

## Child Protection Good Practice Guidelines

### Introduction

This document is a guide to good practice for all people working with children and young people at Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge. It is adapted from recommendations made by the Diocese of Ely Child Protection Guidelines and in-house experience of engaging in safe and responsible Christian work with children and young people.

NB: The terms 'child' and 'young person' are used interchangeably throughout these guidelines, and refer to people aged 0 - 18 years.

### Section 1: Good Practice

Avoid personally compromising situations where an accusation of abuse would be a matter of a young person's word against yours. Ensure that your behaviour is visibly above reproach.

#### Sunday groups and general events

- ▶ All volunteer leaders need DBS checks before commencing work with children and young people on a regular basis. (A central register of all those who have been DBS cleared is kept in the church office). Everyone working with young children will need to read and agree to uphold Holy Trinity's Child Protection Policy and organisational aims at all times.
- ▶ Someone helping on a one-off basis (e.g. a trip or special event) will not require DBS check but should be in the presence of a DBS cleared individual at all times.
- ▶ Never be on your own (in private) with a child under any circumstances e.g. room, car or on a walk. Ensure there is always another adult within earshot and line of vision.
- ▶ In any group situation, it is preferable for there to be one male and one female leader present. Adults leading a session with children should not smoke or use alcohol, or have consumed alcohol before leading. Physical contact with a child in a public place to meet *their* needs is proper and acceptable -e.g. a hug upon greeting. It is not acceptable when it becomes about the needs of the adult.
- ▶ Physical contact should be kept between the same gender and kept to a minimum, with respect being shown to the child's personal space. Games should be considered accordingly.
- ▶ Each new child or young person must have a permission form filled in by their parents before regularly attending the groups. (To check whether a child has a form filled in, look at the register or ask the Youth Pastor or Children and Youth Pastoral Assistants).

- ▶ Keep an attendance register each week and have contact details on hand. Make an effort to identify new families by introducing yourself and welcoming new children or youth into the groups. If it is appropriate, send them home with the general permission form to return in following weeks. Try to introduce yourself to their parents after the group finishes.
  - ▶ In a context of one-to-one prayer, male leaders should only pray for males and female leaders for females.
  - ▶ When walking groups to their locations off-site, first of all check you have ALL the children or young people you expect, and that the ratio of leaders to children is appropriate. Take a head count upon leaving and entering a venue. No leader should be left behind to walk with a young person on their own: either the whole group should wait, or two leaders where possible should remain to wait. No child or young person can leave the church site without parental permission first.
  - ▶ The recommended ratio for children to helper's according to the Diocese of Ely is:
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- ▶ A suitably stocked First Aid kit should always be available. There are First Aids Kits are wall mounted on each floor of the Charles Simeon Centre and Henry Martyn Hall.
  - ▶ If a child talks about the following personally, you must tell one of the safeguarding officer: eating disorders, suicide, depression, bullying, occult, new age or abuse. Immediately after your conversation with them, write a log of what was said on the correct form included in this guide (see end of Section 2: 'logging a concern about a child's safety or welfare'). This form is also available to download from the Safeguarding Policies page on the HT website.
  - ▶ If a child brings a complaint against a leader or staff member, it must be acted upon. Unless it involves them, as a first point of call, inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer (see directory) or see Section 2: Responding to Allegations.
  - ▶ Do not engage in the following:
    - Invading the privacy of a young person when taking them to the bathroom
    - Rough or overly physical games -e.g. offering massages
    - Any ridiculing, rejecting or 'scape-goating' of a young person
    - Any relationship beyond normal friendship with a child or young person
  - ▶ Children's Toilet Procedure (Ages 0-3)
    - Do not change nappies. If you suspect that a child may need their nappy changing, please try to find the relevant parent in church to let them know.
    - Potties can be found in the toilet on the 3rd floor of the Charles Simeon Centre. If required, potties must be brought into the creche room. Children's

leaders must never be alone with a child using a potty. Leaders may hand the child a wet wipe to wipe themselves and then ask the child to put the wipe in a nappy sack (located next to potties). Never assist the child in wiping. If a toddler needs to do a poo, please try to find the relevant parent in church.

