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may include physical contact, both penetrative and non-penetrative, or involve no contact, such as watching sexual activities, harassment or looking at pornographic material. Encouraging children to act in sexually inappropriate ways is also abusive. Under the Sexual offences Act 2003, any sexual activity – contact or non-contact – with a child under the age of 13, is a crime.

Symptoms of sexual abuse include:

- Allegations or disclosure
- Genital soreness, injuries or discomfort
- Sexually transmitted diseases; urinary infections
- Excessive preoccupation with sex; inappropriately sexualised play, words or drawing
- A child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults

Other children and young people may additionally exhibit:

- Depression
- Drug and/or alcohol abuse
- Eating disorders; obsessive behaviours
- Self mutilation; suicide attempts
- School/peer/relationship problems

NOTE

The lists above are intended to be helpful, but can never be anything other than indicative and certainly are not exhaustive. In some cases there may be clusters of symptoms. It is always important to bear in mind that some children and young people who are being abused do not show any signs or symptoms at all. If you are in doubt or not sure what to do, consult your diocesan safeguarding adviser or the local children's social care team.

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

All child protection concerns should be acted upon immediately. If you are concerned that a child might be at risk or is actually suffering abuse, you should tell the designated child protection officer within your church. You may also wish to speak to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

Your designated officer is:.....

Telephone number:.....

The Diocesan Safeguarding Officer is Jenny Price. 01924 371802 or 07800740001

In an emergency situation, contact Social Services or the police directly:

Please insert the relevant telephone numbers for your church from the numbers below:

Children’s Social Care

- Wakefield 01274 437500
- Leeds 0113 22 4403
- Lancashire 08450 530 009
- Cumbria 01539 713377
- North Yorkshire: 08450 349 410

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