

Waverton  
Evangelical  
Fellowship



# Safeguarding Children

Waverton Evangelical Fellowship  
Safeguarding Policy

Issued to.....

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## Introduction

The purpose of this policy document is to identify and outline the issues and principles of safeguarding children for Waverton Evangelical Fellowship (*The Church*)

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of humankind in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm. In addition, every person of any age has a right to have their choice and expression of gender identity treated with love, acknowledgement and respect, regardless of the understanding, opinion or viewpoint of others.

## Principles

We are committed to:

- The care, nurture of and respectful pastoral ministry with all children and all adults
- The safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- The establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is a culture of 'informed vigilance' as to the dangers of abuse.
- We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with safer recruitment principles, including the use of criminal records disclosures and registration with the relevant vetting and barring schemes.
- We will respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, co-operating with the police and local authority in any investigation.
- We will seek to work with anyone who has suffered abuse, providing them with appropriate pastoral care.
- We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust or authority.
- We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- In all these principles we will follow legislation, guidance and recognized good practice.

## Descriptions and definitions

- A **child** is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'children and young people' throughout this document.

*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 states:*

*The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital, in prison or in a Young Offenders' Institution, does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection under the Children Act 1989.*

- The term **safeguarding** covers vetting and safer recruitment, safer working practices, responding to concerns, working with partner agencies, dealing with allegations against those responsible for children and other matters that may be relevant.
- The term **child protection** is used for responding to concerns where it appears that a child may have been harmed. Effective child protection is essential as part of wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. However, all agencies and individuals should aim proactively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.
- The term **children's worker** is used for anyone appointed by Church to a post or role, whether voluntary or paid

## Definition of Abuse and Neglect

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. 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. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

## Forms of Abuse and Neglect

### **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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment 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. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, 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 maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) 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, which would be likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing, or shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;

failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-givers 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.

### **Complex (organised or multiple) Abuse**

Complex (organised or multiple) abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of children. 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 abuse.

### **Responsibilities of the church**

In particular, the Church recognizes the need to:

- Keep abreast of research and policy developments in good safeguarding practice;
- Listen and learn from victims of abuse, in order to provide the most effective support for them;
- Regularly review and update church policy and practice, taking account of the latest safeguarding information available;
- Ensure that there are appropriate systems of accountability and supervision at all levels of the church's life, and that disciplinary and employment procedures are robust enough to manage risk;
- Listen to those who have been abused, so that we can learn how to improve our support and care for survivors of abuse;
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are carefully selected and trained, and that their training equips them for their safeguarding responsibilities in work with children;
- Provide training and support for workers who have responsibilities for children's work, so that they can undertake their tasks with confidence and without being unduly fearful of unfounded allegations being made against them.

Clear, robust procedures are essential to safeguarding. However, it is important to remember that above all it is people who protect, not procedures. The aim should be to create a culture of informed vigilance in the church by:

- Raising awareness of the issues involved in safeguarding children in the church
- Addressing the needs of our children in all their cultural, spiritual, intellectual, racial and physical diversity
- Responding to the needs of children and adults who have been abused
- Supporting and training those who work with children
- Encouraging them to work together to follow good practice
- Caring appropriately for those in the church community who have abused children

## Promoting Safe Practice

### Working with children

Working with children and young people is a rewarding ministry. We want all our workers to enjoy the time they spend with their group and for our children and young people to develop a Christian faith which will mature into adulthood. However, working with children does present challenges and the following sections are designed to assist in presenting the appropriate response. Every child attending a group need to have a registration form completed and signed by their parent/guardian.

### Best working practice

Leaders should not put themselves in a position where they are alone with a young person. The one exception is in a recognised and previously agreed mentoring programme. Personal conversations should be in a room where other leaders are present. If the conversation is of a confidential pastoral nature, another leader should be invited to join the discussion.

Meetings and events should take place preferably on church premises or in a public place. Where events are held on a leader's own property, a leader not related to the household must be present. Appropriate DBS clearance for use of the leader's home must be sought.

### Guidelines for discipline

#### **What is discipline?**

Discipline is the education of a person's character. It includes nurturing, training, instruction, chastisement, verbal rebuke, teaching and encouragement.

