

Child Protection Policy Document

We believe that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a nominated child protection lead and deputy for children and young people, for safeguarding
- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing, if appropriate, an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for volunteers through support, training and quality assurance measures so that all volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently
- recruiting and selecting volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
- sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions
- making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- using our procedures to manage any allegations appropriately
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- building a safeguarding culture where adult workers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

1. Definitions of Abuse

The following definition of child abuse is provided by the government in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2018).

"A form of maltreatment of a child. 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 others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children".

Child abuse is typically defined in four main categories – emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect – although it can come in many forms. For example, child abuse includes offences relating to modern slavery, human trafficking, female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation, and witnessing domestic violence or abuse.

(a) Physical Abuse

This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

(b) Emotional Abuse

This is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of child which causes severe and continuous adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling children that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, and may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger.

(c) Sexual Abuse

This 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. The activities may involve physical contact or non-contact activities (such as forcing children to look at or be involved in the production of pornographic material).

(d) Neglect

This is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from

physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs.

2. Recognising Possible Signs of Abuse

The following signs may be indicators that abuse has taken place:

(a) Physical Signs of Abuse

- Any injuries inconsistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries which occur in places not normally exposed to falls or rough games.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention.
- Neglect may be seen in under-nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, untreated illnesses or inadequate care.
- Reluctance to participate in games.

(b) Indicators of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse.
- A child with an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters.
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias or vivid nightmares.
- Unkempt and poor personal hygiene.

(c) Emotional Signs of Abuse

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
- Depression, aggression or extreme anxiety.
- Obsessions or phobias.
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration.
- Attention-seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness.
- Running away, stealing or lying.

3. Responding to a Child Wanting to Talk

(a) General Points

- Above everything else, listen.
- Do not ask leading questions- use TED- Tell me, Explain to me, Describe to me if needed.

- Show acceptance of what the child says, however unlikely the story may sound – don't judge or question what is said.
- Keep calm and look at the child directly, be mindful of your body language.
- Be honest.
- Tell the child you will need to let someone else know – don't promise confidentiality.
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell.
- Never push for information.
- Write down what has been said as soon as possible.

(b) Concluding

- Reassure the child that they were right to tell you.
- Do not question the child on details shared- asking questions could potentially impact on any future police investigation if required.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
- **Contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead.** If in an emergency where no DSL or DDSL are available, go directly to Social Services or the Police (to prevent the child returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse):
 - Peterborough Children's Services emergency duty team OOH:** 01733 234724
 - Peterborough Children's Services team (within office hours):** 01733 864180
 - Nonprofessional/Public making a referral to children's services:** Reporting safeguarding concerns online form
<https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/healthcare/safeguarding-children#public---reporting-safeguarding-concerns-2-0>
 - Peterborough Police Service:** 01480 456111 or 999 in emergency
- Consider your own feelings and seek support if needed.

(c) Making Notes

- Make notes as soon as possible after talking to the child.
- Write down exactly what the child said, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand- using direct quotes where possible.
- Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record.
- Pass all notes to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

4. Concerns about an Adult within the organisation

- (a) If you have concerns about an adult who works with children and believe they may have caused harm report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

5. Data Protection Act Principles

The Data Protection Act 1998 provides privacy protection for individuals, about whom personal data is kept, covering both paper and computerised records. The following guidelines will therefore be followed to comply with the “best practice” principles laid down in the statute:

- No personal data will be obtained or held unless the individual has consented.
- Data obtained for one purpose will not be used for a different purpose.
- Information about individuals will not be collected which is not necessary – if data is given which is excessive for the purpose intended, it will be deleted or destroyed immediately.
- If data is kept for a considerable length of time, it will be reviewed and updated if necessary – no data will be kept unless it is reasonable to assume it is accurate.
- There will be regular reviews of files to ensure that data is not kept for longer than required for the particular purpose.
- Individuals are entitled to know what data is kept about them and no personal data will be disclosed to anyone outside the convenors who does not strictly need to know without the individual’s consent.
- Personal data will be kept in a secure place, e.g. in a locked filing cabinet or on a secure personal computer to prevent unauthorised access.
- In certain circumstances, the Act allows for disclosure of information without the consent of the subject – this includes the need to protect children and so information relating to concerns that a child is at risk of significant harm will not be withheld from the relevant authorities (if in doubt, the information will not be disclosed to anyone, but contact will be made with Social Services for advice).
- Church members, Children’s Workers, and visitors attending any church activity/event are not permitted to take photos, videos or audio recordings of any child. Should a parent wish to take a recording of their own child, this must be discussed and agreed in advance with safeguards in place, and must not be shared on social media.

