



Safeguarding Children and Young People

Policy and Procedures

*A set of agreed policies and procedures
for ensuring a safe environment for
children and young people
within the care of our church.*

April 2013

FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT
THE TERM 'CHILDREN' REFERS TO ANYONE
UNDER THE AGE OF 18 YEARS.

THE TERM 'THE CHURCH' IS USED IN THIS
DOCUMENT TO REFER SPECIFICALLY
TO MINSTER ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH.

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Minster Road Baptist Church

Safeguarding Children and Young People

POLICY STATEMENT

Minster Road Baptist Church desires to be a hub where all - including children and young people - experience the power and presence of God, deepening our spirituality and passion and producing missionary disciples.

In fulfilling this vision we welcome children and young people into the life of our community and have a programme of activities and events for them. As part of our witness and blessing to the local community, we also make our premises available to organisations working with children.

The church recognises its responsibilities for the safeguarding of all young people under the age of 18 (regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability) as set out in The Children Act 1989 and 2004, *Safe from Harm* (HM Government 1994) and *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government 2010).

As members of this church we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all associated with the church and will pray for them regularly.

In pursuit of this we commit ourselves to the following policies and to the development of procedures to ensure their implementation.

Prevention and reporting of abuse

It is the duty of each church member to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children, and the duty of each church member to respond to concerns about the well-being of children and to report any child abuse disclosed, discovered or suspected. The church will fully co-operate with any statutory investigation into any suspected abuse linked with the church.

Safe recruitment, support and supervision of workers

The church will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children, whether paid or volunteer. All workers will be provided with appropriate training, support and supervision to promote the safekeeping of children.

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Respecting children

The church will adopt a code of behaviour for all who are appointed to work with children so that all children are shown the respect that is due to them.

Safe working practices

The church is committed to providing a safe environment for activities with children and will adopt ways of working with them that promote their safety and well-being.

A safe community

The church is committed to the prevention of bullying of children. The church will seek to ensure that the behaviour of any who may pose a risk to children and young people in the community of the church is managed appropriately.

The church has appointed the following responsible people:

Mrs Gill George, Designated Person for Safeguarding (01795 870213)

She will advise the church on any matters related to the safeguarding of children and take the appropriate action when abuse is disclosed, discovered or suspected.

Miss Amanda Pink, Safeguarding Deacon (07932 460631)

She will oversee and monitor the implementation of the policy and procedures on behalf of the church's charity trustees.

Policy and Procedures

A copy of the policy statement will be displayed permanently on the notice-board in the lobby and on the church website.

Each worker with children will be given a full copy of the policy and procedures and will be asked to sign that they are willing to follow them.

A full copy of the policy and procedures will be made available on request to any member of, or other person associated with the church.

The policy and procedures will be monitored and reviewed annually.

The policy statement will be read annually at the church meeting in April together with a report on the outcome of the annual review.

PROCEDURES: Prevention and Reporting of Abuse

Definitions of Abuse

Physical Abuse: Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury to a child.

Emotional Abuse: The persistent emotional ill treatment of a child that affects their emotional and behavioural development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or that they are given responsibilities beyond their years.

Sexual Abuse: Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This includes no-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect: Where adults fail to care for children and protect them from danger, seriously impairing health and development.

Whilst it is not possible to be prescriptive about the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect, the following list sets out some of the indicators which might be suggestive of abuse:

- unexplained injuries on areas of the body not usually prone to such injuries
- an injury that has not been treated/received medical attention
- an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- a child discloses behaviour that is harmful to them
- unexplained changes in behaviour or mood (eg becoming very quiet, withdrawn or
- displaying sudden bursts of temper)
- inappropriate sexual awareness
- signs of neglect, such as under-nourished, untreated illnesses, inadequate care.

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more indicators is not in itself proof that abuse is actually taking place. It is also important to remember that there might be other reasons why most of the above are occurring.

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PROCEDURES: Prevention and Reporting of Abuse

Responding to Concerns

EVERYONE has his or her part to play in ensuring the safeguarding of children within the church.

If the behaviour of a child gives any cause for concern -

If an allegation is made in any context about a child being harmed -

If the behaviour of any adult (including colleagues and members of the public) towards children causes you concern -

Do not dismiss your concerns

Do not normally confront the adult about whose behaviour you have concerns

Do not take responsibility for deciding whether or not child abuse is actually taking place

Do not investigate allegations

Do not act alone

Do not take sole responsibility for what has been shared or any concerns you may have

Do follow the church's procedures for responding to concerns.

