

Sudbury Baptist Church **Safe to Grow Policy**

Church Statement

Children and young people are part of our church today. They have as much to give as well as to receive. We will listen to them. As we nurture them in learning, worship and in community life, we will respect the wishes and feelings of children, young people and parents.

The church has a growing children's and young people's ministry. The Church takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to the church's care. As part of our commitment to children and young people, Lyn White and John Walton have been appointed as Advocates, representing our young people and acting as point of contact for all matters relating to child welfare.

Church Mission

As part of the mission, the church is committed to:

- The nurturing protection and safekeeping of children and young people.
- Taking responsibility as individuals and as a body to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children and young people, and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.
- Encouraging and supporting parents/carers
- Ensuring that children's/youth workers are given support and training and to provide appropriate supervision and care.
- Having a system for dealing with concerns about possible abuse

Areas Of Policy

The church recognises that many children and young people today are the victims of neglect, and physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Accordingly, the church has adopted the policy contained in this document, (hereafter "the policy"). The policy sets out agreed guidelines relating to the following areas:

- Responding to allegations of abuse, including those made against leaders or members of the church
- Appointing children's/youth workers
- Supervision of activities and practice issues
- Helping victims of abuse
- Working with offenders

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The church recognises the need to build constructive links with the childcare agencies. Accordingly, these guidelines have been prepared in consultation with the Baptist Union Safe to Grow document and the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service, (CCPAS).

The local Social Services office telephone number between 9.00am and 5.00pm is 01284 352000.

The out of hours number known as the Emergency Duty Team is 01473 299669.

The Police Child Protection Team no. is 01284 774100.

The content of the policy has formed the basis of a seminar for all children's/youth workers in the church. The Church is committed to an on-going training programme for all such workers.

Definitions of Abuse

See appendix 1.

Recognising And Responding To Abuse

See appendix 2 & 3.

What To Do If You Suspect That Abuse May Have Occurred

- 1 You must report concerns as soon as possible to Lyn White (01787 379702) or John Walton (01787 371772) (hereafter the Advocates) who are nominated by the Church membership to act on their behalf in referring allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities. In the absence of the Advocates the matter should be brought to the attention of the Youth Deacon.
- 2 If the suspicions in any way involve the Advocates then the report should be made to the Youth Deacon, Jenny Napper (01206 262822). If the suspicions in any way implicate both the Advocates and the Youth Deacon, then the report should be made directly to Social Services.
- 3 Suspicions will not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.
- 4 It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies or seek advice from the Baptist Union Safe to Grow, or Churches Agency for Safeguarding, (CAS). If you feel that the Advocates have not responded appropriately to your concerns, then it is open to you to contact the relevant organisation direct. We hope by making this statement that we demonstrate the commitment of the church to effective child protection.

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Allegations Of Physical Injury Or Neglect

If a child has a physical injury or symptom of neglect, the Advocate will:

- 1 Contact Social Services for advice in cases of deliberate injury or where concerned about the child's safety. The parents should not be informed by the church/organisation in these circumstances.
- 2 Where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. The Advocate will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
- 3 In other circumstances speak with the parent/carer and suggest that medical help/attention is sought for the child. The doctor, (or health visitor) will then initiate further action, if necessary.
- 4 If appropriate the parent/carer will be encouraged to seek help from the Social Services Department.
- 5 Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, if appropriate, the Advocate will offer to go with them. If they still fail to act, the Advocate should, in cases of real concern, contact Social Services for advice.
- 6 Where the Advocate is unsure whether or not to refer a case to the Social Services, then advice from CCPAS will be sought and followed. CCPAS will confirm its advice in writing in case this is needed for reference purposes in the future.

Allegations Of Sexual Abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Advocate will:

- 1 Contact the Social Services duty social worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team directly. The Advocate will **NOT** speak to the parent (or anyone else).
- 2 If, for any reason, the Advocate is unsure whether or not to follow the above, then advice from CCPAS will be sought and followed. CCPAS will confirm its advice in writing in case this is needed for reference purposes in the future.
- 3 Under no circumstances will the Advocate attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation or suspicions of sexual abuse. The role of the Advocate is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to the Social Services Department, whose task it is to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- 4 Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse will normally be reported to the Advocate, the absence of the Advocates should not delay referral to the Social Services Department.