All present will be informed of this requirement at the commencement of a church activity by way of announcement, and this will also be reinforced by signs.

6. Behaviour

All adults working with children should:

- Have high expectations of behaviour, and make sure that the children understand the rules and routines you expect of them, as well as the consequences if negative behaviour persists.
- Build healthy relationships with children and be a good role model by setting an example – you can't expect children to observe rules if you break them yourself.
- Give quieter and well-behaved children attention and resist allowing demanding children to take all your time and energy.
- Be consistent in what you say and ensure that other workers know what you have said to avoid manipulation.
- Make sure that the children understand what action will be taken if they do not keep the basic rules- allow children the opportunity to make the right choice and turn things around.
- Some children have not been taught how to behave as we may expect them to, so make sure that they know what they have done wrong, being understanding of the child's experiences of parenting at home and what may be normalised for them compared to our expected expectations.
- Every child is unique and will respond in different ways to different forms of behaviour management, but for each activity there should be a clear set of consequences if the child is disruptive.
- Some children tend to be disruptive in a group – give them a chance, warn them and only separate them as a last resort.
- Make a disruptive child sit in front of you or get a helper to sit next to them.
- Encourage others to be proactive rather than waiting to be told to act.
- Never smack or hit a child and don't shout.
- Remedial action can be taken against a constantly disruptive child – they can be warned that you may speak to their parents or carers about their behaviour, they may be sent outside the room (under supervision) to calm down and reflect, or they may be banned from attending the group for a period of time (after advising the parents

or carers in cases where the child would become unsupervised during the time of the activity).

7. Visiting Children at Home

Workers may sometimes need to visit children and their families at home, and the following guidelines for visiting will therefore be followed:

- Inform another worker of the proposed visit.
- Never go into a child's home if the parents or carers are absent.
- Keep a written record of the visit.
- If the parents or carers are absent when the call is made, leave some means of identification and explanation for the visit that can be given to them.
- The invitation of a child to a worker's home must be done with the knowledge of other workers and the permission of the child's parents or carers.

8. Children from the Street

Children playing outside or wandering the streets with no adult supervision may want to join in with activities without the knowledge of their parents or carers, and in such cases the following guidelines will be followed:

- On arrival, try to establish the child's name, age, address and telephone number, and record their visit in the register.
- Ask the child if a parent or carer is aware where they are, and what time they are expected home – if this is before the session ends, the child should be encouraged to return home unless permission to stay can be obtained from the parent or carer.
- In any event, suggest that the child seeks their parents' or carers' permission to return the following week.
- On leaving, give the child a leaflet about the Gospel Hall and a letter to the parents or carers inviting them to make contact if they wish.
- Without interrogating the child, find out as soon as possible whether they have any special needs so that you can respond appropriately in an emergency.

9. Transporting Children

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to transport children to or from the Gospel Hall, and the following guidelines will therefore be followed:

- Parental consent should be given and all journeys should only be carried out with the knowledge of other workers.
- The driver must hold a full driving licence, have adequate insurance and the vehicle must be legally road-worthy.
- Whenever possible, another adult will travel with the driver in the vehicle, although it is recognised that having two workers in a car does not in itself guarantee protection for a child.
- If the above point is not possible, then the last two children will be dropped off together. If that is not possible, and the driver is alone with a child for short periods (e.g. when dropping off the last child), routes will be planned so that the least vulnerable child is dropped off last.
- Drivers will not spend unnecessary time alone in a car with a child.
- Always put the children in the back seats of the vehicle with seat belts on and in age appropriate car seats.
- At collection or dropping off points, a child will not be left on their own, and the driver will make sure that all children are collected by an appropriate adult.
- In some instances it may be unwise for a particular driver to transport a particular child (e.g. where there has been a disagreement between them), and in such a case an alternative vehicle will be used and the elders will be informed.
- Drivers/chaperones must have a DBS in place.

10. Physical Contact

Physical contact with children and young people can be inappropriate and the following guidelines will therefore be followed:

- Keep all physical contact to an absolute minimum and only if absolutely necessary.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's.

- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated or consented by the child and always in public.
- 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, encourage the child to do what they can themselves, but consider the child's best interests and give appropriate help where necessary.
- Members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact, and should express concern about anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.
- Concerns about abuse should always be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Contact details

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Name: Evie Francey

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Signed:

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)

Name:

Phone/email:

Signed:

This policy was last reviewed on:15.07.24.....

Signed by the Elders: ...Emailed to all on 15.07.24.....

Date: