

CHILD PROTECTION GUIDE FOR CHURCH WORKERS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



A MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP OF OXFORD

We the bishops, clergy and people of the Diocese are committed to the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of all the children in our care. Many children are involved in the life of the Church, in worship and in various activities, under the guidance of a dedicated group of leaders and helpers. These adults give their time freely and generously so that our children can grow in the faith of Jesus Christ. Both children and adults need a safe and secure environment in which to work.

This brief guide is intended to assist leaders and helpers in the implementation of the House of Bishops policy Protecting All Gods Children: The Child Protection Policy for the Church of England (2004) and the Oxford Diocesan Handbook Protecting Children in the Diocese of Oxford (2005) which should be read for the complete policy, procedures and requirements for good practice.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

STATUTORY AGENCIES (PLEASE WRITE IN YOUR LOCAL NUMBERS)

Thames Valley Police (all enquiries)	0845 8 505 505
Social Services Children and Families Team	0118 944 5300
Emergency Duty Team	01344 786 543
Local General Hospital	0118 987 5111

DIOCESAN CONTACTS:

Stephen Barber, Diocesan Child Protection Officer	01865 208290
Yvonne Morris, Diocesan Children's Adviser	01865 208255
Ian Macdonald, Diocesan Youth Adviser	01865 208253

ST. SEBASTIAN'S CONTACTS:

Rev. Andrew Marsden, Children's Advocate	01344 761050
Mrs Claire Morrison, Child Protection Representative	0118 979 0830

CHILDLINE	0800 1111
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WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT A CHILD HAS BEEN ABUSED & YOU NEED TO TAKE URGENT ACTION

1. Make a telephone referral to the Social Services Department.
2. Describe the event or disclosure and give information about the child & family e.g. the child's name, age, address, telephone number and GP (if known)
3. Follow up your telephone call with a completed referral form or letter
4. Remember that the child & family should, wherever possible, be informed about and consent to the referral unless this will put the child's welfare at risk. However, if you have serious concerns, the absence of consent should not prevent a referral. The Duty Social Worker will give you advice over this if necessary.
5. Be prepared to have further discussions with the social work team or the police investigation team.
6. For out of hours referrals, call the Emergency Social Work Team

Ensure you notify your Group Leader/Child Protection Representative, and the Diocesan Child Protection Officer, Stephen Barber.

LESS URGENT SITUATIONS

If the child is not in immediate danger, if you are not sure if child abuse is involved, or if you have concerns about a child and you need someone to talk things over with, then contact either:

- your local Children's Social Services Department or
- your Group Leader/Child Protection Representative or
- Stephen Barber, the Diocesan Child Protection Officer

In all cases, make notes, as accurately as you can, of the details of the allegation, all that happens, and anything that was said, which struck you as particularly significant. Ensure you note from the church's registration records the child's name, age, address, telephone number and GP.

Remember that, under the Data Protection Act, you will need to make any notes available to the child & family if they request them.

- The notes must be kept in a safe, secure place indefinitely.
- Notify your Group Leader if you have not already done so.
- Seek support for yourself from an appropriate person within the church

HEARING A CHILD ABUSE DISCLOSURE

If a child asks to talk in confidence do not promise confidentiality – you have a duty to refer a child/young person who is at risk. Explain that you may have to get other people to help if they are being harmed.

Ensure you have as much privacy as possible but try to have another adult present when the child is speaking to you.

- Stay calm
- Listen to the child attentively
- Maintain eye contact
- Allow the child to talk but do not press for information
- Tell the child that they are not to blame for anything that has happened
- Reassure the child that they were right to tell
- Let the child know that other people will have to be told so that the abuse can stop
- Try to explain what will happen next in a way the child can understand
- Reassure the child that he or she will continue to receive support during the difficult time to come.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE – CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

All leaders and helpers should be subject to the Diocesan-approved recruitment procedures, which include:

- Submitting an application form with references
- Completing a Confidential Declaration Form
- Having a valid Enhanced Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau

One of the aims of the policy is for church groups to provide a warm, nurturing environment for children and young people whilst avoiding any inappropriate behaviour. All volunteers must work within sight of another adult.