#### **Why discipline?**

It brings security, produces character and prepares for life. It is evidence of love and is God's heart. See Hebrews 12:5-12 and Proverbs 22:6.

## **Dos and Don'ts of discipline in children's work**

- NEVER smack or hit a child.
- Discipline out of love NEVER out of anger. (Call on support from other leaders if you feel you may deal with the situation unwisely in your anger.)
- Do not shout in anger or put down a child/young person.
- Lay down ground rules, e.g., no swearing, racism or calling each other names, respect for each other's property.
- Keep the ground rules simple and clear, and make sure the children understand what procedure will be taken if they are not followed.
- Never reject a child, just the behaviour (Tell the child that you value him/her, but you are not willing to accept the behaviour).
- Remember that each child is unique, special and individual, and each child needs a different method of being dealt with. We therefore need to be asking ourselves "Why is the child behaving like that?"
- Work on each individual child's positives, do not compare them with each other, but encourage and build them up.
- Help the child learn that they will be noticed more when they obey the rules, rather than when they break them. Try to create an environment of care and offer more tangible rewards, where each child feels that it is worth keeping to the rules.

## **Responding to inappropriate behaviour**

Remember to model the ways in which you expect children to behave.

1. A quiet word with the young person asking them to change their behaviour.
2. Separate children who have a tendency to be disruptive when together, OR move the child to the side of the room, OR get a helper to sit next to the child, OR have the child sit right in front of you.
3. Take the child aside and talk to them, challenging them to change, whilst encouraging them on their strengths.
4. Stay in sight and sound of a co-worker at ALL times. The Co-worker should be aware of the action being taken.
5. Young people's work: Whenever possible the discussion should take place female worker to female young person and male worker to male young person.
6. Warn a child that you will speak to their parents if the behaviour doesn't change
7. Speak to the child's parents.

8. If regular indiscipline or a serious breach of discipline has taken place, then the child's parents must be informed of the problem and the action taken by the worker. Discuss with the Team Leader before talking to the parents.
9. Remove a child from the group or activity and return them to their parents.
10. Periods of Exclusion or Total Exclusion with parental knowledge are used when all other channels are exhausted. This should only be done after discussion with the Team Leader.

If there is likelihood of an occurrence requiring further investigation or of a complaint arising as a result then the leader should complete an incident form.

## Unaccompanied children

On occasions, children playing outside the church building without any adult supervision may want to take part in church activities. If this occurs, the following steps should be taken:

On arrival, the child should be welcomed by the leader. However, due to safety considerations the child should be made aware that s/he will be unable to attend the group until the required forms have been completed and signed by his/her parent/carer.

The visiting child should be given a registration form, and contact telephone numbers, location, etc. to pass on to the parent/carer, enabling them to establish contact with the 'Under 18's Co-ordinator' or church leader, if they wish.

The child should then be sent home, and encouraged to pass on the information and forms to his/her parent/carer. The child should be made aware that it is paramount for the forms to have been completed by the parent/carer and returned to the leader before the child is able to attend the group.

If the child lives locally, it may be possible for the child to return the completed forms within minutes. If this occurs, and the church activity has already begun, the child should still be allowed to attend the church activity that same day, provided all the necessary information has been completed on the required forms.

If an unaccompanied child, has returned the completed forms, and is attending the church activity, the child's name should be included in the register. The leader should also ensure that the child is introduced to the other children in the group and made aware of the programme, acceptable behaviour and rules of the group.

## Staff child ratios

The ratio for the number of adults to children defines the number of adults that should be present for a specific indoor/outdoor activity or event. There should be a minimum of 2 adults per group, with at least one being female.

Below are the suggested ratios of adult to child, recommended by the government through Ofsted. These are the ratios required in regulations governing day care for under 8's.

<b>Age of children</b>	<b>Adults: Children</b>
0 to 2 years	1 to 3
2 to 3 years	1 to 4
3 to 8 years	1 to 8

For children over 8, there is no official guidance<sup>1</sup>. However, the suggested ratio is two adults for up to 20 children, with an additional leader for every 10 children.

