

# **CHRISTCHURCH BALDOCK CHILD and VULNERABLE PERSONS PROTECTION POLICY**

## **Introduction**

### **Church Details**

Name of church: Christchurch

Location: Baldock, meeting at Knight's Templar School

Denomination: affiliated to the FIEC

### **Church Statement**

The church aims to have a ministry with the children and young people of the families and vulnerable adults that attend, and an outreach ministry to families in the area. The Church Trustees (hereafter “the CTs”) takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people and vulnerable adults entrusted to the church’s care.

### **Church Mission**

#### **As part of the mission, the CTs are committed to:**

- Listening to, relating effectively and valuing children and young people and vulnerable adults whilst ensuring their protection within the church walls
- Encouraging and supporting parents and carers.
- Ensuring that children’s/ youth workers are given support and training
- Having a system for dealing with concerns about possible abuse
- Maintaining good links with the statutory child care authorities

### **Areas of Policy**

**The CTs recognise that many children and young people today are victims of neglect and physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Accordingly the CTs have adopted the policy contained in this document, (hereafter “the policy”). The policy sets out the agreed guidelines. The same principle apply to vulnerable adults.**

- Responding to allegations of abuse, including those made against leaders or members of the church
- Appointing children’s/youth workers
- Supervision of activities and practice issues
- Helping victims of abuse
- Working with offenders

The CTs recognise the need to build constructive links with the child care agencies. Accordingly, these guidelines have been prepared in consultation with North Herts District Council, the FIEC and the PCCA’s Child Protection Advisory Service.

The local Social Services office telephone number between 0900 and 1700 is 01438 737500.

The content of the policy will form the basis of a seminar for all children's/youth workers in the church. As a church we are committed to an on-going training programme for all such workers.

### **Definitions of Abuse**

The definitions of child abuse recommended as criteria for registration by the Department of Health, "Working Together under the Children Act 1989" are as follows:

**Physical injury:** actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning, suffocation and Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

**Sexual Abuse:** actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. The child may be dependant and/or developmentally immature \*

*\*(Sexual exploitation represents the involvement of dependant, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not understand, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate social taboos or family roles [Kempe and Kempe 1978]. Kempe T.S. & Kempe C.H. (1978) Child Abuse, London: Fontana / Open Books)*

**Neglect:** The persistent or severe neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure of any kind of danger, including cold and starvation or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

**Emotional Abuse:** actual or likely adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment. This category is used where it is the main or sole form of abuse.

**Organised abuse:** organised abuse is sexual abuse where 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 to recruit children for sexual abuse.

### **Recognising and Responding to 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 which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention but which you feel ought to have done
- 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 allegation 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 word, play or drawings
- 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, extreme anxiety
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/ stealing/lying

### **What to do if you suspect that abuse may have occurred**

- 1) You must report concerns as soon as possible to Mrs Rosy Palmer (hereafter the “Co-ordinator”) (phone number 01462 626333), who is nominated by the CTs to act on their behalf in referring allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities. She may also be required to by conditions of the Church Insurance Policy to immediately inform the Insurance Company. In the absence of the Co-ordinator the matter should be brought to the attention of the Deputy Co-ordinator or church leader.
- 2) If the suspicions in any way involve the Co-ordinator then the report should be made to Mrs Pauline Poole (hereafter the Deputy Co-ordinator) (phone number 01462 893459). If the suspicions in any way implicate both the Co-ordinator and the Deputy Co-ordinator, then the report should be made in the first instance to the Church Trustees or if that fails, to Churches’ Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS), **CCPAS PO Box 123, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UA (Tel: 0845 1204550 or info@ccpas.co.uk)**. Alternatively contact Social Services on 01438 737500.
- 3) Suspicions will not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.
- 4) It is, of course the right of any individual as a citizen to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies or seek advice from the CCPAS, although we hope that members of the church will use this procedure. If, however, you feel that the Co-ordinator or Deputy has not responded appropriately to your concerns, then it is open to you to contact the relevant organisation direct. We hope by making this statement that we demonstrate the commitment of the church to effective church protection.

## **Allegations of Physical Injury or Neglect**

If a child has a physical injury or symptoms of neglect, the Co-ordinator will:

- 1) Contact Social Services for advice in cases of deliberate injury or where concerned about the child's safety. The parents should not be informed by the church in these circumstances.
- 2) Where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. The Co-ordinator will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
- 3) In other circumstances, (i.e non deliberate injury or neglect), speak with the parent/carer and suggest that medical help or attention is sought for the child. The doctor or health visitor will then initiate further action if necessary.
- 4) If appropriate the parent /carer will be encouraged to seek help from the Social Services Department.
- 5) Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, if appropriate, the church Co-ordinator will offer to go with them. If they still fail to act, the Co-ordinator should, in cases of real concern contact Social Services Department.
- 6) Where the Co-ordinator is unsure whether or not to refer a case to the Social Services Department, then advice from the CTs or the CCPAS will be sought and followed. They will confirm its advice in writing in case this is needed for reference purposes in the future.

## **Allegations of Sexual Abuse**

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Co-ordinator will:

- 1) Contact the Social Services duty social worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team directly. The Co-ordinator will NOT speak to the parent (or anyone else).
- 2) If, for any reason, the Co-ordinator is unsure whether or not to follow the above, then advice from CCPAS will be sought and followed. CCPAS will confirm its advice in writing in case this is needed for reference in the future.
- 3) Under no circumstances will the Co-ordinator attempt to carry out an investigation into the allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse. The role of the Co-ordinator is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to the Social Services Department, whose task it is to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989
- 4) Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse will normally be reported to the Co-ordinator, the absence of the Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to the Social Services Department.

- 5) Exceptionally, should there be any disagreement between the person in receipt of the allegation or suspicion and the Co-ordinator or Deputy as to the appropriateness of a referral to the Social Services Department, that person retains a responsibility as a member of the public to report serious matters to the Social Services Department and should do so without hesitation.
- 6) The CTs will support the Co-ordinator or Deputy 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.

### **How to respond to a child wanting to talk about abuse**

It is not easy to give precise guidance, but the following guidelines may help:

#### **GENERAL POINTS**

- 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.

#### **HELPFUL THINGS YOU MAY SAY OR ASK**

- I believe you (or showing acceptance of what the child says)
- Thank you for telling 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
- Explain to the child 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 children or young person returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse)
- Contact the person in your church responsible for co-ordinating child protection concerns or contact the CTs, the CCPAS or go directly to Social Services/Police/ NSPCC

- Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed.

### **What to do once a child has talked to you about abuse**

#### **The procedure**

- 1) **Make notes as soon as possible (Preferably within an hour of the child talking to you), writing down exactly what the child said and when he or she said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity). 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 safely for an indefinite period.**
- 2) Report your discussion as soon as possible to the Co-ordinator. If the latter is implicated, then report to the Deputy. If both are implicated, report to CCPAS or Social Services if preferred.
- 3) You should not discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those nominated in the above point.
- 4) Once a child has talked about abuse the worker/Co-ordinator should consider whether or not it is safe for a child to return home to a potentially abusive situation. On rare occasions it might be necessary to take immediate action to contact Social Services and/or Police to discuss putting into effect safety measures for the child so that they do not return home.

#### **Working with Offenders:**

Where someone attending the church is known to have abused children, then whilst extending friendship to the individual, the CTs 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.

#### **Helping victims of abuse:**

As a church we are committed to supporting victims of abuse and encouraging them in their faith.

#### **Appointment of workers**

In appointing workers, the church will be responsible for the following:

- 1) All prospective workers will be asked to complete an application form.
- 2) The procedure for the appointment will be:
  - Asking the potential worker to complete a form giving information as to their name (any previous name/aliases), date, place of birth, current and previous addresses, as well as details of employment history, previous churches/groups etc. They should be asked to declare whether they have ever been convicted or

cautioned in relation to any offence and informed of the provision of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

- Interviewing a potential worker and finding out about their past and ensuring that they have resolved any issues of their own from the past.
- Talking to others who may know the person e.g. previous church leaders, friends, home group leaders and taking up a formal reference.
- Discussing with the applicant in detail the church's policy on safeguarding children's welfare and expectations in relation to practice issues, e.g. supervision of children's activities and workers etc
- A DBS check will be required. This is now obtained online and a "self-declaration form" is filled in to be retained by the coordinator, who will check the application and relevant documents. Only the applicant will be supplied with the DBS Certificate, but the coordinator will be informed by CCPAS when the applicant has been granted a DBS Certificate.
- Attaching the new appointee to a more experienced worker for a period of time
- During and at the end of this probationary period, receiving feedback from the other workers on the progress of the trainee
- Only then confirming the appointment - perhaps with regular reviews and support where there are particular concerns

3) The criteria for NOT appointing a worker are:

- If someone has had a previous conviction of offences against children, they should never be placed in any position where they would have an opportunity to cultivate relationships with children
- If the church has reason to doubt a workers suitability to work with children, because of concerns about their lifestyle, attitudes and spiritual commitment, it has the responsibility not to expose the children in the church's care to any risk.