You should:

- Treat all children and young people with respect & dignity
- Watch your own language, tone of voice and body language
- Do not use physical punishment to discipline children – this is illegal
- Always aim to work within sight of another adult.
- Ensure another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet. Toilet breaks should be organised for young children
- If known in advance, seek a parent's permission if a child or young person is to be seen on their own. Another adult must be nearby and the child or young person must know this.
- Ensure that each group includes a female helper.
- Ensure that children and young people know who they can talk to if they need to speak to someone. Display the Childline telephone number in a prominent place where children & young people can see it.

- Respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but make sure there are other adults around.
- Administer any necessary First Aid with others around.
- Record any concerning incidents and give the information to your Group Leader.

You should not:

- Invade a child's privacy whilst washing or toileting.
- Play rough physical or sexually provocative games.
- Be sexually suggestive about or to a child or young person even in fun.
- Touch a child inappropriately or obtrusively.
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child, young person or group.
- Show favouritism to any one child, young person or group.
- Allow a child or young person to involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly physical or sexual in nature.
- Give lifts to children or young people on their own or on your own.
- Share sleeping accommodation with young people.
- Invite a young person to your home alone.
- Permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying.
- Allow unknown adults access to children. Visitors should always be accompanied by a known person.
- Allow strangers to give children lifts.

Touch

Child abuse is harm of a very serious nature so that it is unlikely that any type of physical contact in the course of children and youth work could be misconstrued as abuse. One of the aims of the policy is for church groups to provide a warm, nurturing environment for children and young people whilst avoiding any inappropriate behaviour or the risk of allegations being made. All volunteers must work with or within sight of another adult.

- If any activity, for example bell-ringing, requires physical contact make sure that the young person and their parents are aware of this and its nature.
- There must be no physical punishment of any kind nor should any sanction ridicule or humiliate a child.
- Avoid physically rough games.
- Avoid unnecessary informal touching.
- Avoid taking young children to the toilet, but when unavoidable make sure another adult is informed, or organise a toilet break for the whole group.
- Young children may sometimes need comforting; make sure they are responded to warmly but with other adults around.
- First aid should be administered with others around.
- Very occasionally it may be necessary to restrain a child or young person who is harming himself or others. Use the least possible force and inform the parents as soon as possible. All such incidents should be recorded and the information given to the Parish Child Protection Representative.

All physical contact should be an appropriate response to the child's needs not the needs of the adult. Colleagues must be prepared to support each other and act or speak out if they think any adult is behaving inappropriately.

TRANSPORTING CHILDREN BY PRIVATE CAR

- Children & young people should not be transported in a private car without the prior written consent of their parents/carers. This also applies to giving lifts to and from a church activity.
- All those who drive children on church-organised activities should be over 25 and should have held a full driving licence for over two years.
- All cars that carry children should be comprehensively insured. The insured person should make sure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts during church activities. Insurance company should be informed that lifts may be given,
- All cars that carry children should be considered to be clean and in a roadworthy condition.
- All children must wear suitable seat belts. If there are no seat belts children should not be carried.
- At no time should the number of children in a car exceed the usual passenger number. There must be a seat belt for every passenger.
- If a child is known to have a disability or special need, consideration should be given whether to have a non-driving adult in the car. This adult should sit in the back, behind the driver, with the child in the seat beside him or /her.
- Any driver who has an endorsement of 6 points or more on their licence should inform the Parish Child Protection Representative.
- Any driver who has an "unspent" conviction for a drink driving offence or for Dangerous Driving or Racing on the Highway should not transport children.
- There should be a non-driving adult escort as well as the driver. If in an emergency a driver has to transport one child on his or /her own, the child must sit in the back of the car.
- To ensure that these guidelines are adhered to it would be appropriate to obtain a signed undertaking, covering the above issues, from those people who are prepared to transport children in their cars.
- Drivers who are not children's workers should be recruited for the task through the normal recruitment process.

