

# Durham City Baptist Church

## POLICY STATEMENT ON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH

Durham City Baptist Church

- Has a programme of activities with children and young people
- Welcomes children and young people into the life of the church
- Makes our premises available to organisations working with children and young people

The church recognises its responsibilities for the safeguarding of all children and young people under the age of 18 (regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability) as set out in the Children's Acts 1989 and 2004, *Safe from Harm (HM Government 1994)* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2010)*.

As members of this church we commit ourselves to the following policies and to the development of procedures to ensure their implementation.

### **a Prevention and reporting of abuse**

It is the duty of each church member and each member of the wider church family to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children and young people and the duty of all to respond to concerns about the well-being of children and young people and to report any child abuse disclosed, discovered or suspected. The church will fully cooperate with any statutory investigation into any suspected abuse linked with the church.

### **b Safe recruitment, supervision and support of workers**

The church will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of all those working with children and young people, whether paid or voluntary. All workers will be provided with the appropriate training, support and supervision to promote the safeguarding of children.

### **c Respecting children and young people**

The church will adopt a code of behaviour for all who are appointed to work with children and young people so that children and young people are shown the respect that is due to them.

### **d Safe working practices**

The church is committed to providing a safe environment for activities with children and young people and will adopt ways of working with children and young people that promote their safety and well-being.

### **e A safe community**

The church is committed to the prevention of bullying of children and young people. The church will seek to ensure that the behaviour of any who may pose a risk to children and young people in the community of the church is managed appropriately.

### **f Responsible people**

The church has appointed Janet Claydon as Safeguarding Deacon to oversee and monitor implementation of the policy and procedures on behalf of the church's charity trustees (Deacons)

The church has appointed Christine Ashton as the Designated Person for Safeguarding to:

- Advise the church on matters relating to the safeguarding of children and young people
- Take the appropriate action when abuse is disclosed, discovered or suspected.

### **g Equal Opportunities**

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, this church undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information received.

We welcome people to serve the church on the basis of the right mix of talent, skills, character, potential and call of God, including those with criminal records.

A Disclosure is requested only after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned.

A criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to a person serving with children and young people. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.

In order to protect the confidentiality of those with criminal records we will access Disclosures through Due Diligence Checking. We invite the Baptist Union's Child Protection Advisory Panel to advise us in the appointment process when necessary, and we agree to act on their advice for the protection of children and young people.

### **h Policy and procedures**

A copy of the policy statement will be displayed permanently on the noticeboard in the vestibule. Each worker with children and young people whether paid or voluntary will be given a full copy of the policy and procedures and will be required to follow them.

A full copy of the policy and procedures will be made available on request to anyone.

The policy statement and procedures will be monitored and reviewed by the Diaconate annually before the church AGM.

The policy statement and procedures, together with a report on the outcome of the annual review, will be considered at the church AGM. The policy statement and procedures will be revised / reaffirmed at that meeting.

### **References:**

- Safe to Grow - Sixth Edition (Baptist Union of Great Britain 2011) ISBN 978-0-901472-66-3
- Safe from Harm (HM Government 1994)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2010).

## PROCEDURES

### 1 PREVENTION AND REPORTING OF ABUSE

#### 1.1 Understanding abuse and its signs and its symptoms

- All workers must be aware of the ways in which children may be harmed and the signs of abuse in Appendix 1.
- The Safeguarding Deacon must ensure that regular training for new and existing workers is provided to understand the ways in which children may be harmed and how to recognise abuse.

#### 1.2 How can children express their concerns

- The Safeguarding Deacon will ensure that details of how to contact the Designated Person for Safeguarding is displayed on a notice board.
- Group leaders will ensure that all children know how to express their concerns and that they know who the Designated Person for Safeguarding is.

