

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

## Purpose

To define the church's commitment to safeguard the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults involved in church activities at The Bethel or elsewhere.

## Introduction

This document is the child protection policy for the Christadelphian church in Old Trafford, often known as 'The Bethel'. It will be followed by all members of the church and followed and promoted by those in positions of leadership especially those individuals responsible for the youth activities within the church.

The purpose of the church is to serve and worship the Lord God and His son Jesus Christ, and to follow their leadership and principles for daily living.

The work of the church includes church members caring for each other and witnessing to people about the love of God. The activities undertaken bring church members into regular contact with children, and at times require certain members to take responsibility for children or young people in the absence of their parents or carers via the work of the **crèche, Sunday School, youth clubs and crèche**. This section therefore includes a policy (the Safe Care Policy) outlining safe care principles within which those activities will be undertaken. It is the responsibility of all those working with children in the church to ensure these principles are followed.

The church members with designated responsibility for child protection are **Charlotte Ramsden** and **Rachel Tanner**. Any concerns in relation to possible child protection issues should be discussed with them, whether those concerns relate to the welfare of a child at home or the conduct of a member of the church with regard to children. If a child or young person, or their parent or carer has concern about the conduct of a member of the church Charlotte or Rachel will be available to discuss it with them. Parents or young people may of course contact Social Services or the police directly if they wish to do so.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the actions of adults working with children in the church are transparent, and safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It is to be hoped that providing a framework within which to work will assist those adults by providing greater clarity and consistency for their conduct with children during the valuable work that they undertake.

This policy is written in accordance with "Working together to Safeguard Children" produced by the Department of Health in 1999.

## Principles upon which this policy is based

### **The welfare of the child or young person will always be paramount.**

- The welfare of families will be promoted.
- The rights wishes and feelings of children, young people and their families will be respected and listened to.
- Those people in positions of responsibility within the church will promote the policy outlined below within the church and ensure that all differences between individual children and young people are treated with respect.
- Those people with direct responsibility for working with children and young people will work in accordance with the policy outlined below and ensure that all differences between children and young people are treated with respect.
- The church acknowledges God's forgiveness of wrong doing and this policy in no way seeks to negate the availability of forgiveness for those who repent of any wrongdoing in relation to children. It seeks to plan for the immediate need of children who may be in need of protection and to provide a consistent approach to the treatment of children and an appropriate way to address any concerns that arise.

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### ***Immediate Action to Ensure Safety***

Immediate action may be necessary at any stage in involvement with children and families.

IN ALL CASES IT IS VITAL TO TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IS NEEDED TO SAFEGUARD THE CHILD/REN ie:

- If emergency medical attention is required this can be secured by calling an ambulance (dial 999) or taking a child to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department.
- If a child is in immediate danger the police should be contacted (dial 999) as they alone have the power to remove a child immediately if protection is necessary, via Police Protection Order.

### ***Recognition of Abuse or Neglect***

Abuse or neglect of a child is caused 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, or, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as, fabricated 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 in so far 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 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.

Individuals within the church need to be alert to the potential abuse of children both within their families and also from other sources including abuse by members of the church. There is an expected responsibility for all members of the church to respond to any suspected or actual abuse of a child in accordance with these procedures. For the majority of members this responsibility will be simply to report any concerns to the appropriate people.

For those in positions of responsibility for working with children the responsibilities may at times be more significant and they need to be prepared to act upon indicators of abuse or potential abuse.

It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parents/carers about any concerns.

However, you must not discuss your concerns with parents/carers in the following circumstances:

- where sexual abuse is suspected
- where organised or multiple abuse is suspected
- where fictitious illness by proxy (also known as Munchausen Syndrome by proxy) is suspected
- where contacting parents/carers would place a child, yourself or others at immediate risk.

### ***What to do if children talk to you about abuse or neglect***

It is recognised that a child may seek you out to share information about abuse or neglect, or talk spontaneously individually or in groups when you are present. In these situations **you must:**

- Listen carefully to the child. **DO NOT** directly question the child.
- Give the child time and attention.
- Allow the child to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make an accurate record of the information you have been given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child's presentation as well as what was said. Do not throw this away as it may later be needed as evidence.
- Use the child's own words where possible.
- Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.
- Reassure the child:
  - that you are glad they have told you;
  - that they have not done anything wrong;
  - about what you are going to do next.
- Explain that you will need to get help to keep the child safe.
- Do NOT ask the child to repeat his or her account of events to anyone.