- Find or call the Children's Pastor or Children and Youth Pastoral Assistants for help finding parents if needed.

▶ Children's Toilet Procedure (Ages 3-11)

- Children of these ages should all be able to go to the toilet by themselves but need to be accompanied there and back. If a child asks to go to the toilet, only leaders with a DBS check (all regular leaders should have a DBS check) should leave the room with the child.
- Help younger children to walk on the stairs to the toilet and stand outside the toilet door in the corridor while they are using the toilet. Do not enter the toilet with the child or assist the child with wiping. If a child needs assisting, ask another child to go back to the room and tell another leader to find the Children's Pastor or Children and Youth Pastoral Assistants who can notify the relevant parent.
- It's better safeguarding practice to leave the room with more than one child if possible. Leaders should ask if any other children would like to use the toilet too, then let children use the toilet one by one whilst the leader stays in the corridor.
- If a child does not like the door closed, leaders can explain to the child that toilet time is private time and they can hear you but not see you (you can talk to them whilst they are in there). This also serves the purpose of others hearing you outside the toilet. Close the door slightly and ask them to call out when they are finished and are washing their hands.
- Encourage children to wash their hands.

### General Church Activities

- ▶ Children may attend worship or other activities unaccompanied by an adult. Where this is the case, try to establish if parents know the child is present and what times/he is expected home.
- ▶ All mixed-age and open groups need to provide a safe environment for children and young people. This may include revising the suitability of people attending who are shown to be a risk to children. All leaders of groups where there is an expectation of child members on a regular basis, even if there are none at present, should be appointed through the 'safer recruitment' procedure and undergo a DBS check.

- ▶ Someone helping on a one-off basis (e.g. a trip or special event) will not require DBS check but should be in the presence of a DBS cleared individual at all times.

### One-to-one work (relevant for work with 11-18 year-olds)

- ▶ Never engage in personal work with a child of the opposite sex.
- ▶ Before meeting with a child individually, ensure they have filled out an appropriate permission form to meet with you (available from the Children and Youth Pastoral Assistants, Youth Pastor or church office).
- ▶ When undertaking one-to-one counselling or pastoral work you must adhere to the highest standards of conduct in the relationship with the child. Know your own level of competence, and do not step beyond it; if a situation becomes difficult, seek advice straight away. Be clear at the start what you and the child are planning to achieve by meeting, and the limits of what you can offer.
- ▶ Meet at a time agreed with the young person and confirmed by the parents. Make sure the parents have your contact details and you theirs in case of emergency or change of plans. Try to introduce yourself to the parents first to put them at ease. Arrange a drop-off/pick-up point which is public, and does not require you to walk with the child through private areas. Thank the parents at the end.
- ▶ Meet in a public place, e.g. city-centre coffee shop, that affords an ability to talk confidentially without being secretively 'tucked away' and let the Youth Pastor or Children and Youth Pastoral Assistants know what you are doing.
- ▶ **At no stage can you promise a child confidentiality - it is against the law to do so**, as you have a legal obligation to make known certain confidences such as abuse of any kind. If you suspect abuse of any kind do not question the child yourself (see Section 2: Responding to Allegations). Make a log of what was said and inform the Youth Pastor or Children's Pastor for further advice on how to proceed.
- ▶ Report any queries or worries you have about a child or young person to the Children's Pastor (if children aged 0-11), Youth Pastor (if youth aged 11-18) or see the instructions in Section 2: 'what to do next'.

### Taking children or young people on socials/trips away

- ▶ No child should be taken on a trip away from the church site without a parental consent form. It is important that parents should have full information before giving consent. Each child or young person under the age of 18 (unless they are over 16 and living away from home or married) must have the written consent of parent or guardian.
- ▶ Make sure that all planned activities, on or off site, are covered by an adequate insurance policy. Events should be risk assessed.
- ▶ Always have accessible: the permission forms, emergency contact details and a first aid kit.

