

SAFEGUARDING POLICY
ALVERSTOKE EVANGELICAL CHURCH
June 2014 edition

- Alverstoke Evangelical Church (AEC) is involved in running a large number of children's activities throughout the week, both within the church and in local schools.
- These guidelines have been produced with the intention of supporting this Children's work and developing good practice in working with young people.
- A child is defined as a person under the age of 16 years.

SECTION 1

OUR DETAILS

Alverstoke Evangelical Church

Meeting at: Bay House School, Gomer Lane, Gosport, PO12 2QP

Telephone: 023 9252 8978

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- Affiliated to the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches
- Charity Number: 275967
- Public Liability Insurance: Congregational & General Insurance plc RC02000087.

OUR COMMITMENT AS A LEADERSHIP

- We recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment of children, young people and vulnerable adults who we acknowledge can be victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect.
- We have adapted the procedures set out in this Safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.
- The leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone.
- All our workers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis through the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS).
- The leadership will ensure that children and vulnerable adults are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse or other matters that concern them.

SECTION 2

RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING APPROPRIATELY TO AN ALLEGATION OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE

Defining child abuse or abuse against a vulnerable adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may

be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or vulnerable adult.

The following behavioural signs may be indications of child abuse, but they should not be taken in isolation.

Physical signs of abuse and neglect

- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures, cuts, etc. which do not have an accidental explanation.
- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, knocks in rough games, etc.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention.
- Reluctance to change or participate in games or swimming.

Indicators of sexual abuse

- Any allegations made by a child.
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matter and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play.
- Sexual activity indicated through words, play or drawing.
- Child is sexually provocative with adults.
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.

Emotional signs of abuse

- Changes or regression in mood and behaviour including depression and aggression, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging
- Nervousness/frozen watchfulness
- Sudden under achievement or lack of concentration.
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults.
- Attention seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness.
- Running away/stealing/lying.

How to react when a child wants to talk about abuse

- Accept what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound).Keep calm.
- Look at the child directly.
- Be honest.
- Let them know that you will need to tell someone else.
- Don't promise confidentiality.
- Even when a child has broken a rule they are not to blame for abuse.
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened.
- Never push for information.

Helpful things to say

- I believe you (or showing acceptance of what the child says)
- I am glad you have told me
- It's not your fault
- I will help you
- I know someone who can help us with this.

What to avoid

- Saying "Why didn't you tell me this before?"
- Saying "I can't believe it."
- Saying "Are you sure this is true?"
- Asking questions that require the answer "Yes" or "No".
- Asking "Why?"
- Making false promises.
- Making statements such as "I am shocked."

Concluding

- Again, reassure the child they were right to tell you and that you believe them.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
- Immediately refer to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator as indicated in the child protection procedure.
- (You might have to consider referring to Hampshire Children's services to prevent a child/young person returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse).

What to do once a child has talked to you about abuse:

- a) Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within an hour of the interview), writing down the actual words that the child used and when he/she said them and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. description of activity). Record dates and times of these events and also record when you made the record. Keep all hand written notes, even if these have been typed subsequently.
- b) Report your discussion as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.
- c) You should not discuss your suspicions or the allegations with anyone other than the Safeguarding Coordinator and one of the elders.

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

What to do if you suspect that abuse may have occurred or a child alleges abuse.

- a) You must report concerns as soon as possible to the church Safeguarding co-ordinator [**HAZEL PAY**] who is nominated by the eldership to act on behalf of the church in referring all allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities. In the absence of the Co-ordinator the matter should be brought to the attention of the Deputy Co-ordinator **BRIAN WILLIAMS** [DBS coordinator is **GEM ROYLE**].

- b) If the suspicions in anyway involve the co-ordinator then the report should be made to the Deputy Co-ordinator. If the suspicions in anyway implicate the Co-ordinator and the Deputy Co-ordinator then the report should be made in the first instance to one of the Elders.
- c) Such concerns (Referrals) are to be made to the Co-ordinator without being discussed with anyone else.
- d) The Co-ordinator should inform the Eldership of any referrals made.