#### 1.3 What to do if a child expresses a concern – LISTEN

When a child or young person talks about harm or abuse they are suffering:

- Create a safe environment in which the child or young person can share their concerns.
- React calmly so as not to further distress the child or young person.
- Listen carefully to what the child or young person has to say.
- Allow them time to say what they want.
- Don't rush or interrupt or ask more questions than you need to in order to establish whether there is cause for concern or to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- If you need to ask questions to clarify what the child is saying, always use open questions (e.g. "who is it you are afraid of?" not "is it Daddy you are afraid of").
- As soon as you believe there is cause for concern, allow the child to finish, but do not question them further. Explain that you will have to tell someone who knows what to do next.
- Accept what the child or young person says and take seriously what you are hearing.
- Reassure the child or young person, and tell them that you know how difficult it must be to confide in you.
- Tell the child or young person that s/he is not to blame and has done the right thing in speaking to you.
- Help the child or young person to understand what is going to happen next - the child should be informed that other people will need to be told about the concerns which have been shared and who those people are.
- **Do not promise or lead a child to believe that any child protection concern which affects them or other young people will be kept confidential.**
- Be aware that a child or young person may be frightened and that they may have been threatened if they tell of what has been happening to them.
- Remember that most children feel loyalty to other significant people in their lives and often find it difficult to say things to their detriment.
- Make notes as soon as possible afterwards using the child's language and recording any questions that you asked to prompt a response.

#### **1.4 What to do if abuse is disclosed or discovered**

If the behaviour of a child or young person gives any cause for concern, or an allegation in any context is made about a child or young person being harmed or the behaviour of any adult (including colleagues or members of the public) toward children or young people causes you concern:

- Do not delay.
- Do not dismiss your concerns
- Do not confront the adult whose behaviour causes the concern (although colleagues may sometimes be confronted)
- Do not take responsibility for deciding whether or not child abuse is actually taking place
- Do not act alone.
- Do not start to investigate allegations.
- Do not take sole responsibility for what has been shared or any concerns you may have.
- Do follow the church's procedures for responding to concerns, and only speak to people who need to know.

#### **1.5 Procedures for responding to concerns**

##### **Stage 1**

Where a worker has a concern about the welfare of a child/young person or the behaviour of an adult

The worker has a duty to RECORD AND REPORT

A written record must be made of the concern using the incident report form and the concern must be reported to the Designated Person For Safeguarding within 24 hours.

If a child is in imminent danger of harm a referral should be made to the police or social services without delay. See Appendix 2 for details.

##### **Stage 2**

When the Designated Person receives the report of concern

The Designated Person has a duty to REVIEW AND REFER

The report will be reviewed by the Designated Person with any other relevant information and a decision will be taken (often in liaison with others) as to what action should follow. Any formal referral to Social Services should normally be made within 24 hours of receiving the report.

If a child is in imminent danger of harm a referral should be made to the police or social services without delay. See Appendix 2 for details.

##### **Stage 3**

After the decision has been made as to what action should be taken

The Designated Person, the Safeguarding Deacon and the Minister may have a duty to SUPPORT AND REPORT

Support should be offered to all parties affected by any safeguarding concerns and where formal referrals are made reports may also need to be made to the Regional Minister, the DBS or the Charity Commission.

#### **1.6 Responding to concerns about the behaviour of fellow-workers**

Workers must be prepared to RECORD and REPORT if the behaviour of another worker may be putting children at risk.

Leaders have a responsibility to:

- Supervise their workers.
- Point out inappropriate behaviour to workers, one to one. Repeated breaches of the code of conduct should be reported to the Designated Person.
- Maintain and encourage a culture of good practice.

### **1.7 When the concern involves the Designated Person**

In this case reports should be made to the Minister.

### **1.8 When the concern involves the Minister**

The normal procedures should be followed by the Designated Person, and the Regional Minister should be informed.