- ▶ Ensure there is a key contact for each trip whose mobile number is known to parents.
- ▶ No child under the age of 8 can be taken away on residential activities without the child's parent or guardian.
- ▶ Boys and girls must have separate sleeping and washing facilities which are private to them. Adults should have separate accommodation but in close proximity to the young people.
- ▶ Parents should be informed beforehand if it is intended to allow groups of young people to go off unsupervised e.g. for shopping.
- ▶ All those who drive children on Church-organised activities should be over 25 and should have held a full driving license for over two years. Any driver who has an endorsement of 6 points or more on their licence should not transport children. Nor a driver who has an "unspent" conviction for a drink driving, dangerous driving or racing on the highway.
- ▶ All cars that carry children should be comprehensively insured, with evidence being shown to the Parish Safeguarding Officer. They should be clean and in a roadworthy condition.
- ▶ All children must use suitable seat belts and child safety seats appropriate to their age/weight. At no time should the number of children in a car exceed the usual passenger number.
- ▶ If a child is known to have a disability or special need, consideration should be given whether to have a non-driving adult in the car. This adult should sit in the back, behind the driver, with the child in the seat beside him or her.
- ▶ If, in an emergency, a driver has to transport one child on his or her own, the child must sit in the back of the car. Unless explicit parental permission is given, and all parties informed of the exact expectations of the journey, it is inappropriate to drive in a car alone with a child.

### Communicating electronically

The issues involved in communicating electronically are not very different from those in face to face communication, except that the person is not with you, so neither of you can use facial expressions or body language to clarify your meaning. It is also normally private, so others are not there to provide a context and background. Finally, it creates a detectable record which could, if necessary, be printed out and used in evidence. Good practice is to communicate in such a way that achieves its purpose without unintentionally encouraging habits in young people which could be dangerous.

- ▶ If young people want you to keep their mobile phone numbers, email addresses or similar, make sure that their parents know and have agreed.
- ▶ Keep communications short. If you need a discussion, fix a time to do so face to face during or following the group.

- ▶ Use an appropriate tone: friendly, but not over-familiar or personal. Beware of 'jokey' remarks: these are often misinterpreted when conveyed electronically.
- ▶ While communications should be friendly, they should not suggest or offer a special relationship. Be especially careful of how you sign off a message. Ending a message with 'love' or 'kisses (xxx)' is not appropriate, whereas ending with 'yours sincerely' is probably too formal. 'Take care', 'God Bless' or 'See you soon' are all safe options.
- ▶ Respect the young person's confidentiality, unless abuse is suspected or disclosed. Before sending your communication, ask yourself: would you be embarrassed if it were seen by the young person's parents, or church leaders?
- ▶ It is not appropriate to still be in communication with a young person - via text or on line chat etc. - at a time you would no longer feel comfortable calling their house and having the parents answer.
- ▶ If a communication is of a particularly sensitive nature, try to do it in person. If it is unavoidable, try to cc: in another person to keep your communication open.

## Section 2: Responding to Allegations

This section gives guidance on how to respond when a child discloses to you information that raises concern over their safety or welfare, or requires you to take action. Full contact details for the different agencies or people mentioned in this section can be found in Section 3 at the end of this document.

**Under no circumstances should someone carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse.** The person in receipt or responding to an allegation of abuse should:

Report all concerns as soon as possible to the leader of your ministry, the Children's Pastor or Youth Pastor, who will deal with the allegation on behalf of Holy Trinity church, including all referrals to statutory agencies.

Suspicious must not be discussed with anyone other than the above named people or the incumbent. A written record of the concern should be made and kept safe (see later: 'Logging a concern about a child's safety or welfare'). After speaking to social services, they may or may not recommend informing the parents.

It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the child protection agencies or seek advice from the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS). If an individual feels a concern is not being dealt with appropriately they are free to contact an outside agency directly. It is hoped in making this statement that Holy Trinity demonstrates its commitment to effective child protection. Independent advice can also be sought from the Bishop's Advisor for Child Protection, with no names needing to be mentioned at the first stage.

## How to react when a child wants to talk about abuse

**Don't panic.** It is important to reassure the child that it is right to talk about it, and that you will take everything they say seriously. It is not easy for them to talk about this, so listen carefully. It is wrong and illegal to promise confidentiality. Also do not lead them on by asking questions, instead try to maintain the conversation by encouraging murmurs and head movements.

