

Bishopdown Evangelical Church

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

(For the safeguarding of children and young people under the age of 18)

Policy statement

Bishopdown Evangelical Church recognises its responsibilities for the safeguarding of all young people under the age of 18 (regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability) as set out in The Children Act 1989 and 2004, and *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government 2018), and is committed to protecting young people and children from harm and acting in the best interests of their welfare.

As members of this church, we commit ourselves to the following:

- 1) Creating a safe environment
- 2) Prevention and reporting of abuse
- 3) Safe recruitment, support and supervision of workers

Safeguarding team

	Name	Contact Details
Designated person for safeguarding	Carol Walker	carwal@talktalk.net 07796 638468
Deputy designated person for safeguarding	Olive Martin	hmartin207@btinternet.com 07581 181548
Safeguarding Trustee/Minister	Gavin Walker	gandcwalker@talktalk.net 07799 241255

Introduction

Every youth and children's worker (both paid and voluntary) has a legal responsibility to identify and act upon concerns for the safety and well being of young people. This policy gives guidance on good practice to avoid young people or children coming to harm and details the steps you must follow if you are concerned about a young person's safety.

This policy is intended as a guide to good practice in child protection and promoting the welfare of young people at Bishopdown Evangelical church. It does not replace the Wiltshire council child protection procedures (see other resources below) which should always be followed when making a child protection referral to social services.

- A copy of the policy statement will be displayed permanently on the noticeboard in the hall.
- A full copy of the policy will be kept in the policies file on the top shelf of the right-hand cupboard in the middle room
- Each youth or children's worker will be given a copy of the relevant parts of this policy (p1-11) and will be asked to sign that they are willing to follow it
- A full copy of the policy will be made available on request to any member or person associated with the church.
- The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually at the church members meeting in September.
- Each youth or children's worker will be asked to re-read the policy annually and sign that they have done so.

Summary

1. Speak to the church's **designated person for safeguarding**, Carol Walker if you are in doubt or suspicious about anything. Tel: 01722 330423/07796638468. E-mail: carwal@talktalk.net

2. If she is unavailable, or if an allegation has been made against her or a member of her family, speak to the **deputy designated person for safeguarding**, Olive Martin. Tel: 01722 335973. E-mail: hmartin207@btinternet.com

3. In an emergency, when neither of these people are available, speak to the **Wiltshire council multi-agency safeguarding hub** on 0300 456 0108. After 5pm you can contact the **emergency duty service** on 0300 456 0100. Alternatively, you can call **Childline** for advice on 0800 1111.

4. In an absolute emergency ring 999

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Physical Abuse - Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury to a child.

Emotional Abuse - The persistent, emotional, ill treatment of a child that affects their emotional and behavioural development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or that they are given responsibilities beyond their years.

Sexual Abuse - Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This includes 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 - Where adults fail to care for children and protect them from danger, seriously impairing health and development.

Bullying - Deliberate action or hurtful behaviour by one or more people that is repeated over a period of time. It can be verbal, physical, emotional, cyber, sexual or discriminative

Spiritual Abuse - An abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into saying or doing things without respecting their right to choose for themselves

Self-harm - The intentional damage or injury to a person's own body. It is used as a way of coping with or expressing overwhelming emotional distress.

Signs of child abuse

Whilst it is not possible to be prescriptive about the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect, the following list sets out some of the indicators which might be suggestive of abuse:

- unexplained injuries on areas of the body not usually prone to such injuries
- an injury that has not been treated/received medical attention
- an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- multiple injuries over time
- a child discloses behaviour that is harmful to them
- unexplained changes in behaviour or mood (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden bursts of temper)
- inappropriate sexual awareness
- signs of neglect, such as under-nourishment, untreated illnesses, inadequate care.

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more indicators is not in itself proof that abuse is actually taking place. It is also important to remember that there might be other reasons why most of the above are occurring

1) CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Bishopdown Evangelical Church is committed to providing a safe environment for activities with children and will adopt ways of working with them that promote their safety and well-being. The church takes seriously its responsibility to ensure that the premises are safe for all who use them.

All youth and children's workers (paid and voluntary) should observe the following guidelines:

a) Be familiar with the church's health and safety policy and comply with it

Risk assessments will be carried out annually for all groups

b) Maintain safe ratios of adults to children according with the following guidelines:

Age range	Recommended minimum ratio for INDOOR activities	Recommended minimum ratio for OUTDOOR activities
0 – 2 years	1:3 (minimum 2)	1:3 (minimum 2)
3 years	1:4 (minimum 2)	1:4 (minimum 2)
4 – 7 years	1:8 (minimum 2)	1:6 (minimum 2)
8 – 12 years	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	2 adults for up to 15 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 8 additional children
13 years and over	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children

If there are special circumstances such as behavioural issues, developmental issues, disability, etc. extra adults may be required. In calculating the ratios of workers to children, young leaders who are under the age of 18 should be counted as one of the children, not one of the workers.

c) Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity.