## **2 SAFE RECRUITMENT, SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION OF WORKERS**

### **2.1 Procedures to be followed for the appointment of children's workers and leaders**

Children's workers will be appointed following the guidelines in Safe to Grow, section 12.2 to 12.10, as follows:

- The appointment process will be started by the group leader, a Deacon or the Minister who will give a role description to the candidate.
- Candidate completes an application form and signs a declaration that there is no reason why they should not be working with children.
- The Safeguarding Deacon or the Minister will discuss with the applicant the new role, the person's past experience with children, the church's child protection policy, and the appointment procedure. The Safeguarding deacon will ask the candidate to sign an undertaking to work within the agreed safeguarding policy and procedures.
- The Minister or the Safeguarding Deacon will take up references.
- The Safeguarding Deacon or the Minister will check the candidate's criminal record.
- The minister will store confidential information regarding application forms and references, and the safeguarding deacon will store information from the DBS.
- The Diaconate decide whether to recommend appointment of worker.
- The church meeting confirms the appointment.
- The Safeguarding Deacon or group leader provides initial training including health and safety, as necessary.

### **2.2 Appointing and supporting young leaders, volunteers from abroad and paid workers**

Young leaders under the age of 18 will be appointed following the guidelines in Safe to Grow section 12.11.

Young adult leaders of age 18 or over will be appointed following the guidelines in Safe to Grow section 12.11.

Volunteers from abroad will be appointed following the guidelines in Safe to Grow section 12.12

Paid workers will be appointed following the guidelines in Safe to Grow section 12.13.

### **2.3 Supervision of workers**

Group leaders will follow the guidelines in Safe to Grow section 12.14 and in particular they will

- Encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows all workers to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour.
- Meet with workers regularly to review and plan the work including safeguarding issues.

### **2.4 Appointment of Deacons**

- **Deacons with child protection responsibilities must have a DBS check**
- Nobody who has offended against children in the past may serve as a Deacon.
- All deacons should undergo level 2 and level 3 safeguarding training if possible.

### **3 RESPECTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE- A CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**

#### **3.1 Respecting children and young people**

- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity.
- Use age appropriate language, tone of voice and be aware of your body language and the effect you are having on the child.
- Listen well to what children say and how it is said, and observe body language.
- Do not engage in any of the following:
  - Invading the privacy of children when they are showering or toileting.
  - Rough games involving physical contact between a leader and a child, or sexually provocative games.
  - Making sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person, even in 'fun'.
  - Inappropriate or intrusive touching of any form.
  - Any scapegoating, ridiculing, or rejecting a child or young person.
  - Physical punishment to control or discipline children.
- Make sure another adult is present if, for example, a young child has soiled their underclothes and needs to be thoroughly washed.
- Do not let youngsters involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature.

#### **3.2 Guidelines to avoid being alone with children and young people**

- At least 2 adults should be present before the doors are opened for children, and two adults should remain until the last child has left.
- Do not invite a child or young person to your home alone: invite a group, or ensure that someone else is in the house. Make sure the parents know where their child is.
- As far as possible, do not be alone with a child where your activity cannot be seen. On church premises, this may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room.

##### **3.2.1 Unplanned occasions when a worker is alone with children.**

If a worker finds themselves unexpectedly in sole charge of children, the worker should follow the guidelines in Safe to Grow section 13.3:

- Assess the risks in sending the children home
- Phone another children's worker to request help.
- Make a written report of the situation for the Designated Person.

If a child asks to speak to a worker on their own, the worker should follow the guidelines in Safe to Grow section 13.3:

- The worker should consider insisting that another worker is present.
- The worker may have the conversation in a corner of a room where others are present.
- Alternatively they may meet in a room where they can be seen.
- Another adult should be in the building and the child should know they are there.
- Another adult should know the interview is taking place.
- The worker should set an agreed time limit.

The worker should not take the child to their home.

### **3.2.2 Working One to one**

A worker who wishes to work one to one with children or young people should follow the guidelines in Safe to Grow section 13.3:

- The worker should obtain permission from the Deacons and the group leader.
- The worker should keep a log of meetings, and notes of each meeting. These notes should be stored in the locked church filing cabinet.
- Group leaders should monitor the frequency and content of these meetings.
- Workers should maintain a professional distance from the young person.
- Workers should maintain appropriate confidentiality.