DO	DON'T
Listen and clarify	Minimise what is said
Give support	Show shock alarm or disapproval
Explain what happens next	Question or push for information
Take action	Offer false reassurance

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What to do if abuse is suspected or disclosed:

STAGE 1 - RECORD AND REPORT

The duty of the person who receives information or who has a concern about the welfare of a child or young person is to RECORD their concerns in writing and to REPORT their concerns to the Designated Person. If he/she is not contactable reports should be made to the Safeguarding Deacon.

The report to the Designated Person should be made within 24 hours of the concern being raised.

The record should:

- be hand-written as soon as possible after the event
- be legible and state the facts accurately (if hand-written notes are typed up later the original hand-written notes should be retained)
- include the child's name, address, date of birth (or age if the date of birth is not known)
- include the nature of the concerns/allegation/disclosure
- include a description of any bruising or other injuries that you may have noticed
- include an exact record of what the child has said using the child's words
- include what was said by the person to whom the concerns were reported
- include any action taken as a result of the concerns
- be signed and dated
- be kept secure and confidential and made available only to:
 1. the Safeguarding Team (i.e. the Designated person and the Safeguarding Deacon)
 2. the church Minister (as far as this is consistent with the welfare of the child concerned and possible pastoral responsibilities to any others involved)
 3. representatives of the professional agencies

If such a report is made in an emergency without reference to one of the Safeguarding Team, one of the team should be informed as soon as possible after the report has been made.

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If concerns arise in the context of a children's group, the worker who has the concern may in the first instance wish to talk through their concern with their group leader. However, such conversations should not delay a report being made to the Designated Person.

It should be clear that the duty remains with the worker to record and report their concerns to the Designated Person.

If a concern is brought to the attention of a group leader by one of the workers the leader should remind the worker of their duty to record and report, and will also themselves have a duty to report the concern to the Designated Person.

STAGE 2 - REVIEW AND REFER

The duty of the Designated Person on receiving a report is to REVIEW the concern that has been reported and to REFER the concern on to the appropriate people.

In reviewing the report that is received the Safeguarding Team:

- should take account of their own experience and expertise in assessing risk to children
- must take account of other reports that may have been received concerning the same child, family or adult
- may speak with others in the church (including the Minister) who may have relevant information and knowledge that would impact on any decision that will be made
- such conversations should not lead to undue delay in taking any necessary action
- may consult with other agencies to seek guidance and advice in knowing how to respond appropriately to the concerns that have been raised.

The Safeguarding Team will make a decision about who the report should be referred on to. They may:

- Refer back to the worker who made the initial report if there is little evidence that a child is being harmed, asking for appropriate continued observation
- Refer the concern to others who work with the child/children in question asking for continued observation

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- Refer to the adult about whom the concern has been raised. This may be the parent/carer of the child or it may be one of the children's workers. If there is any question at all of possible sexual abuse or serious physical abuse the Designated Person should never address the adult directly but should refer their concerns to the police or Social Services. To do so may place the child at more risk, or could make any statutory investigation difficult to pursue because the child may be intimidated.
- Make a formal referral to the local Social Services Department

All original reports should be retained safely and securely by the Designated Person and a written record should be made of the actions taken.

STAGE 3 - REPORT AND SUPPORT

Responsibilities in stage 3 of the process are shared by the Safeguarding Team and the Minister.

Whenever a formal referral is made to Social Services the Designated Person should

- report the referral to the Safeguarding Deacon
- report the referral to the Minister
- report the referral to the Regional Minister of the local Baptist Association

In certain circumstances the Safeguarding Deacon acting on behalf of the Deacons may also need to make further reports for example to Charity Commission.

If an allegation is made against someone who works with children the allegation should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO is located within Children's Services and should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

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Church Workers (voluntary or paid)

If a worker has an allegation made against them they should step down from all church duties until the incident has been investigated.

If a worker has been removed from their post or would have been removed from their post because of the risk of harm that they pose to children and young people there is a statutory duty to report the incident to the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

If a worker in the church has been accused of causing harm to children or young people this would be classed as a serious incident that should be reported to the Charity Commission in the annual return by those churches that are registered with the Charity Commission.