Youth and children's workers should use age-appropriate language and tone of voice. Be aware of your own body language and invading a child's personal space. Listen well to what children are saying and never belittle or ridicule them

d) Only work one to one when you have to and only in sight of others.

Youth & Children's workers should only work alone with one young person when it is absolutely necessary and where another adult can easily observe what is going on. Try to avoid the following situations in your work:

- Giving a young person a lift home on your own.
- Inviting a young person into the church building or your home when you are alone.
- Making home visits on your own.
- Being alone with a young person in a part of the church building where no-one else can see you (e.g. in the back room).

If you need to talk to a young person in private, try to do it in the corner of a large room where other people can see you, or in a room with an open door or window through which other people can see you, or outside in the view of others.

e) Avoid working with a group of young people on your own

There should be at least two adult leaders in each children's group, and workers should not be required to work alone with a group out of the sight of another adult.

If you do find yourself on your own with children, you should:

- Assess the risk of sending the child home.
- Phone another team member or the designated person and let them know the situation.

f) Be very careful about physical contact with young people

Workers must never use any form of physical punishment (e.g. hitting or even rigorous handling or holding). If you have to physically restrain a young person to protect someone else or yourself, make it clear to the young person what you are doing and why.

Avoid rough games that involve physical contact between a worker and a child.

Avoid initiating hugs, hand-holding etc. with young people over the age of 5. If you need to comfort a child make sure you do it in the context of a group, not in private. Avoid doing anything that could be misinterpreted.

Be especially careful about physical contact with teenagers who may develop crushes or infatuations with adults. Do not encourage these and think carefully about how physical contact can be interpreted. Workers are in a position of trust and it is therefore unacceptable for them to engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop whilst the relationship of trust continues.

g) Do not invade the privacy of children when they are using the toilet.

The level of assistance with personal care (eg. toileting) must be appropriate and related to the age of the child, whilst also accepting that some children have special needs.

h) Keep a record of incidents

If any significant incidents take place a record should be made on an incident form (blank forms are kept in the folder with the first aid box in the kitchen). Enter the names of both children and adults present and anything of note which you observe, e.g. details of any fights broken up by the workers, allegations made by young people, incidences where a child is asked to leave. All workers who witnessed, heard or responded in any way should record details, and sign and date the entry. Forms should be returned to the designated person. It should be noted that allegations or suspicions of abuse should not be recorded on an incident form but on a child protection referral form (also kept in the folder in the kitchen) and given to the designated person.

i) Notify the Designated Person of any trips that take place in the name of the church

Parental permission must always be obtained for such trips

j) Arrangements for residential/camps etc.

It is good practice for the team of adults to reflect the gender of the young people being supervised all the time, but it is essential on residential. If young women or girls are staying overnight somewhere, there must be an accompanying female adult. Sleeping accommodation must be single sex, and adults must never enter dormitories or tents which are occupied by members of the opposite sex (even if they are currently empty). Leaders should not share sleeping accommodation with children.

k) Media & Photographs

Never make films or photos of children available to the media or the public without obtaining written permission from the parent or carer.

l) Data Protection

All children and young people attending a church club must have a completed registration form signed by their parent or guardian giving them permission to attend and containing emergency contact and other relevant details. Group leaders are responsible for ensuring this information is kept up to date. Personal information about children (such as addresses etc.) will be kept locked up, or password protected if it is on a computer. When disposing of any old paper records they will be shredded.

In the event of a young person turning up to a children's/youth group for the first time without a parent or guardian, the leader will ask the young person for their parent/guardian's phone number and try to obtain verbal consent for the young person to attend that particular session. The young person will be given a registration form that must be signed by a parent/guardian before the young person can attend any further sessions. If it is not possible to contact the parent by phone the leader will give the young person a registration form and will explain to the young person that it is not possible for them to attend without permission from their parent/guardian.

m) Electronic communication

Electronic communication has become enormously important and popular over the past ten years. It is an easy way to communicate with young people in particular. However, there are dangers associated with electronic communication that call for vigilance.

Parents or carers and children and young people themselves have the right to decide if a worker is to have email addresses or mobile phone numbers etc. and workers should only use electronic means of communication with those children and young people from whom appropriate consent has been given.

