

Rivers of Life Church

Child Protection Policy Statement

Policy statement on children, young people and the church

§ As members of this church, we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all, especially children and young people.

§ It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children and young people, and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.

§ We recognise that our work with children and young people is the responsibility of the whole church.

§ We undertake to exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children and young people whether paid or volunteer.

§ The church is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children and young people, and to providing supervision.

§ Each worker with children and young people must know the recommendations, and undertake to observe them. Each shall be given a copy of the church's agreed procedures and Good Practice guidelines.

Children and young people are part of (or belong to) our church today. They have much to give as well as to receive. We will listen to them. As we nurture them in worship, learning, and in community, we will respect the wishes and feelings of children and young people. As part of our commitment to children and young people the church has appointed Norita Roberts to be Child Protection Co-ordinator.

A Disclosure is requested for everyone involved in all aspects of the church's work with children and young people whether as a leader or helper.

Good practice guidelines
for the prevention of abuse

Good practice with children and young people

The church should ensure that:

. As far as possible a worker is not alone with a child where their activity cannot be seen. On church premises this may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room.

. In a counselling or one to one situation with a young person where privacy and confidentiality are important, try to make sure that another adult knows the

interview is taking place and with whom. If possible, another adult should be in the building, and the young person should know they are there.

. Where children come to church accompanied by an adult, they are the responsibility of that adult when not in Sunday School.

. Where children come to church unaccompanied, a letter will be sent to the parent / carer, accepting parental responsibility for them for the duration of the service (i.e. 10.30am -12 noon). If a child leaves church during a service or Sunday School, their teacher will endeavour to contact a parent.

You, the worker should:

. Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity befitting their age, watch language, tone of voice, and where you put your body.

. Not engage in any of the following:

- invading the privacy of children when they are toileting
- rough, physical or sexually provocative games;
- making sexually suggestive comments about, or to, a young person, even in 'fun';
- inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form;
- any scapegoating, ridiculing, or rejecting a child or young person.

Learn to control and discipline children without using physical punishment. This may include warnings, visits to parents, and possible suspensions for persistent, unacceptable behaviour (i.e. swearing, harming other children physically or verbally, verbally or physically abusive to the Sunday School teacher). This behaviour should be reported to the Family Church Coordinator, who will be responsible for making the decision and informing the child's parent. The latter will be done initially by letter, and subsequently by a visit to the home.

. Make sure another adult is present if, for example, a young child has soiled their underclothes and needs to be thoroughly washed.

. Not let youngsters involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature.

. Not invite a child or young person to your home alone; invite a group, or ensure that someone else is in the house. Make sure the parents know where the child is.

Not give lifts to children or young people on their own, other than for short journeys. If they are alone, ask them to sit in the rear of the car.

Good practice with colleagues

If you see another member of staff acting in ways which might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them or to your supervisor about your concerns. Leaders should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows all

workers to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour.

These measures will also protect workers from false accusation

What to do for child and worker if abuse is

suspected or disclosed

It is not the task of an individual or the church to investigate.

If any abuse (emotional, sexual, physical or neglect) is suspected, or if allegations are made, do not jump to conclusions or start to investigate. You must report your concerns as soon as possible to Norita Roberts 07860 342323 who is nominated by the church to act on its behalf in referring allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities.

She is required by the conditions of the church insurance policy to immediately inform the Baptist Union Insurance Company.

Suspicions should not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.

Our aim will be to work in an open and co-operative way with the statutory authorities for the good of the child/children involved.

If abuse is suspected, disclosed or discovered

DO NOT DELAY

DO NOT ACT ALONE

DO NOT START TO INVESTIGATE

DO NOT CONTACT ALLEGED ABUSERS

DO NOT TALK TO PARENTS OR GUARDIANS DO NOT

DISCUSS WITH FRIENDS

DO report to the co-ordinator. Write down what the child has said in exactly the child's own words.

It is important not to change words to make them more adult or less offensive. You may be asked for this report and in the event of a Social Services investigation this written account will be very important and will be passed to Social Services.

How to react to a child who wants to talk about abuse

It is important that you react in a way which will be helpful and supportive to the child. It is not easy to give precise guidance but the following may be of help

- DO NOT agree to keep the information secret.
- DO NOT say or suggest you are shocked.
- DO NOT say or suggest that you do not believe the child.
- DO NOT ask questions, except to clarify what has been said.
- DO NOT make false promises.
- DO allow the child to talk but do not press them for information.
- DO look at the child directly.
- DO explain to the child at the outset that you may have to tell someone else if you think it necessary.
- DO remain calm and supportive.
- DO be aware that the child may have been threatened.
- DO show acceptance of what the child says.
- DO re-assure the child they were right to tell you.
- DO tell the child what you are going to do next, i.e. whom you are going to tell and why and roughly what will happen.
- DO finish on a positive note with the child.
- DO tell the Co-ordinator as soon as possible, who will inform the minister that an incident has occurred.

The Child Protection Co-ordinator, after consultation, will decide what needs to be done by way of referral to an agreed outside agency, and will inform the minister of the outcome.

If abuse is suspected, more detailed discussion and discreet observation may need to take place before referral.

If abuse by someone within the church is disclosed or suspected, the procedure will be as above, then:

The Minister needs to be informed, as the worker will need to be immediately withdrawn in their own interest. They will be given support and help throughout the process by the Minister. No guilt or blame will be implied.

The decision with regard to referral will be made as above.

Volunteer Agreement

Name of worker: _____

Organisation: _____

We welcome you as: _____

You are joining a team which, together with the whole church, commits itself to the care and nurture of children and young people.

Connection with you: Connection with you:

Criminal Records Declaration

Name: Name:

Address: Address:

Postcode: Postcode:

Because of the nature of the duties the post-holder would be expected to undertake, the successful candidate will be required to co-operate in obtaining a Standard or Enhanced Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau.

If considered suitable for the post, do you agree to co-operate in obtaining a Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure at the Standard or Enhanced level?*

Yes:

No:

(Please tick)

* Because of the nature of the work for which you are applying, this position is exempt from the provision of section 4(ii) of the Rehabilitation of offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Order 1975), and you are therefore not entitled to withhold information about convictions which for other purposes are 'spent' under the provisions of the 1974 Act and in the event of appointment, any failure to disclose such convictions could result in the withdrawal of approval to work with children and 1 or young people within the church.

Declaration

I confirm that the submitted information is correct and complete.

Signed..... Date