A record should be kept of all safeguarding incidents and should be considered in the annual review of the church's safeguarding policy.

Once concerns, suspicions and disclosures of abuse have been addressed, the church continues to have a responsibility to offer support to all those who have been affected.; Child, Other Family Members, Church Worker/Volunteer, Safeguarding Team, Ministers/Leadership Team etc

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PROCEDURES: Recruitment

The church will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children, whether paid or volunteer. All workers will be provided with appropriate induction, support, supervision and training to promote the safekeeping of children.

The procedure for the recruitment of Sunday School Leaders and Helpers and MASCH Leaders includes the following:

- An interview of the prospective volunteer (written notes being kept);
- Two references taken up (at least one from outside the church);
- DBS (formerly CRB) check undertaken;

On successful completion of the above:

- An induction is completed which includes familiarisation with relevant policy and procedures and safeguarding training;
- Written confirmation obtained that the volunteer agrees to comply with the safeguarding policy and procedures;
- A second interview being completed after a 6 month probationary period including confirmation of compliance with policy and procedures.

The relevant Team Leader is responsible for ensuring this procedure is complied with when a leader or helper is recruited. The Safeguarding Deacon is responsible for overseeing the recruitment process.

Until this procedure is completed workers must be supervised.

All Leaders and Helpers should have a calling to work with children, which should, in turn, be recognised by the Church Leadership Team and have the agreement of existing children's leaders and helpers.

Leaders will ensure that their first priority is their own spiritual welfare, and, therefore, they should receive teaching and be part of a worship service or life group regularly.

Leaders will set a good example for Christ in their personal lifestyle, and

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there will be an expectation that Leaders and Helpers will practice a life style congruent to the aims and objects of the church.

Young helpers under 18 years of age

In law young helpers under the age of 18 are children and cannot be treated as adult members of a team.

Guidance and support will be given to ensure that the young helper is helped to develop and hone skills, attitudes and experience.

A young helper must be closely supervised by an adult leader at all times, and never given sole responsibility for a group of children.

When considering ratios of staff to children the young helper needs to be counted as a child, not a helper.

The Safeguarding Policy & procedures applies to a young helper just as it does to any other person.

The permission of parents or carers needs to be sought for the young helper just as you would for any other person under 18 years of age
If the young helper accompanies a group on a residential activity ideally they should have separate sleeping accommodation to both the adult leadership team and the children they are working with.

Young helpers should not be given leadership responsibility for a group immediately below their own age, it is advised to have a gap of at least two years

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR:
Working with children and young people

The church will adopt the following code of behaviour for all who are appointed to work with children and young people so that all children and young people are shown the respect that is due to them.

Respecting children

Leaders and Helpers should:

- Treat all children with respect and dignity. Use age appropriate language and tone of voice. Be aware of your own body language and invading a person's personal space.
- Use age appropriate language and tone of voice. Be aware of your own body language and the effect you are having on the individual child.
- Listen well to children. Be careful not to assume you know what a child is thinking or feeling. Listen to what is spoken and how it is said. At the same time, observe the body language to better understand what is being said.

Do not engage in any of the following:

- invading the privacy of children when they are using the toilet or showering
- rough games involving physical contact between a leader and a child
- sexually provocative games
- making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child, even in 'fun'
- scapegoating, belittling, ridiculing, or rejecting a child.

When it is necessary to control and discipline children, this should be done without using physical punishment. (A situation may, however, arise where a child needs to be restrained in order to protect them or a third person.)

Make sure another adult is present if, for example, a young child has soiled their underclothes and needs to be thoroughly washed. If possible, the child's own parent or carer should be called in to carry out such a task.

Do not respond to or encourage excessive attention-seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature.

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Workers should not normally plan to be alone with children: on church premises this may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room.

On occasions when one to one work with a child is required this should take place with appropriate supervision and accountability structures in place.

Working with Children and Young people on trips, offsite or overnight Leaders and Helpers should:

- Only invite young people on trips in groups, and always make sure another adult is present. The Designated Person should be notified of any trips for children which take place in the name of The Baptist Church. Parental permission must always be sought for such an event.
- Normally only invite young people to your home in groups, making sure another adult is present. Not give lifts to young people on their own, other than for short journeys, during which the young person must sit in the back of the car. Ensure that if transporting children that you have the correct insurance cover for passengers. When possible, ensure you have parental permission.
- Not share sleeping accommodation with young children if you take a group away.