Direct electronic communication with children of primary school age is inappropriate and should be avoided.

Contact with older children and young people by electronic communication should generally be for information-giving purposes only. Do not share any personal information with children and young people, and do not request or respond to any personal information from the child or young person other than that which is necessary as part of your role. Electronic communication should be carried out in a group setting such as a WhatsApp group and another adult should be included in this group.

Adults should not normally make 'friend requests' of young people or accept 'friend requests' from young people. All communications with young people should be transparent and open to scrutiny

2) PREVENTION AND REPORTING OF ABUSE

It is the duty of each church member to prevent the abuse of children, to respond to concerns about the well-being of children and to report any child abuse disclosed, discovered or suspected. The church will fully co-operate with any statutory investigation into any suspected abuse linked with the church.

What to do if abuse is suspected or disclosed

If the behaviour of a child gives any cause for concern

If an allegation is made in any context about a child being harmed

If the behaviour of any adult (including colleagues and members of the public) towards children causes you concern

DO NOT

- dismiss your concerns
- Minimise what is said
- Show shock, alarm or disapproval
- Question or push for information or investigate allegations
- Offer false reassurance
- Confront the adult about whose behaviour you have concerns
- Take responsibility for deciding whether or not child abuse is actually taking place
- Act alone
- Take sole responsibility for what has been shared or any concerns you may have
- Offer total confidentiality
- Pass on information to those who don't need to know

DO

- Listen and Clarify
- Reassure and give Support
- Explain what happens next
- Take Action
- Follow the church's procedures for responding to concerns.

Procedures for Responding to Concerns

STAGE 1

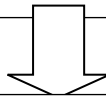
A worker/church attendee has a concern about the welfare of a child or the behaviour of an adult

The person who has the concern has a duty to

RECORD AND REPORT

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

(Standard Incident Forms are kept in the folder with the first aid box in the church kitchen)



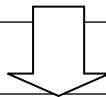
STAGE 2

The Designated Person receives the report of concern

The designated person then 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.



STAGE 3

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

*The Designated Person, the Safeguarding Trustee,
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 need to be made to the Southern Counties Baptist Association, the Disclosure and Barring Service and the Charity Commission.

Procedure for responding to concerns

STAGE 1 - RECORD AND REPORT

The duty of the person who receives information or who has a concern about the welfare of a child or young person is to:

- a) **Recognise** – that abuse may be taking place
- b) **Respond** – to the concern. It is not your role to decide whether abuse is taking place. If you have concerns always share them with the Designated Person for Safeguarding.
- c) **Record** - Within an hour, if possible, make a written **record** of what has been said or noticed, and sign and date it. Use the form available in the folder with the first aid box in the church kitchen. Include the child's name, address and date of birth. Make sure it is clear and factual and try to write down exactly what you and the young person said. Make a note of the time when it happened, the setting, who was there and what happened immediately beforehand. Keep this report locked somewhere safe or give it to the designated person for safeguarding. All disclosures of abuse by young people or children should be written up and stored in this way.
- d) **Report** the discovery or disclosure to the designated person for safeguarding as soon as possible, at least within 24 hours. Say nothing to the young person's parents or alleged abuser (even if it is a colleague or someone you know well) as this might compromise the young person's safety or an investigation by police or social services. **Don't discuss it with anyone else.**

Make a record of all the contacts made in following this procedure and keep them with your initial report. Continue to keep records of the young person (their well-being and relationships) even after any referral has been made. These records are not open to the young person.

If concerns arise in the context of a children's group, the worker who has the concern may in the first instance wish to talk through their concern with their group leader. However, such conversations should not delay a report being made to the Designated Person.

IMMEDIATE EMERGENCIES

Where a young person requires urgent **first aid or medical treatment**, this takes priority over procedures for reporting child protection concerns.

If you think the young person is in immediate **danger from an abuser**, contact the police first as they have powers of police protection under the Children Act 1989. When the emergency has been dealt with, then follow the procedure to report.

If you are not sure what to do, speak to the designated person for safeguarding, do not leave it and hope the situation will go away.

Even if the concern seems very minor, it is far better to report it and feel reassured, than to end up as part of an enquiry into the death or serious injury of a young person

STAGE 2 - REVIEW AND REFER

The duty of the Designated Person on receiving a report is to REVIEW the concern that has been reported and to REFER the concern on to the appropriate people.

- a) **Review** - the designated person may speak with other members of the safeguarding team or the minister and may consult with agencies to seek guidance and advice in knowing how to respond appropriately to the concerns that have been raised.
- b) **Refer** - the Safeguarding Team will make a decision about who the report should be referred on to. All original reports should be retained safely and securely by the Designated Person and a written record should be made of the actions taken.

