

Park Church Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People (YP)

INTRODUCTION

We have an awesome responsibility to care for children and to teach them by word and example who God is and what He requires of us. *“But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believes in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea”*. Matthew 18:6. Children were clearly valued by Jesus and He spent time with them. We must follow His example as we work with children and young people. *“Then the little children were brought to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them and pray for them....Jesus said, ‘let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these’.”* Matthew 19:13-15.

For the purpose of this policy, Park Church refers to Park Church and Hope Church.

To ensure the safety of the children and young people we adhere to the following to:

- uphold and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures.
- provide on-going safeguarding training for volunteers and review the policy annually.
- ensure that the premises (where reasonably possible) meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation.
- support the Safeguarding lead in any action they may need to take in order to protect the children and young people in our care.

As Christians we have a responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted into our care. We need to value them and respect them. We do this by:

- appointing a Safeguarding Officer for children and young people.
- adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and guidance for staff and volunteers.
- providing effective support for staff and volunteers.
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made (DBS etc.).
- ensuring all information provided will be recorded and stored securely in accordance with GDPR requirements.
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment.
- using our procedures to manage any allegation against staff and volunteers.
- ensuring we have effective complaints procedures in place.
- ensuring we provide a safe physical environment for all involved that complies with health and safety rules and guidance
- listening to, relating effectively and valuing children and young people whilst ensuring their protection within our activities.
- encouraging and supporting parents and carers.
- having systems in place for dealing with concerns about possible abuse.
- ensuring workers with children are aware of and act according to current good practice.

GOOD PRACTICE

- All potential workers/volunteers will be asked to sign the policy to confirm they have read and understand the safeguarding policy.
- All potential workers/volunteers will be asked to attend level 1 equivalent Safeguarding Awareness training.

Photographs

Before taking any photographs of children, please ensure that parents have given signed permission for this to be done.

- Avoid taking photographs of children in swimwear.
- Preferably take photographs of children in groups.
- Take photographs in places where parents and/or other workers can see you.

Work with Children and or Young Adults

- Workers should avoid being alone with a child (if unavoidable, then a door should be left open) and all activities should take place within public view.
- Arranged one to one meetings should only take with a child of the same gender, in a public venue, with parental permission.
- Workers should not take just one child to the toilets etc, but if unavoidable should be accompanied by another worker, and/or workers should not enter the toilet unless absolutely necessary.
- Lifts can be given by workers who have been DBS checked or when there is another adult in the car. Child should be seated in the back seat and a text should be sent when leaving/arriving from the venue.
- All social media communication with children will be in adherence to the social Media policy (Appendix 4).
- Be careful of physical contact in the more boisterous games. However, in some sports this is unavoidable.
- Physical contact should only ever be initiated by the child (child to worker) and only used when appropriate, i.e. an arm round a shoulder when a child is hurt.
- Reasonable physical constraint should only be used if a child is endangering themselves or someone else and only as a last resort.
- Physical punishment must **never** be used as a form of discipline.
- All children and young people should be treated with respect and dignity befitting to their age.
- Children and young people should not be ridiculed, rejected or be made to feel like the scapegoat for any incident.
- Good behaviour should be positively and verbally encouraged and rewarded.
- Children who continually disrupt the meeting or put other children at risk should be asked to leave the meeting and taken back to their parents as appropriate.
- If a disruptive child refuses to leave the meeting contact their parents, asking them to collect/deal with the child.
- If parents of a disruptive child are not available remain calm and try and use diversionary tactics until the meeting ends. Do not physically remove the child from the meeting unless absolutely necessary and the child is putting others at risk.
- If a child or young person hurts himself or herself to such an extent that minor medical treatment is required, parents should be informed.
- Accidents should be recorded and placed in the accident file (Appendix 3).