3) **What the Coordinator must do if a referral is made:**

- a) Contact the Hampshire Children's Service 0845 603 5620] for advice if concerned about the child's safety. Parents or carers should not be told unless advised to do so having contacted the Children's service.
- b) Where emergency medical attention is required it will be sought immediately. The co-ordinator will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
- c) Under no circumstances will the Co-ordinator carry out any investigation into allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse. The role of the co-ordinator is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to Hampshire Children's Service.

Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse will normally be reported to the Co-ordinator, the absence of the Co-ordinator or the Deputy should not delay referral to Hampshire Children's Service.

Advice can be obtained from CCPAS (0845 120 4550)

The leadership will support the safeguarding coordinator/deputy in their role, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis

It is, of course, the right of any individual to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from CCPAS, although the leadership hope that members/attenders of AEC will use this procedure.

If, however, the individual feels that the safeguarding coordinator/deputy have not responded appropriately, or where there is a disagreement with them as to the appropriateness of any referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct.

THE ROLE OF THE SAFEGUARDING COORDINATOR/DEPUTY/DBS COORDINATOR

- 1 To collate and clarify the precise details of the allegations or suspicions
- 2 To pass on the information to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate
- 3 To respond to referrals as set out in these guidelines
- 4 To carry out all DBS checks on all Children's workers
- 5 To keep a record of all such checks

SECTION 3 PREVENTION

The leadership will ensure that all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with CCPAS guidelines on safe recruitment

SECTION 4 PASTORAL CARE

- 1. Supporting those affected by abuse

The leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are members of or attenders at AEC.

2. Working with offenders

When someone attending AEC is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to vulnerable adults the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection on children and vulnerable adults will set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep.

SECTION 5 PRACTICE GUIDELINES

As an organisation working with children, young people and vulnerable adults we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false accusation.

The care of children whilst within Children's activities at AEC

- 1) No physical punishment will be used on a child.
- 2) No sexual contact is ever to take place between a Children's worker and a child.
- 3) No individual Children's worker will arrange to meet with a child alone outside the planned activities.
- 4) Teams will attempt to work together to minimise scope for isolation of either a child or an adult. However, in circumstances when it might be necessary to see a child on their own, the interview will be between members of the same sex in place where the door is kept open (unless the child asks for the door to be closed). Another person must be around in the building and will know that the counselling is taking place.
- 5) Children's workers are required to report all allegations or concerns about possible abuse to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator (as detailed above).
- 6) There should be available addresses and contact telephone numbers for all children.
- 7) Children's workers must treat all young people with dignity and respect in attitude, language used and actions.
- 8) Any arrangements for transporting young people will be with the knowledge of the team leader and the approval of the parent/guardian. As far as possible the principles of point 4 above also applies to transport of young people.
- 9) A first aid kit will be available and in the event of any accidents, a record of them will be kept.
- 10) A log book must be kept by each team leader to record "incidents" that might have child protection implications. EG A strange mark on a child's arm, something "worrying" that a child might say. Any record must be signed and dated.

Boundaries

- a) The level of personal care, e.g. toileting, must be appropriate and related to the age of the child whilst also accepting that some children have special needs.
- b) Guidance on touch
 - Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
 - Touch should be related to the child's needs.

- Touch should be age appropriate and initiated by the child and not the worker.
 - Avoid any physical activity which is or thought to be sexually stimulating to the child or to the adult.
 - Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances when they need medical attention.
 - Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by pointing out anything that could be misunderstood.
- c) Workers should treat all children/young people with dignity and respect in attitude, language used and actions.
- d) Respect the privacy of children, avoid questionable activities, e.g. rough or sexually provocative games or comments.

Quick Check List

1 Things to avoid

- Never place yourself in a vulnerable position.
- Being on your own with a child.
- Avoid situations where you will be tempted especially with older young people.
- Touching a child in private.
- Favouritism and special relationships.
- Smacking or physically chastising but physical restraint for safety reasons may be necessary.
- Taking a child home on your own. Ideally, have another leader/adult with you.
- Discussing personal relationships or sexual activity with a child.
- Sexist comments or making comments about a child's attractiveness.