### **Consulting about your concern**

The purpose of consultation is to discuss your concerns in relation to a child and decide what action is necessary.

You may become concerned about a child who has not spoken to you, because of your observations of, or information about that child.

It is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused, or respond to a child wanting to talk to you. This practice can help clarify vague concerns and result in appropriate action.

If you are concerned about a child you must share your concerns. Initially you should talk to one of the people designated as responsible for child protection within the church. The designated people are Charlotte Ramsden and Rachel Tanner. If one of those people is implicated in the concerns you should discuss your concerns with the other person or directly with Social Services.

You should consult externally with your local Social Services Department in the following circumstances:

- when you remain unsure after internal consultation as to whether child protection concerns exist
- when there is disagreement as to whether child protection concerns exist
- when you are unable to consult promptly or at all with your designated internal contacts for child protection and the situation appears to present an immediate or serious risk to a child

Consultation is not the same as making a referral (see following section) but should enable a decision to be made as to whether a referral to Social Services or the Police should progress.

### ***Making a referral***

A referral involves giving Social Services or the Police information about concerns relating to an individual or family in order that enquiries can be undertaken by the appropriate agency followed by any necessary action.

In certain cases the level of concern will lead straight to a referral without external consultation being necessary.

Parents/carers should be informed if a referral is being made except in the circumstances outlined on previously..

However, inability to inform parents for any reason should not prevent a referral being made. It would then become a joint decision with Social Services about how and when the parents should be approached and by whom.

**IF YOUR CONCERN IS ABOUT ABUSE OR RISK OF ABUSE FROM SOMEONE NOT KNOWN TO THE CHILD OR CHILD'S FAMILY, YOU SHOULD MAKE A TELEPHONE REFERRAL DIRECTLY TO THE POLICE AND CONSULT WITH THE PARENTS/CARERS.**

If your concern is about abuse or risk of abuse from a family member or someone known to the children, you should make a telephone referral to your local Social Services Office (see list at the end of this document).

### Information required

Be prepared to give as much of the following information as possible (in emergency situations all of this information may not be available). Unavailability of some information should not stop you making a referral.

- Your name, telephone number, position and request the same of the person to whom you are speaking.
- Full name and address, telephone number of family, date of birth of child and siblings.
- Gender, ethnicity, first language, any special needs.
- Names, dates of birth and relationship of household members and any significant others.
- The names of professionals' known to be involved with the child/family eg: GP, Health Visitor, School.
- The nature of the concern; and foundation for them.
- An opinion on whether the child may need urgent action to make them safe.
- Your view of what appears to be the needs of the child and family.
- Whether the consent of a parent/carer with parental responsibility has been given to the referral being made.

### Action to be taken following the referral

- Ensure that you keep an accurate record of your concern(s) made at the time.
- Put your concerns in writing to Social Services following the referral (within 48 hours).
- Accurately record the action agreed or that no further action is to be taken and the reasons for this decision.

### ***Confidentiality***

The named individuals should ensure that any records made in relation to a referral should be kept confidentially and in a secure place. Where appropriate, the Managing Committee should be informed.

Information in relation to child protection concerns should be shared on a “need to know” basis. However, the sharing of information is vital to child protection and, therefore, the issue of confidentiality is secondary to a child’s need for protection.

## **To Conclude**

**If in doubt, consult.**

## USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

For referrals 8.30 am to 4.30 pm Mon -Fri:

TRAFFORD COMMUNITY ADVICE TEAM	<b>912 5199</b>
TRAFFORD CHILD PROTECTION LINE	<b>912 5124</b>

For referrals at other times :

EMERGENCY DUTY TEAM	<b>912 2020</b>
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For non emergency referrals in relation to stranger abuse:

POLICE CENTRAL SWITCHBOARD	<b>872 5050</b>
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**For EMERGENCY POLICE ACTION.....999**