A risk assessment should be carried out for each activity and especially when the activity:

- is outdoors
- is high risk or dangerous
- includes activities for people with disabilities or special needs.

The results of the risk assessment may mean that ratios need to be increased. Group Leaders should give written guidance to all adults and be specific regarding expectations.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.outofschoolalliance.co.uk/staffing>

## Registration, consent and other forms

Personal data is stored on the ChurchSuite app and the preference is to enter the data directly to the app. Where a paper registration form is used, the information should be entered into ChurchSuite at the earliest opportunity. If there is a need for a signed form, these will be kept in a secure cabinet on WEF premises. Records relating to a child's attendance will be kept for seven years after the last contact with that individual.

Since the introduction of General Data Protection Regulation in 2018, organisations have to be careful if they want to take photographs or film footage of young people, and take care as to how images are used. This does not mean that photographs should not be taken or filming prohibited but there are certain protocols that must be followed to comply with data protection legislation and to safeguard children and young people.

Even though the right exists to photograph anyone on or from public space, permission should be obtained of both children and adults before a photograph is taken or video footage recorded. However, it is perfectly acceptable to ask parents/carers to let Waverton Evangelical Fellowship know if they do NOT want their child photographed or filmed. There is space on group/event registration forms for such consent.

When using photographs of children and young people use group pictures and never identify them by name or give other personal details. Such details include e-mail or postal addresses or telephone numbers.

### Personal care

Every child is entitled to privacy to ensure personal dignity. 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.

- If there is a need, one of the children's workers should accompany the child to the toilet, ensuring that the door to the adjoining room is left open. The leader should check the toilet appropriate to the child's gender to ensure it is vacant. Once sure that the toilet is vacant the leader should request that the child closes the cubicle door, but doesn't lock it. The leader should remain outside the toilet and wait for the child to finish so they may accompany them back to the activity.
- If the child is not able to manage his/her buttons and zips, then the leader is

allowed to assist the child, if given permission by the child to do so. However, this should be done outside of the cubicle area, with the toilet door left open. If the leader is under 16 years of age, s/he may not take the children to the toilet, as s/he should not be left unsupervised. This also applies to occasional helpers or leaders who have not had a disclosure check completed.

- If a child is unable to go to the toilet without assistance, then it is the parents' responsibility to take the child to the toilet. The parent/carer will be called by the leader if this happens during the group session.
- If the child is wearing nappies, and these are soiled, then the parent/carer must be called to change it. Leaders may not change nappies unless they are also the child's carers.

## **Touch**

The following guidelines are intended to provide clarification for all children's leaders with regard to appropriate physical contact:

- Leaders should ensure that any contact with children is kept public. Physical contact within the context of a group can be perceived as very different from physical contact behind closed doors.
- Any physical touch between a leader and a child should be related to the child's needs, not the leaders.
- The leader should avoid any physical activity that may be thought or interpreted to be sexually stimulating to either the leader or the child/ren.
- The leader should respect that every child has the right to decide how much physical contact he/she has with others. This does not apply to exceptional circumstances when medical attention may be required.
- If the leader has to give first aid, he/she should encourage the child to do what as much as possible for themselves. However, due consideration should be given to the child's best interests and appropriate help should be given where necessary. Always complete an accident form as soon as possible after first aid has been given
- Every children's leader is a team member. Therefore, a leader should be free to help another leader by constructively challenging any action or behaviour which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.
- If a leader has any concerns about abuse, these should always be reported to the Pastor or member of Church Council.

## Transport

Drivers and vehicles must comply with all aspects of the applicable sections of the current Road Traffic Act. Drivers must have an appropriate driving licence and insurance and comply with the law in relation to seat belts, child seats and booster cushions. Further information can be found here: [www.gov.uk/highway-code](http://www.gov.uk/highway-code) Appropriate arrangements, for example regarding insurance and driving qualifications, should be made by those driving minibuses on behalf of the church. Transporting children on behalf of a church is a regulated activity and CRB/DBS registration is required. Drivers should also complete an Approved Driver form.

## Events

Separate permission forms are required for each external event detailing times, venue, nature of the event and transport arrangement. When the event is one of a series one form with all the dates will suffice.