2 Things to do

- Exercise wisdom in your relationships with children.
- Listen to what children say without being judgmental
- Think about child safety at all times.
- Touch should be age appropriate and in public.
- Allow children privacy when changing or toileting.
- Aim for at least two children's workers present at any given time.
- Always be visible when talking with children
- Discourage crushes.
- Have time and space for children to talk to leaders casually.
- Be prayerful about difficult situations.
- Inform the leader of group of difficult situations.

Leadership statement

The elders recognise the importance of AEC's work with children and young people and adults in need of protection and its responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care.

Specifically:

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people (those under 18 years of age) and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We believe that every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- All children and young people have a right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We recognise that that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial and discriminatory abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults and to report any such abuse that t we discover or suspect.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of vulnerable adults and will ensure all our procedures reflect this.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children and vulnerable adults.

We are committed to:

- Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and good practice recommendations.
- Respecting the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Ensuring that workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy
- Keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding
- Supporting the safeguarding coordinators in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and vulnerable adults
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these guidelines.
- Supporting parents and families
- Nurturing, protecting and safeguarding children and young people.
- Supporting, resourcing, training, monitoring and providing supervision to all those who undertake to work with children and vulnerable adults.
- Supporting all in AEC affected by abuse.

We recognise;

- Children's Social services has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where it concerns a child
- Adult social care has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a vulnerable adult
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

We will review our policy and procedures annually

GUIDELINES FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF CHILDREN'S WORKERS.

- 1) All team leaders will be members of AEC , or specifically approved by the eldership
- 2) Children's' workers should:
 - Attend regularly the Sunday services and be involved in the life of the church. Those who serve on a Sunday morning and are therefore unable to meet with the body of the church are expected to make the evening service a priority.
 - Attend planning and prayer meetings for the work
 - Follow the Safeguarding policy
 - Commit themselves to Safeguarding training

Team members under the age of 16, care should be taken that they are not out of every morning meeting and that they are receiving teaching on a regular basis.

- a. The names of prospective workers must be cleared with the Eldership before an individual is approached
- b. The team leader will meet with a potential worker to discuss what is involved. The team leaders (or the safeguarding coordinator) will go through this Safeguarding policy and all accompanying guidelines.
- c. Each person will sign the Safeguarding declaration and references may be taken up
- d. Each new worker will be DBS checked.
- e. Children's workers will plan together and review their work. The team leader will regularly review Safeguarding matters.
- f. All appointed workers should attend Safeguarding training.

GUIDELINES FOR REGULAR TRANSPORTING GROUPS OF CHILDREN,

1. All involved in the transportation of young people should be police checked before getting involved in this task.
2. All helpers should be familiar with and have access to a copy of the church's Safeguarding policy. This policy must be adhered to by all working with children.
3. The aim should be a minimum of 2 adults per journey, one driver and one other.
4. There must always be one person who is a committed Christian and where possible an AEC Church member on a mini-bus and this person is THE responsible adult on the bus.

For more detailed guidance and advice the Safeguarding Coordinator or CCPAS should be contacted. (info@ccpas.co.uk 0845 120 45 50)

Copies of this policy are available from the church's web-site or from the Safeguarding coordinator.

New workers – SAFEGUARDING DECLARATION

Please complete the following form and submit it to the team leader (_____).

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone No. _____

Name and address of previous church (if any) _____

Name and contact details of previous church's minister or referee _____

Past experience in Children's work _____

I am willing for you to contact my past church or referee for a reference.

I have read the church's Safeguarding policy and guidelines and commit myself to adhere to them for the good of children and leaders alike. I am willing to attend Safeguarding training.

I give permission for a DBS check to be carried out.

Signed _____ Date _____

New workers - TEAM LEADER's declaration

NAME of LEADER _____

NAME of NEW WORKER _____

Please initial when completed

1. References (if required) have been taken up and are satisfactory ()
2. Safeguarding policy and guidelines have been read with the new Children's worker and they have received their own copy. ()
3. DBS check has been carried out without any problems arising. ()
4. The Elders have given agreement over this appointment. ()

Signed _____ Date _____

This page must be returned to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator for safekeeping