STAGE 3 - REPORT AND SUPPORT

Responsibilities in stage 3 of the process are shared by the Safeguarding Team and the Minister.

- a) **Report** - whenever a formal referral is made to Social Services the Designated Person should:
 - report the referral to the Minister
 - report the referral to the Southern Counties Baptist Association (SCBA) safeguarding contact.
 - If a worker has been removed from their post or would have been removed from their post because of the risk of harm that they pose to children and young people this should be reported to the disclosure and barring service (DBS).
 - If a worker in the church has been accused of causing harm to children or young people this would be classed as a serious incident that should be reported to the Charity Commission in the annual return

A record should be kept of all safeguarding incidents and should be considered in the annual review of the church's safeguarding policy.

- b) **Support** - Once concerns, suspicions and disclosures of abuse have been addressed, the church continues to have a responsibility to offer support to all those who have been affected. It may be necessary to appoint different people to support the alleged perpetrator and the victim(s)

Allegations against staff or volunteers

It should be recognised that certain workers may be more vulnerable to allegations than others (e.g. workers doing one to one work, male workers, single people, anyone who has had a recent disagreement with a child or young person).

Bishopdown Evangelical Church will take seriously any allegation of abuse by staff or volunteers, from whatever source.

The allegation must be reported to the designated person for safeguarding immediately, using the form available in the folder with the first aid box in the church kitchen. If the allegation is against the designated person or a member of her family, it should be reported to the deputy designated person for safeguarding. The designated persons will follow the procedure previously outlined.

Whilst waiting for an outcome from the statutory authorities, the worker about whom concerns have been raised will be supervised as closely as possible, without raising suspicion.

Once the statutory authorities are involved, the church will follow their advice with regard to the next steps to take (for example, suspension of worker, putting a contract in place).

A written record of all discussions with statutory authorities or other parties should be maintained by the DPS and stored securely and confidentially, where only those directly involved in safeguarding (DPS, Safeguarding Trustee, Minister) can access them.

No information about the allegation will be shared with people in the church other than those directly involved in safeguarding; not even for prayer purposes.

When concerns are expressed about the Minister

Any safeguarding concerns involving a Minister should always be reported immediately to the Local Baptist Association safeguarding contact in addition to following the church's normal procedures. The minister should **not** be told that a concern has been raised about him.

3) SAFE RECRUITMENT, SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION OF WORKERS

1) Recruitment

As a church, we are committed to safer recruitment practices. When recruiting both paid and volunteer church workers, the following process will be applied:

- a) Prospective youth and children's workers will be asked to fill in and sign an application form giving two references and a declaration of previous criminal convictions.
- b) They will have an interview with the designated person for safeguarding or someone designated by her if considered necessary. Since we are a small church and know each other well a formal interview will not always be necessary.
- c) Two satisfactory references (at least one should be from outside the church) should be obtained
- d) A DBS check will be completed
- e) The church leadership must approve the appointment
- f) All youth and children's workers will receive an introductory talk on safeguarding issues and be made familiar with BEC policies and procedures by the designated person for safeguarding. They will be required to complete the BUGB level 2 Excellence in Safeguarding training as soon as is reasonably possible. Group leaders will be required to complete do level 3. All workers will also receive a copy of p1-11 of this policy and the health and safety policy which they will be required to sign to confirm that they have understood and agree to comply with them.

It is the designated person's responsibility to ensure that these steps are taken for each appointment.

Note: Under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, it is an offence for anyone disqualified from working with children to knowingly apply, accept or offer to work with children at risk. It is also a criminal offence to knowingly offer work with children to an individual who is so disqualified or to knowingly allow such an individual to continue to work with children.

2) Training

It is important that all workers understand our church's agreed safeguarding procedures and attend either BUGB Excellence in Safeguarding training or equivalent level training (e.g. through work or other voluntary organisation) at least once every four years. Other training will be given as needed. The Designated person will keep a record of training undertaken by all staff and volunteers.

Each worker will be supervised and supported by a designated leader in their group where possible.

3) Young leaders under 18 years of age

In law young leaders under the age of 18 are children and cannot be treated as adult members of a team. They must be closely supervised by an adult leader at all times, and never given sole responsibility for a group of children. When considering ratios of staff to children the young leader needs to be counted as a child, not a leader. Volunteers under the age of 18 must have written permission of their parents.