## Working with children with special needs

Some children and young people will need extra help to feel included in the life of the Church. The Registration Form that is filled in for everyone attending the children and youth work at Waverton Evangelical Fellowship will help to identify those people.

Workers should be aware that any child or young person attending an activity who has a special need or disability may need extra help in areas such as communication and mobility (e.g., use of sign language or assistance in going to the toilet). They may behave in a non-age appropriate way. For example, a young person of 17 might behave more like a 2-3 year old, particularly in demanding cuddles or sitting on a worker's lap. So it is important to set appropriate boundaries that take their needs into account, but also protect workers from false accusation.

Once a special need or disability has been identified, the team leader is responsible for asking the child or young person and the parents/carers how the person's specific needs can be met, ensuring all workers involved with them are aware of these expectations. The number of workers needed to assist for a specific activity (e.g., to prevent injury) will be identified.

Ensure that a worker of the same gender assists if they need help with toileting.

The team leader will identify how to make the meeting place of their group accessible (e.g., ramps, toilets for the disabled, hearing loop system) and encourage integration within the group. They will also develop appropriate disability awareness including the use of different forms of communication (e.g., sign language) and language etiquette.

## Recruitment procedures

We believe that the Bible calls us to a distinctive lifestyle of discipleship. Our work with children requires us to demonstrate that, especially as we are likely to influence others. It demonstrates moral standards including an acceptance that the only appropriate place for a sexual relationship is within a marriage between a man and a woman. Whilst we recognise that as fallen people we often fall short of this ideal, we believe that grace and forgiveness are always available to those who repent. We nevertheless expect that all those working and volunteering with Waverton Evangelical Fellowship will be committed to work towards achieving such a lifestyle with God's help.

Upon an initial invitation from the church leadership, or an individual expresses an interest themselves in becoming involved in the children's or youth work, then appropriate steps will be taken in assessing the suitability for the role. This may also be applicable for other areas of volunteering in the life of the church.

The appropriate steps are as follows:

- An application form *and* self-disclosure will need to be completed by the applicant.
- Two references will also be sought in writing from persons who have known the applicant closely (not a relative) one of whom should have known the applicant for more than five years, and one external to church.
- The applicant will have a short interview with a group leader together with the Under 18s Co-ordinator to confirm the written details and assess suitability.
- The applicant will be provided with and asked to read the Child Protection Policy and to sign to say they have read and agreed to it
- The applicant must complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) form using the guidelines provided and present the disclosure notice to the U18 Co-ordinator prior to coming along to a group for the first time.
- Following successful recruitment all children and youth workers should attend a safeguarding training session.

## Handling of disclosure information

### Storage and access

Certificate information will be kept in the church safe with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties. Electronic data will be stored on the ChurchSuite app in accordance with the church's data protection policy.

### Handling

In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997, certificate information will only be passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We will maintain a record of all those to whom certificates or certificate information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

### Usage

Certificate information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

### Retention

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep certificate information for any longer than is necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep certificate information for longer than six months, we will consult the DBS about this and will give full consideration to the Data Protection and Human Rights of the individual before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding the safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

### Disposal

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any DBS certificate information is immediately destroyed by secure means, i.e. by shredding, pulping or burning. While awaiting destruction, certificate information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack). We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the certificate or any copy or representation of the contents of a certificate. However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a certificate, the name of the subject, the type of certificate requested, the position for which the certificate was requested, the unique reference number of the certificates and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

## Renewal of disclosure

### Charity Commission Requirements

The Charity Commission for England and Wales requires that where an organisation working with children or vulnerable adults applies to register as a charity, they confirm that any trustee who is either legally required, or allowed to apply for a DBS disclosure have done so. This will need to be carried out before the Charity Commission will register the organisation.

The Charity Commission believe that DBS checks are currently the best way for trustees to check whether a fellow trustee is disqualified from working with vulnerable beneficiaries.

The Charity Commission states:

“All charity trustees have a duty of care, and a duty to act solely in the interests of the charity. The Commission believes that charity trustees risk being in breach of these duties if they fail, without good reason, to carry out appropriate DBS checks when they are entitled to do so. **In some circumstances such failures may be viewed as evidence of misconduct and/or mismanagement in the administration of the charity.**”

The Charity Commission also recommends that charities should obtain a criminal record check on workers and trustees every **three years**.