Guidelines for Mentoring

As part of our youth work we are pleased to offer individual mentoring sessions to our young people aged 14 and over. By nature, this requires one-to-one time between youth worker and young person. The following guidelines will be adhered to in the interests of safeguarding.

Normally, one-to-one work will be carried out in a public place (e.g. McDonald's). One-to-one sessions may take place in a youth leader's home for pastoral or mentoring purposes. On these occasions another adult must be present on the premises, parental permission must be given in advance, and the another leader (the Youth Team Leader, the Designated Person for Safeguarding, the safeguarding Deacon or the Minister) must be informed of planned appointments in advance.

Normally, regular one-to-one sessions will take place with a leader of the same gender as the young person.

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The expected length of the session will be agreed with the young person and his or her parents/guardian before it takes place - this should normally be an hour and should not exceed 2 hours.

Abuse of Trust

Relationships between children and their leaders/helpers can be described as 'relationships of trust'. The leader is someone in whom the child has placed a degree of trust, this may be because the leader has an educational role, is a provider of leisure activities, or even is a significant adult friend. It is also not acceptable for a leader/helper to form a romantic relationship with a child with whom they have a relationship of trust.

While by no means restricted to young leaders, those who are in their early adult years will need to be particularly aware of the need not to abuse their position of trust in their relationships with other young people who are not much younger than themselves.

Electronic Communication

Electronic communication has become enormously important and popular over the past ten years. It is an easy way to communicate with young people in particular. However, there are dangers associated with electronic communication that call for vigilance:

- electronic communication is often an extremely informal mode of communication which can create the potential for communication to be misunderstood
- because of the informal style of electronic communication workers can easily cross appropriate boundaries in their relationships with young people
- some adults who are intent on harming children and young people choose to use electronic communication as a way to meet and 'groom' children.

These guidelines are written to try to maintain healthy and safe relationships between adults and children.

Electronic communication must never become a substitute for face to face contact with young people.

Parents or carers and children and young people themselves have the right to decide if a worker is to have email addresses or mobile phone numbers etc workers should only use electronic means of communication with those

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children and young people from whom appropriate consent has been given.

Only workers who have been appointed under the church's agreed procedures should use any electronic means of communication to contact children or young people on behalf of the church or one of the church's organisations.

Contact with children and young people by electronic communication should generally be for information-giving purposes only and not for general chatter.

Leaders and helpers should not share any personal information with children and young people, and should not request or respond to any personal information from the child or young person other than that which is necessary and appropriate as part of their role.

Leaders and helpers should be careful in their communications with children and young people so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives, clear, unambiguous language should be used and the use of unnecessary abbreviations should be avoided.

Direct electronic communication with children of primary school age is inappropriate and should be avoided.

Official church e-mails to young people should be sent out from a church email and include a church signature indicating to the young people that this is an official communication.

Any photos or video taken on personal mobile phones should not be uploaded to social networking sites without parental permission and workers should not retain images of children and young people on their mobile phone.

Social Networking sites, Online Messaging and Texting

If adults are intending to add young people to their social networking sites they must first have the permission of the parents of the young person.

Adults should not normally make 'friend requests' of young people.

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It should not become expected behaviour that adults say yes to young person when a friend request is received.

It is the adult's responsibility to ensure that all of the content on their site is appropriate for young people to see (including contents of photos uploaded).

Texting and online messaging should be kept brief, and only used between the hours of 8am and 10pm. Messages initiated by youth workers should be primarily for the purpose of making arrangements only. If a young person initiates contact outside of these hours and for other purposes than making arrangements, the youth worker should guide the young person to continue contact at a more appropriate time. Where a young person in need or at a point of crisis uses this as a way of communicating with a worker, any significant conversations should be saved as a text file if possible, and a log kept of who and when they communicated.

All communications with young people should be transparent and open to scrutiny.

Discipline

A policy based upon the following guidelines should be agreed upon by each different section of youth work if and when necessary. It should reflect the age group and general activities of the children.

Children should be disciplined without the use of physical punishment, shouting or name calling. Discipline is about our relationship with children not our mastery of them.

Good discipline is built on respect between leaders and children. (This does not imply equality but does have an implication for leaders' attitudes towards children).

Minor incidents/offences should be dealt with immediately on the spot. This prevents escalation and enables major offences to be seen as major.