REGISTRATION OF CHILDREN'S GROUPS

Any group that includes children who are under 8 years old and that meets regularly for more than 2 hours in any one day or for more than 6 days a year must register their group. Please contact your local branch of OFSTED for advice. Registration includes standards for workers as well as the premises and tries to ensure that children do not come into contact with unsuitable people who may be using the premises

- A Registration Form should be completed for every child or young person who attends groups.

- A Register should be kept of all children & young people's groups that meet regularly. For one-off events a list of the children should be kept.
- All Registers and lists should be retained.
- Written parental consent should be obtained for all activities that involve leaving the church premises. Full details are contained in the Diocesan Handbook: Page: 135-6 and 76-7.

RECOMMENDED STAFFING LEVELS:

The minimum required staffing levels for children's groups are given below: More help may be required if children are being taken out or undertaking physical activities.

0-2 yrs	1 person for every 3 children	1 : 3
2 – 3 yrs	1 person for every 4 children	1 : 4
3 – 8 yrs	1 person for every 8 children	1 : 8
Over 8 yrs	1 person for the first 8 children then 1 extra person for every extra 12 children	

Each group should have at least 2 adults and it is recommended that there should be at least one male and one female.

If groups are in the same room or adjoining rooms with doors open then one person per group is allowed.

Young people aged 16 & 17 may help with groups but should be supervised by an adult helper who will be responsible for ensuring good practice and that child protection procedures are followed. Young people under 16 may help with other things but should not have responsibility for children.

Additional adults may help on one or two occasions but must be responsible to an appointed worker. Thereafter they should become part of the team and properly appointed through the normal recruitment process.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Insurance, First Aid Kit and fire precautions should be checked. Carry out a Health and Safety Checklist in the Diocesan Handbook Page: 36

These are the recommended standards:

Premises

- Meeting places should be warm, well lit and well ventilated. They should be kept clean and free of clutter. Electric sockets should be covered.
- Toilets and hand basins should be easily available. Hygienic drying facilities should be provided. Roller towels should be avoided.
- Ensure you have enough space available for the intended activity.
- If food is regularly prepared for children on the premises, the facilities will need to be checked by the Environmental Health Officer and a Food Handling and Hygiene Certificate acquired. Children's packed lunches should be kept

refrigerated. Drinks should always be available.

- Groups must have access to a phone in order to call for help if necessary.
- Adults should be aware of the fire procedures. Fire extinguishers should be regularly checked and smoke detectors fitted throughout the premises. A fire drill should be carried out regularly.
- No smoking should be permitted in the areas where there are children.
- Alcohol must not be used by those who have children and young people in their care or at a time when their use could affect their care.
- Unaccompanied children and young people should not walk to or from your premises along dark or badly lit paths.
- A First Aid kit and accident book should be available on the premises. The contents of the First Aid Kit should be stored in a waterproof container and be clearly marked. Each group should designate one worker to check the contents at prescribed intervals. All staff and volunteer workers should be encouraged have some First Aid knowledge and the parish should encourage access to First Aid training. A list of first aiders in the parish should be compiled and kept available. All accidents must be recorded in the accident book.

Special needs

Welcome children and young people with special needs to the group. Try to make the premises, toilets and access suitable for people with disabilities. Ask the parent about how best to meet the child's special needs, and do not see this as the responsibility only of the child's parent. If premises are being designed or refurbished, take the opportunity to anticipate the possible special needs of future children and adults; advice is available.

OTHER ISSUES

Please see the Diocesan handbook for detailed guidance on:

Taking Children Out	Page: 38
Holiday Clubs	Page: 40
Sleeping on Church Premises	Page: 41
Seeing young people on their own	Page: 41
Making & publishing images of children	Page: 43

This booklet has been prepared by Sandy Trowles of St Mary's and St John's Bletchley and is used with permission.