**No one has a right to work with children**

4) Workers will have regular meetings with the Co-ordinator and church leaders to discuss work programmes and areas of concern, including issues relating to discipline. This is a team effort and we need to work in an atmosphere of trust and openness.

**Practical arrangements for supervision of children's activities:**

- Make sure there are always at least two adults present with any group, particularly when it is the only activity taking place on church premises.
- A guideline to the ratio required is 0-2 yrs = 1:3, 2-3 yrs = 1:4, 3-8yrs = 1:8
- Where possible, ensure that a worker is never alone with a child. However there may be circumstances where this may be beneficial i.e. counselling or where a young person wishes to speak privately to a worker. It is best in such circumstances to leave doors open so to be visible to other workers, as well as advising a co-worker where you are going and why.
- No person under the age of 16 should be in charge of any children of any age, though they may help another adult. Nor should children and young people be left alone at any time
- A register of children or young people attending the group should be kept and a register of helpers. This should include times of arrival and departure if any individual is not

- attending the whole session, and any others in the building at the time (e.g. a maintenance person)
- Keep a log book in which to record any unusual events, with each leaders recording what they witnessed. This can be very helpful if leaders have to deal with a difficult youngster who may subsequently make accusations of assault. A young person who constantly makes “throw away” sexual comments about church workers may later make an allegation of sexual abuse. Records of previous examples of this behaviour will enable any allegation to be seen in context. Of course if a number of young people make the same allegation against a worker, this should alert the leadership that there may well be a problem. Log books protect both the child and the worker.
- It is suggested that workers also record on an “incident form” any incident such as accidents or fights and what action was taken by the leaders. Parents and older children should read the report and sign the “incident form” which should be kept separate from the log book which may contain sensitive information. The log book should be kept separately from the incident forms and in a secure place. The log book should be kept indefinitely (as advised by insurance companies) as accusations can take place years after an event.

### **Guidelines on “touch”**

- Guidance on touch: Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors
- Touch should be related to the child’s needs not the workers
- 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 children and young people
- Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in the exceptional circumstances when they need medical attention.
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by pointing out anything that could be misconstrued.  
Concerns about abuse should always be reported

### **General boundaries**

- Toileting etc should be appropriate and related to the age of the child whilst accepting that some children have special needs. Young children who need supervision in toileting should ideally be accompanied by a worker of the same sex.
- Workers should treat children and young people with dignity and respect in attitude, language used and actions: avoid questionable activity, eg rough games and comments
- Make sure that the only people allowed into a children’s activity are the workers assigned to that group. Other adults should not have free access. Guest speakers should be logged in, with times and details of names and reason for being there.
- If you invite a child to your home, ensure this is with the knowledge of the leadership and that you have parental approval.
- Outings must have adequate supervision, parental consent and safe transport. Drivers should be over 25; avoid taking one child on its own. The church leadership should be advised of the venue and time of return.
- Best practice is to have two leaders in the car with children in the back seats.

- In the very rare event of needing to take a single child home in a car with only one leader (driving) the guidelines are:
  - The leader must phone the parent to tell him/her that he is bringing the child home and give an estimated time of departure and arrival.
  - The child/ young person should sit in the back seat.
  - The leader must text or phone either Rosy Palmer or Pauline Poole to inform them.
  - A female leader should transport girls if possible.
  - In the event that a lone leader takes 3-4 children home, then the least vulnerable child (i.e. the oldest, most sensible or best known to the church) should be dropped last and a phone call to the parent should be made.

## **Guidelines for good discipline**

- Set clear boundaries and make sure all the workers know what they are. Be consistent.
- Look honestly at the programme – is boredom a factor in bad behaviour?
- NEVER smack or hit a child. Don't shout but change voice tone if necessary.
- Discipline out of love not anger. Ask for help from another worker if the situation seems out of control
- Sit a child in front of you or ask a helper to sit with them. If two children are disruptive together, you may need to separate them, but give them a warning. Be pro-active – don't wait until the situation is out of control
- If a child's behaviour is a constant problem, seek advice and guidance from a leader.
- Speak to the parents if necessary, but only after warning the child. Find the best way to help that particular child reach his or her full potential. Remember that God is in the business of changing lives!

A copy of this Child Protection Policy has been filed with the CCPAS.

Revised 14<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Signed:

Dated:

16/10/16

Rosy Palmer

Child Protection Co-ordinator

16/10/16

Chris Jenkins

Minister