Ways of dealing with discipline:

Chastise the individual/group – criticise the behaviour not the person

Move the offender to a less volatile situation - change the group activity

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Remove the child to a calm space away from others. Stay with them until they have cooled down, but keep the time out short.

If the above mentioned procedures fail to bring about the desired result, refer the issue to the Group Leader or Safeguarding Deacon.

Allegations and incidents of bullying (ie. behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally) should be reported to Group Leader or Safeguarding Deacon.

Working with Colleagues

If you see another member of staff acting in ways, which might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them or to one of the Safeguarding Team about your concerns.

Leaders & helpers should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows all workers to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour.

Responsibility for children after the Sunday Morning Service

It should be noted that Sunday School provision for children ends with the end of the Sunday morning service and that at this point responsibility for children reverts to parents.

Ratios

When working with young people the recommended minimum ratios (shown below) apply. This does not take into account any special circumstances such as behavioural issues, developmental issues, disability etc, which may mean an increase to the recommended ratio. In calculating the ratios, young helpers who are under the age of 18 should be counted as one of the children, not one of the leaders/helpers.

Age Range	Recommended minimum ratio for INDOOR activities	Recommended minimum ratio for OUTDOOR activities
0-2 years	1:3 (minimum 2)	1:3 (minimum 2)
3 years	1:4 (minimum 2)	1:4 (minimum 2)
4-7 years	1:8 (minimum 2)	1:6 (minimum 2)
8-12 years	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one	2 adults for up to 15 children (preferably one of

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	of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	each gender) with an extra adult for every 8 additional children
13 years and over	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children

Health & Safety

All leaders and helpers are responsible for being observant for any health and safety issues which may affect their group, for example:

- Access to the building should be safe and well lit.
- There should be adequate heating and lighting in the venue.
- Ensure there is enough space and appropriate activities for all children.
- Have a First Aid kit and phone available.
- Check the premises for hazards (e.g. piles of chairs etc).
- Check equipment for sharp edges or missing parts.
- No smoking should be permitted.
- Fire drills should be carried out at least annually.
- Any food should be prepared carefully and hygienically.

Risk Assessments

A generic written risk assessment will be produced at the beginning of each academic year by the Team Leader for each group (Sunday School and MASCH). This will cover the general meeting activities. A specific risk assessment will be carried out by Group Leader for any other one off youth activities which may take place throughout the year. Risk assessments will be filed and stored by Team Leaders, and a back-up copy will be stored electronically on the Church email account. Copies will be produced by the Team leaders when requested.

A safe community - Working with Offenders

The church should be a community that is welcoming and open to all. It is a place for people who have failed and for people in need. Those who have abused children in the past are to be included in this welcome. However,

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the gospel imperative to welcome the sinner needs to be set alongside the gospel imperative that the protection of children must be paramount.

Where someone attending the church is known to have abused children, then whilst extending friendship to the individual, the church 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. A formal contract between the church and the person who has abused.

Where necessary this will include working with other agencies such as Baptist Association, Baptist Union, Probation Service and so on.

A contract would consider the following:

- will identify the meetings the person will attend
- will specify that they will always sit apart from children
- may ask that they are always accompanied by a befriender on church premises
- will require the person not to attend small group meetings where children are present
- will require that the person declines hospitality where there are children
- will state that the person will never be alone with children while attending church functions
- will require the person to stay away from areas of the building where children meet.

Guidance will be sought on who within the church can and should be notified if an offender joins the congregation.

It is impossible in a policy such as this to cover every scenario and 'what if'. Further guidance will be taken by the Safeguarding Team from Safe to grow (BU guidelines on Safeguarding), and other agencies if and when necessary.

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HELPFUL NUMBERS/CONTACT DETAILS

Designated person - Mrs Gill George

01795 870213 gillygeorge@hotmail.com

Safeguarding Deacon/Youth Team Leader - Miss Amanda Pink

07932 460631 amanda.pink97@yahoo.com

Sunday School Youth Team Leader - Mrs Esther Marsh

esther@marsh-electrical.co.uk

**South Eastern Baptist Association (SEBA) Children's and Youth Officer -
Maeve Whitchurch**

01273 441509/07944 600871 mave@seba-baptist.org.uk

Kent Children's Social Services

0300 333 5540

Police non emergency - 101 or 01622 690690