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- 5 Exceptionally, should there be any disagreement between the person in receipt of the allegation or suspicion and the Advocates as to the appropriateness of a referral to the Social Services Department, that person retains a responsibility as a member of the public to report serious matters to the Social Services Department, and should do so without hesitation.
- 6 The Church will support the Advocates 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.

Working with Offenders

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.

Helping victims of Abuse

As a church we are committed to supporting victims of abuse, and encouraging them in their faith.

Procedure for the Appointment Of Workers

1. Any advertising for workers or those volunteering to work with children and young people will be given the information that an application form and voluntary disclosure form will be required.
2. Discussion of the role and the churches Safe to Grow policy with one of the advocates/ youth deacon and the group leader. (The group leader is responsible for contacting the Advocate/youth deacon.)
3. References will be taken up.
4. On receipt of satisfactory references the new worker will be asked to contact the CRB to start the disclosure process and sign a volunteer agreement.
5. The completed disclosure form should be taken along with proof of identity to the Designated persons - Rev. J. Crockett/Paul Mizen to countersign. The form is then sent to the CAS (churches agency for safeguarding)
6. On receipt of notification from the CAS of "not unsuitable" a workers name can be added to the register kept by the designated person/s.

This follows the guidelines of the Safe to Grow policy.

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Arrangements For Supervision Of Group/Children's Activities

Each group will be responsible for following good practice guidelines. They will be responsible for producing written guidelines concerning supervision and the safety of those in their care, in consultation with the Youth Deacon and or one of the Advocates. These guidelines are to be available for all parents and workers. Any other organisation such as Churches Together In Sudbury, using the church premises will be required to produce written guidelines to meet with this policy.

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually by the Youth Deacon and Advocates in conjunction with the relevant group leaders.

APPENDIX 1

Definitions of Abuse (England & Wales)

The definitions of child abuse recommended as criteria throughout England and Wales by the Department of Health, Department for Education and Employment and the Home Office in their joint document, Working Together to Safeguard Children (1999) are as follows:

Abuse and Neglect

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen syndrome by proxy*.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-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

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Organised Abuse

Organised or multiple abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abuser and a number of related or non-related abused children and young people. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for

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Organised and multiple abuse occur both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community, and within institutions such as residential homes or schools.

(A child may suffer more than one category of abuse).

*Munchausen's Syndrome by proxy

The Oxford Textbook of Psychiatry defines Munchausen's Syndrome by proxy as: *"A form of child abuse in which the parents, or carers, give false accounts of symptoms in their children and may fake signs of illness (to draw attention to themselves). They seek repeated medical investigations and needless treatment for their children."*

APPENDIX 2

Recognising Abuse

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

PHYSICAL SIGNS OF ABUSE

- 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, rough games, etc
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Neglect – under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse

INDICATORS OF POSSIBLE SEXUAL ABUSE

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive 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
- Eating disorders – anorexia, bulimia

EMOTIONAL SIGNS OF ABUSE

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

APPENDIX 3.

How to Respond to a Child Wanting to Talk About Abuse

It is not easy to give precise guidance, but the following may help:

GENERAL POINTS

- Show acceptance of what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound)
- Keep calm
- Look at the child directly
- Be honest
- Tell the child you will need to let someone else know – don't promise confidentiality
- Even when a child has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell
- Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen.

HELPFUL THINGS YOU MAY SAY OR SHOW

- I believe you (or showing acceptance of what the child says)
- Thank you for telling me
- It's not your fault
- I will help you

DON'T SAY

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- Never make false promises
- Never make statements such as "I am shocked, don't tell anyone else"

CONCLUDING

- Again reassure the child that they were right to tell you and show acceptance
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (you might have to consider referring to Social Services or the Police to prevent a child or young person returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse)
- Contact the person in your church/organisation responsible for co-ordinating child protection concerns or contact an agency such as CCPAS for advice or go directly to Social Services/Police/NSPCC
- Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed

Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the child talking to you), writing down exactly what the child said and when s/he said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (eg a description of the activity). Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all hand written notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept safely for an indefinite period.