## Social media and electronic communication

Social media and electronic communication covers networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, and messaging applications including email, MSM, WhatsApp, Zoom and Skype. This list is not exhaustive. The overriding priority is that the leader remains accountable in every communication sent to young people.

- **Twitter/Snapchat/Instagram**

- Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram and MSN should not be used for contacting young people or posting information about an event specifically aimed at children and young people.

- **Facebook**

- Young people under 13 should not have a Facebook account. If you discover an under 13 who has you should challenge their parents, not the young person. You can also report the account anonymously via Facebook. Contact with young people holding an account should be via a group page. Friend requests must not be sent to young people; if a friend request is sent to you, you should consult the young person's parent/s before accepting it. In-box messaging should not be done on an individual basis; always copy another leader into your messages or better still use a group page.
- As Christian leaders we have a constant responsibility to ensure that posts on our profile are **never** those which would bring the Christian faith, Waverton Evangelical Fellowship or ourselves into disrepute. This is regardless of whether it is visible to the young people in our care or not. This includes the pages we 'like' and the comments and photos we post. If 'friends' post inappropriate items which appear on your timeline they should be hidden or deleted as soon as possible. We must be, at all times, 'beyond reproach' in every respect.

- **Email**

- Email should only be used to communicate details of an event or activity and not for one-to-one conversations. Request a *wefchurch.org* email account so as not to use your personal email. Send to the whole group and copy another leader into the mail. Similarly if you receive a personal email always copy another leader into the reply. Preferably send mail via ChurchSuite if you have the facility.

- **Text and personal messaging apps**

- Text messaging may not be used for one-to-one messages. Messaging via mobile phone should be via a WhatsApp group in which at least three leaders are members
- Where on-line meeting apps eg Zoom or Skype are used for 1:1 mentoring sessions, the session should be recorded in full knowledge of both parties and the recording stored in a folder in a designated shared drive on the wefchurch Google Workspace account

## Gifts to young people

It is recognised that there are occasions when gifts or rewards will be given to young people for example at Christmas, birthdays or to reward particularly good effort or behaviour. The overriding principle is that these gifts are made on behalf of the church via the particular group and not from the individual leader. This is particularly important when the gift is given to an individual young person rather than to the whole group and such presentations must always be made in a public or group setting. The following guidelines apply when choosing the item to give.

- The item should be of sorts which encourages or supports the Christian faith of the recipient
- The item should be age appropriate
- The item will not contain any language or image which is, or could be interpreted as: attitudes which are contrary to a Christian lifestyle; offensive; defamatory; erotic or pornographic nor which in any way promotes violent or discriminatory behaviour.

## Responding to concerns

### The recognition of the signs and symptoms of abuse and/or neglect

#### Indicators of possible Physical 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 illness, inadequate care, etc.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains.
- Bruises, bites, burns, fracture 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.
- 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.

#### Indicators of possible Emotional 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.

## How to listen to a child who wants to talk about being abused

### General Points

- Show acceptance of what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound).
- Keep calm.
- Look at the child directly, maintaining eye contact as much as possible.
- Be honest.
- Tell the child you will need to let someone else know: don't promise confidentiality. Often the child will try to make you promise not to tell anyone else, before they will divulge anything.
- 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 you are always ready to listen.
- Children will often make their own choice and decision about the person they want to talk to. If a child, however, wants to talk to a particular leader, the following considerations should be made:
  - The location where the discussion will take place – the child should be offered privacy but safety considerations for both the leader and the child should be made. If the leader speaks to the child without a further adult being present, the door to the room should therefore be left open.
  - The leader should remember never to promise confidentiality, as the child may want to talk about abuse.
  - The leader should be aware of how to respond if a child does disclose abuse

### Helpful things you may say or show

- I believe you (or show 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 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.
- Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed.

### **Making notes**

Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the child talking to you), writing exactly what the child said and when s/he said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of activity). Record any details of any of the above possible indicators that you noticed. It is also wise to note the clothing being worn by the child, as this may assist in why possible indicators may not have been seen.