The following are suggestions which may be helpful rather than precise guidance:

- ▶ Reassure the child that you are taking what is being said to you very seriously.
- ▶ Reassure them they are not the only child to experience this.
- ▶ Keep calm.
- ▶ Look at the child directly.
- ▶ Don't prejudge anything: it's not the time to ascertain whether or not it is true.
- ▶ Tell the child you will need to tell someone else who can help.
- ▶ Whatever a child may have done, they are not to blame for the abuse.
- ▶ Be aware the child may have been threatened, intimidated or made to promise secrecy.
- ▶ Never push for more information than is immediately given. Hear the allegation clearly, make a written note of it afterwards, and refer the case correctly.

Some helpful things to say:

- ▶ "Thank you for telling me this."
- ▶ "I will have to share this with someone else who can help."
- ▶ "You needn't tell me any more about it, I've understood what you're telling me."
- ▶ "I am glad you have told me, it is not your fault, I will help you."

Avoid saying:

- ▶ "Why didn't you tell anyone before?"
- ▶ "I can't believe it!"
- ▶ "Are you sure this is true?"
- ▶ "Why, how, who, when, where?"
- ▶ "Don't tell anyone else."

End by reiterating:

- ▶ Reassure the child that they have done the right thing to tell you
- ▶ You are taking what has been said very seriously
- ▶ You will tell someone who can help, straight away
- ▶ They are not to worry or feel they've done anything wrong

It is helpful to note if the child has told anyone else. The point of the conversation is to establish the barest account of the allegation. You do not have to believe it or disbelieve it, just note it accurately, and then refer the case onwards correctly the Children's Pastor or Youth Pastor or an external agency.

## What to do next

Investigation is the responsibility of the Social Services, the NSPCC or the Police (The Lead Agencies).

**If the allegation is specific**, you are sure of its implications, and names: the case must be referred to Social Services, the Police or NSPCC within 24 hours (with contact details in section 3). If you have reason to fear the child will suffer further significant harm, the referral must be made at once. The Children's Pastor or Youth Pastor can do this. It is for the professionals to decide whether the child is at risk or not. They may well have other information to hand on the child and they are authorised and trained to investigate the case correctly and in complete confidence. If you have to make such a referral, notify your parish vicar (if not involved in the allegation) and make sure that the Bishop's Advisor for Child Protection is notified promptly.

**If the allegation is unclear or confused:** just accept this and don't try to question the child further. Note what has been said and then take advice immediately. Speak to the Youth Pastor, the Children's Pastor or the Bishop's Advisor for Child Protection. You can make calls to seek advice without naming anyone.

Should you need to telephone any of the above at the Diocese, please make it clear that you are ringing about a situation relating to work undertaken on the Church's behalf.

The right thing may be to go on observing the child carefully for a while until a clearer picture emerges; but it may be right to make a formal referral to Social Services. Professional advice is vital. Always continue to record everything.

### **You must consult – you must escalate what you've heard**

The Children's Act states that where a Local Authority (Social Services Department) suspects that a child in their area is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, the authority shall make enquiries as to the necessary action to promote the child's welfare. *You must not do anything to delay, hinder or prevent a Local Authority from exercising that duty.*

You do not have to ask permission from a child's parents, or even inform them, before making a referral to one of the Lead Agencies (Police, Social Services, NSPCC). This is for the Lead Agency to handle. They will advise you of the correct action to take when the referral is made and they may also be consulted if you are unsure how to proceed. This can be hard on any adults involved but this must not prevent referrals being made when this is called for; the Lead Agencies are responsible for investigating cases fairly, justly and confidentially. Remember, the key principle is to make the child's well-being the first concern, so you must do something, and speaking to the Youth Pastor or Children's Pastor will enable you to gain advice on what else, if anything, needs to happen.

As soon as possible after receiving the allegation information:

- ▶ Make a careful log of what has happened: what the child told you (use his/her words as closely as you can), when and where the alleged abuse took place, who was involved, when and where the child told you about it. Log any calls you made e.g. to the Children's Pastor, Youth Pastor, children's services or the police. Put a full date and time on the log. (See an example logging form below, 'Logging a concern about a child's safety or welfare.')