- Avoid administering First Aid unless absolutely necessary. This should be done by a worker who holds a current First Aid Certificate.
- If working with the 11+ age group and activities are going to take place away from the Church, a consent form will be required. (See Appendix 2).
- Be consistent in the meetings to avoid disputes.
- Keep your word.
- Don't ask children or young people to do something you would not be willing to do yourself.
- Only keep in touch with children after obtaining parental permission.

LOVE THEM AS JESUS WOULD AND PRAY FOR THEM

Recognising Abuse (See Appendix 1)

Firstly, symptoms of abuse are normally noted over a long period of time.

Secondly, the abused child or young person will often only disclose abuse to you upon the development of a relationship built on trust over a long period of time. However, we do need to be prepared for the unthinkable.

Listed in Appendix 1 are some general signs that may be noticeable in different types of abuse. They may not all be applicable in every case/situation.

What to do if a Child Confides in You.

It takes a great deal of courage for a child to talk to another adult about their abuse. The child may have to betray a person who is not only close to them, but also loved by them. They are risking a great deal in the hope that you will believe what they say.

- Remain calm, accessible and receptive.
- Listen carefully, without interrupting.
- Be aware of your own non-verbal messages.
- Make it clear that you are taking them seriously.
- Acknowledge their courage and reassure them that they are right to tell.
- Reassure them that they should not feel guilty.
- Let them know you are going to do everything you can to help them, and this may mean taking further action.
- Do not allow your shock or distaste to show.
- Do not probe for more information than is offered.
- Do not make negative comments about the alleged abuser.
- Do not agree to keep the information secret.
- Do not make any promises that you cannot keep, for example “everything will be alright”.
- Make notes of what was said. The following details should be recorded:
 - Name of child
 - Date of birth
 - Address
 - What the child said, use their words, verbatim if possible
 - When and where it was said, what was the activity immediately before
 - Date and time
 - Signature

The more specific the information the more useful it will be for the authorities if this needs to be followed up.

- Notes are not for you to give opinions just state the facts and be specific about what was said and done.
- Notes must be recorded within 24 hours of any concerns.
- Notes must be handed to the person in charge.

Any concerns must then be brought, by the person in charge, to the Safeguarding Officers who will seek advice as needed from Christian Safeguarding Services (<https://thecss.co.uk/>).

The Safeguarding Officer will inform the pastors/elders whilst maintaining confidence as appropriate. The local Social Services Department or Police will be notified as appropriate.

- All notes should be copied and put in the Church safe where they will be kept indefinitely. (Do NOT destroy original notes.)
- A copy of the notes should also be given to the local Social Services Department or Police.
- Parents should not be informed except in consultation with the Safeguarding Officer.
- Contact details for the Safeguarding Officers and Pastors are contained in Appendix 5.

Remember it is not your role to investigate, that is the role of the Police and Social Services.

You could hinder an investigation through or by bad practice.

Abuse is serious but we must be careful of not becoming paranoid and ceasing to enjoy working with children/families.

WHAT TO DO IF THE ALLEGATION IS AGAINST A CHILDRENS' or YOUTH WORKER

- If an allegation of sexual misconduct or physical injury is made against a worker, the person in charge must be informed. That person must then inform the pastors/elders. There are two child advocates, one for males and one for females, who must also be informed.. They in turn should consult our Safeguarding Officers for further advice. See Appendix 5 for Contact Details.
- If the allegation is made against a worker, they should cease from children's work immediately until the issue is resolved. Either by the child or parent retracting the allegation or it is proven through independent witnesses that the allegation cannot be substantiated.
- If the allegation is against the person in charge, the same should apply and the pastors/elders contacted immediately. They will then make a decision on what action should be taken.
- Always take the complaint seriously and never let it go unchallenged.
- Make full notes of the complaint. Include who said what and the actual incident of the complaint.
- Inform the complainant or their parent, if complainant is a child, of the action that is to be taken.
- Remember Social Services or the Police may still need to be informed.
- Procedures then followed as above.

WORKERS DECLARATION

I agree to abide by the good practice set out in this document and ensure that I'm aware of Child Protection procedures as set out.

Name: -----

Signature: -----

Date -----