Record the date and time of the events and when you made the record. If you happen to make your records on a separate piece of paper then you must keep all hand written notes personally, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept safely for an indefinite period as they may be required later in an investigation.

## Reporting procedure for concerns

### Responding to allegations of abuse

Under no circumstances should the group leader carry out an independent investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Instead, the leader who has been informed of an allegation or suspicion of abuse must do the following:

Any concern should be reported as soon as possible to the Under 18's Co-ordinator who has been nominated by the Church leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with any allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse. This includes referring any suspicions or allegations on to the statutory authorities.

If the leader is unable to get hold of the Under 18's Co-ordinator, or if the suspicion in any way involves the Under 18's Co-ordinator, then the leader should report to the Pastor.

If the allegations involve both the Co-ordinator and the Pastor, then the report should be made initially to the thirtyone:eight PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Tel no 0303 003 11 11 or alternatively the leader should contact the CWAC Children & Young People's Department.

The CWAC office telephone number between 08:30 – 17:00 is 0300 123 7047 The out of hours emergency number is 01244 977277.

Under no circumstances, should the suspicions be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns raised should be made and the report kept in a secure place.

Absence of the Under 18's Co-ordinator or the Pastor should not delay referral to CWAC.

The Church Council will support the Under 18's Co-ordinator/Pastor in their role. The Church Council also accept that any information the Under 18's Co-ordinator/Pastor have in their possession will only be on a confidential, need to know basis.

Every leader has the right as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or, alternatively, to seek advice from thirtyone:eight. However, the church Council hope that church members will, where possible, use the above procedure to respond to allegations or suspicions of abuse. Each leader may, however, directly contact an outside agency, if he/she has any concerns about the way in which the

allegation is being handled by the Under 18's Co-ordinator/Pastor or if the leader has a disagreement with the Under 18's Co-ordinator/Pastor with regard to the appropriateness of the referral.

It is the role of the Under 18's Co-ordinator/Pastor to collate and clarify allegation/suspicion details and pass these details on to the CWAC Children & Young People's Department. Under Section 27 of the Children Act 1989, it is the role of Children & Young People's Department to investigate the matter.

### **Allegations of physical injury or neglect**

In a case where a child has a physical injury or symptom of neglect, it is the Under 18's Co-ordinator/Pastor duty of care to:

Contact Children & Young People's Department (or thirtyone:eight) for advice. This particularly pertains to cases of deliberate injury where the Under 18's Co-ordinator/Pastor may be concerned about the child's safety or if the child in question is afraid to return home.

Not inform the child's parents/carers unless the Under 18's Co-ordinator/Pastor is advised to do so by Children & Young People's Department.

Seek medical help if needed. The doctor will be informed of any suspicions.

Encourage parents/carers to request assistance, if concerns are less grave (e.g. poor parenting). However, such action should never place the child at risk of injury.

Offer to accompany parents/carers as they seek help from statutory or voluntary organisations, if the parent/carer is unwilling to do so independently. However, in cases of grave concern, if the parent/carer does not adhere to the recommendations made, then Children & Young People's Department should be contacted directly for further advice.

Request and follow any advice given by thirtyone:eight if the Under 18's Co-ordinator/Pastor is unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children & Young People's Department. thirtyone:eight will confirm their advice in writing.

### **Allegations of sexual abuse**

If an allegation or suspicion of sexual abuse is disclosed, the Under 18's Co-ordinator/Pastor will:

- Contact Children & Young People's Child Safeguarding Co-ordinator on 0300 123 7047 (01244 977 277 16:30 – 08:30) or Police. Under no circumstances, will the Under 18's Co-ordinator/Pastors speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Contact thirtyone:eight and follow the advice given by them if the Under 18's Co-ordinator/Pastor is unsure whether or not to contact Children & Young People's Department/Police. thirtyone:eight will confirm their advice in writing.

**I .....**

**Acknowledge the receipt of the Waverton Evangelical Fellowship Child Protection Policy and agree to operate within the policy in all my work with children and young people.**

**Signed.....Date.....**

**Please sign and date this and leave it in the policy document**