### **3.2.3 When offering transport to children**

When transporting children, to avoid vulnerable situations being created, follow the guidelines in Safe to Grow section 13.3.

- As far as is possible, parental consent must have been previously obtained.
- If for any reason a single child requires transport, they should be seated in the rear of the car with any other adults in the front.

## **3.3 Appropriate physical contact with children**

Be cautious of physical contact and consider whether or not touch is appropriate in any given situation.

All workers should follow the guidelines in Safe to Grow section 13.4.

## **3.4 Abuse of trust**

No worker in a group should enter into a romantic or sexual relationship with a young person under 18 in the same group.

If such a relationship exists, the worker must resign.

Workers should follow the guidelines in Safe to Grow section 13.5.

## **3.5 Electronic communication**

When communicating with children electronically, workers should follow the guidelines in Safe to Grow section 13.6.

- Children and their parents should be asked for permission for use of email addresses, mobile phone numbers etc before any communication is made, and children should not be pressurised into giving this information.
- Electronic communication should not be used with primary aged children.
- Only workers on the church's child protection register should contact children in this way.
- Communication is for information giving only, however if a child in need initiates a conversation, the conversation should be saved and a log kept.
- Personal information should be avoided.
- Clear language should be used to avoid misinterpretation.
- Communication should be done between 8.00am and 10.00pm.

### **3.5.1 Mobile phones**

- Avoid text language.
- Avoid text conversations.
- Do not retain photos of children on the phone.

### **3.5.2 Instant messaging services**

This should be kept to a minimum.

### **3.5.3 Social networking sites**

- A separate profile could be set up for the church group
- If a leader uses a personal site the worker should ensure all of its content is appropriate.
- Workers should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

## **4 SAFE WORKING PRACTICES**

### **4.1 Parental consent**

Group leaders should ensure that all children are registered consistent with Safe to Grow Section 14.2. They should also ensure that explicit consent is obtained for:

- Emergency medical treatment
- Travel arrangements when transport is being arranged
- Taking the child off church premises for occasional activities
- Overnight events
- Use of child's photograph
- Electronic communication with the child
- Authority for someone else to collect the child from a group (for a child up to age 7).

Group leaders should ensure that the consent form is completed annually and should encourage parents to keep the information up to date. They should also ensure that parents are given information about the group consistent with Safe to Grow, section 14.2.

### **4.2 Registration**

Children's attendance will be recorded each session. The group leader and a worker will indicate in the register whether or not any incidents have taken place, and any incidents will be recorded on an incident report form.

### **4.3 Health and safety**

The Health and Safety Officer should work in partnership with the Safeguarding Deacon to ensure that the church's Health and Safety policy is implemented with children in mind, consistent with Safe to Grow section 14.3.

The Safeguarding Deacon will ensure that every worker is given clear information about:

- Their individual responsibility to uphold the church's Health and Safety policy
- How to report incidents and concerns under the church's Health and Safety Policy
- Where the first aid equipment is kept and how accidents should be reported
- What procedures should be followed in the event of fire.

### **4.4 Risk Assessments**

Group leaders should do a general risk assessment termly consistent with Safe to Grow section 14.4, considering the programme and venue.

The group leader should do a specific risk assessment for activities which are out of the ordinary or activities with specific risk factors, and whenever an activity takes place off church premises, consistent with Safe To Grow section 14.4.

A copy of the risk assessment should be given to the Designated Person for Safeguarding.

The Safeguarding Deacon should ensure that all group leaders are trained to produce risk assessments in a consistent style.

### **4.5 Risk Assessments – ratios**

The ratio of staff to children should be included in the risk assessments and should be consistent with Safe to Grow section 14.5.