4) Disclosure and barring service checks (DBS)

DBS checks are carried out using the provider Due Diligence checking limited which notifies us by e-mail once a disclosure has been issued. The BUGB Safeguarding Team at Baptist House is responsible for handling blemished Disclosures and will carry out a risk assessment of the information contained and will notify us if the applicant is cleared to work in the role applied for. If an applicant is deemed unsuitable to work in a role, or should work within particular conditions, we will be notified of the relevant information. This information will only be seen by those who need to have access to it (the designated person and the church leaders) and will be kept securely only for as long as is necessary and then destroyed.

All youth and children's workers require a DBS check which should be rechecked every 3 years. The designated person is responsible for ensuring this happens.

We will accept a disclosure if the applicant is already on the update service. They will be required to provide their original certificate and documentary evidence of their identity.

When a known offender is present in the church

The church should be a community that is welcoming and open to all. It is a place for people who have failed and for people in need. Those who have abused children in the past are to be included in this welcome. However, the gospel imperative to welcome the sinner needs to be set alongside the gospel imperative to protect children.

Where someone attending the church is known to have abused children, then whilst extending friendship to the individual, the church in its commitment to the protection of all children will meet with the individual and discuss boundaries that the person will be expected to keep. It may be appropriate to draw up a formal contract between the church and the person who has abused. This might also state that the abuser or alleged abuser (until such time as the allegation has been cleared or proven) must decline offers of hospitality from church members where there are children present in the home.

OTHER RESOURCES

The designated person for safeguarding has electronic copies of the following, which are available to all Youth and Children's Workers at their request:

Baptist Union of Great Britain – Model safeguarding policy and procedures 2017

Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children's Act 2004 (2007) – HM Government

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) – HM Government

What to do if you're Worried a Child is being Abused (2015) – HM Government

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused or neglected - flowchart (2020) – Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership

Allegations against adults who work with children – flowchart (2020) – Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership

Useful information can also be obtained from the following websites:

The Wiltshire procedures for Child Protection and referrals at:

<http://www.wiltshirescb.org.uk/professionals/local-policies-and-guidance/>

Wiltshire safeguarding vulnerable people partnership at: <https://wiltshiresvpp.org.uk/>

Wiltshire children's services at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/children-young-people-contact>

[The Baptist Union of Great Britain - Safeguarding](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/220183/Safeguarding.aspx) at:

<http://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/220183/Safeguarding.aspx>

The following may be able to give advice:

Keith Baldwin (Safeguarding advisor, Southern Counties Baptist Association)

Phone: 07712 508779 <https://www.scba.org.uk/Groups/349113/Safeguarding.aspx>

Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) 0845 120 4550

Wiltshire Council:

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 0300 4560108 or mash@wiltshire.gov.uk

Out of hours/Emergency Duty team 0300 4560100

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) 0300 4560100

Police Child Protection Investigation Team 101

Childline 0800 1111

This policy was accepted at a church member's meeting on: 4th October 2023

Updated September 2022

Signed: _____ Position: _____

Appendix 1 – Retention of safeguarding records

The following guidelines give indications of good practice in terms of the retention of specific types of safeguarding information.

Category	Type of Record	Retention Period
Allegations/concerns/ risk assessments/ safeguarding contracts	Records of safeguarding incidents, allegations or concerns	75 years after last contact with the individual concerned
	Records that relate to safeguarding concerns/allegations about church workers (paid or voluntary)	75 years after employment / role ceases
	Risk assessments / safeguarding contracts concerning known or alleged offenders	75 years after last contact with the individual concerned
Events / activities specifically for children and young people / adults at risk (where no safeguarding incidents or concerns raised)	Registers / records of events or activities*	At least 3 years after the event
	Parent / carer consent forms*	At least 3 years after the form has been completed
	First Aid / accident forms*	At least 3 years after the form has been completed
	Health and safety risk assessment*	At least 3 years after the risk assessment has been completed.
Employment	Minister personnel records where there are safeguarding allegations / investigations, regardless of the findings	75 years from the date of the minister's death
	Personnel records relating to church workers whose role involves contact with children and adults at risk	75 years after employment / role ceases
Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks	Record of a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check being undertaken for a church worker (paid or voluntary)	75 years after employment / role ceases (Please see BUGB Guide to DBS Checks for more information on what to keep)
	Record of a minister's DBS check history	75 years from the date of the minister's death
Discipline	Record of a church worker's (paid or voluntary) disciplinary procedure relating to safeguarding allegations / offences	75 years after employment / role ceases
	Record of a minister's disciplinary procedure relating to safeguarding	75 years from date of the minister's death

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	allegations / offences	
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*Please check with your church insurer, who may require you to keep these records for a longer period.