- ▶ Contact your Safeguarding Officer to relay what has happened and seek advice. Go over the log together to make sure it is clear, and then give it to the Officer for filing in a secure place. It might be needed by other agencies.
- ▶ If needed, and you have not already made an emergency referral, the Children's Pastor or Youth Pastor can call Children's Services. Have at hand the details from the child's registration form with the name(s), address and date of birth on it. Follow up the call with a written note (you will be advised about what you need to include in it).
- ▶ If the alleged abuse involves a worker in the church, whether paid or voluntary, contact the Bishop's Adviser for Child protection for further advice. Such allegations will always need to be examined by agencies outside the Church.
- ▶ Arrange continuing support within the church for the child, yourself and the family as appropriate, in collaboration with the Children's Services.

### Logging a Concern about a Child's Safety or Welfare

- ▶ Name and Address of church:
- ▶ Full Name of Child/Young Person:
- ▶ Their Address:
- ▶ Their date of birth:
- ▶ Account of what happened: *Write what happened as accurately as you can. Include who was involved, when it happened (day, month and time), where it happened, was anyone else told, any other witnesses or behavioural signs that you observed. If your log includes an injury, describe it and say exactly where it was on the child using the body map on the form to assist you. Use a separate sheet if necessary. Try to use the child's words where possible and avoid any subjective or emotive language.*
- ▶ Action taken: *Record here any steps taken. E.g. "spoke to the Children's Pastor and it was decided to..." or "made emergency referral to..."*
- ▶ Your name and role in the church (sign and print):
- ▶ Date (include year) and time of incident:
- ▶ Date ( dd/mm/yy) and time of this log:

You can find a copy of the "Logging a concern" form on the safeguarding page of the HT website.

### Section 3: important numbers

Childline	0800 1111
Parentline Plus	0808 800 22
Parish Safeguarding Officer Steve Conacher (Youth Pastor)	01223 355 397 <a href="mailto:stephen.conacher@htcambridge.org.uk">stephen.conacher@htcambridge.org.uk</a>
Children's Advocate Cat Meakin (Children's Pastor)	01223 355 397 <a href="mailto:cat.meakin@htcambridge.org.uk">cat.meakin@htcambridge.org.uk</a>
Youth Advocate Steve Conacher (Youth Pastor)	01223 355 397 <a href="mailto:stephen.conacher@htcambridge.org.uk">stephen.conacher@htcambridge.org.uk</a>
Hannah Fisher Children and Youth Pastoral Assistant	01223 355 397 <a href="mailto:hannah.fisher@htcambridge.org.uk">hannah.fisher@htcambridge.org.uk</a>

Iona Tattersall Children and Youth Pastoral Assistant	01223 355 397 <a href="mailto:iona.tattersall@htcambridge.org.uk">iona.tattersall@htcambridge.org.uk</a>
Bishop's Advisor for Child Protection	01733 229 027
Rebecca Boswell Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser	01353 652 731 <a href="mailto:rebecca.boswell@elydiocese.org">rebecca.boswell@elydiocese.org</a>
Sarah King Diocesan Safeguarding Officer	01353 652 735 <a href="mailto:sarah.king@elydiocese.org">sarah.king@elydiocese.org</a>
Sharon Gage Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (part-time)	01353 652 735 <a href="mailto:sharon.gage@elydiocese.org">sharon.gage@elydiocese.org</a>
Police Cambridge (Parkside) Cambridgeshire Police (non-emergency)	01223 823 421 101
Children's Social Care Services (to speak to a social worker about a child or vulnerable adult at risk) 8am - 6pm Monday to Friday	0345 045 5203
Cambridgeshire contact centre (Emergency duty team - U18s) 6pm - 8am and weekends	01733 234 724
Cambridgeshire Children's Safeguarding team	01480 418 633
Churches Child Protection Advisory Service	0845 120 45 50
Cambridgeshire contact centre/Cambridgeshire Direct (Adult services - over 18s) 8am - 6pm	0345 045 5202
National Society of the Prevention of the Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)	0800 800 5000

**Holy Trinity Church**  
 Market Street Cambridge CB2 3NZ  
 01223 355297  
[office@htcambridge.org.uk](mailto:office@htcambridge.org.uk)  
[www.htcambridge.org.uk](http://www.htcambridge.org.uk)  
 Holy Trinity PCC, Cambridge  
 Charity No. 1128200