If, on a one-off situation, the ratios fall below the minimum necessary, the leader should:

- Determine whether it is safe to continue with the planned programme
- Cancel the event if the risk is unacceptable
- Write a report on all situations of reduced staffing and give a copy to the Designated Person for Safeguarding.

If a decision is taken to run a group regularly with staff levels below the recommended level, this must be approved by the Deacons and recorded in the Deacons' meeting minutes.

## **4.6 Risk Assessments –procedures for transporting children and young people**

### **4.6.1 When children are transported in cars**

When a children's worker gives a lift to a child, as part of an arrangement made by the children's group (not as part of a private arrangement made by parents) the group leader and driver should follow the guidelines in Safe to Grow section 14.7.

### **4.6.2 When a minibus or coach is used to transport children**

When using a minibus/coach the group leader should follow the guidelines in Safe to Grow section 14.7.

## **4.7 Outings and overnight events**

When arranging an overnight event the group leader must follow the guidelines in Safe to Grow section 14.8, and in particular:

- A special risk assessment has been carried out
- Parental consent has been obtained.

## **4.8 Welcoming children into an all-age community**

The whole church has a responsibility to safeguard children and should:

- Be alert to situations where children may be vulnerable.
- Give support to workers who have to make difficult child protection decisions.
- Know who to speak to if you suspect a child is being harmed.
- Ensure the building is safe and well lit.
- Not give children access to the church premises without a responsible adult.

If any person becomes aware of a safety issue they should report it immediately to a Deacon or the Health and Safety Officer.

### **4.8.1 Before and after services**

The whole church should be aware of its responsibility to safeguard children before and after services.

### **4.8.2 Family or all-age service**

If children attend unaccompanied, a group leader should arrange to supervise such children.

### **4.8.3 Multi-generational dramatic or musical production**

If a production is planned which will involve practises of adults and children together, the Safeguarding Deacon or Designated Person for Safeguarding will appoint a person to be responsible for the care and welfare of the children, following the guidelines in Safe to Grow section 14.9.

## **4.9 Photography**

Any one taking photographs of children on behalf of the church must follow the guidelines in Safe to Grow section 14.10.

## **4.10 Other user groups**

If other groups involving children or young people wish to use the premises regularly, the Deacons should ensure that the group has a safeguarding policy in place. The Deacons should follow the guidelines in Safe to Grow section 14.11.

## **4.11 Sharing of confidential information**

When it is necessary to discuss or share information concerning the safeguarding of children

- Email conversations should be kept to a minimum and written without identifying the individuals concerned
- Verbal conversations should take place where they cannot be overheard

- Written information should be distributed in sealed envelopes addressed to the recipient and handed over personally.

## **5 A SAFE COMMUNITY**

### **5.1 Prevention of bullying**

Group leaders will:

- Know how to identify bullying as described in Safe to Grow section 15.2.
- Involve children and young people in agreeing a code of behaviour which makes it clear that bullying is unacceptable.
- Inform children and young people how they can report incidents of bullying.
- Take allegations of bullying seriously.
- Check details carefully before action is taken.
- Investigate the bullying behaviour and stop bullying as quickly as possible.
- Inform the parents of the bully and the bullied
- Attempt to help bullies change their behaviour.
- Record all allegations and incidents of bullying together with actions that are taken

### **5.2 When a known sex offender is present**

The Safeguarding Deacon or Designated Person for Safeguarding will ensure that:

- If a sex offender wishes to attend any meetings, a written contract establishing clear boundaries, consistent with Safe to Grow section 15.3, has been discussed and agreed with the sex offender and is in place, and is enforced.
- If the contract is broken, then appropriate sanctions are considered.
- The Deacons decide who should be informed about the contract and the nature of the offence.
- The Safeguarding Deacon, the Designated Person for Safeguarding, the Minister and the Regional Minister are informed.
- If the person is subject to supervision or on the sex offenders register, the Safeguarding Deacon or Designated Person liaise with the offender's specialist probation officer.

