

## Summary

### Safeguarding Policy/Procedures Children/Young People

Brandon Baptist Church (2018)

## Principles

**Responsibility** - It is the responsibility of every adult to take every effort to prevent the physical, sexual, emotional or spiritual, organised abuse of or the neglect of children and young people and to report any actual or suspected abuse that comes to light. When working with children/young people you're in a good position to do this.

**Respect** - It is right to respect the wishes of adults and children/young people to keep private information private. However, it is absolutely necessary to breach confidentiality where a child/young person is deemed to be at risk of harm (see section 2 Policy and Procedures).

**Confidentiality** - In order to maintain confidentiality as far as possible however, the concerns should only be discussed with the leader of the activity you're involved in, the Child Advocate, Advisor or Minister of Brandon Baptist Church

(see p14 Policy and Procedures).

**'Duty of Care'** - Workers have a legal 'duty of care' to the children/young people who are attending their activity. In order to meet this duty, there are certain expectations regarding levels of supervision and ways of behaving towards children and young people.

## Understanding Abuse

Abuse of children/young people may be **physical, emotional, sexual, neglect, spiritual or organised abuse**. Be alert to signs that could indicate abuse and check them out. Don't make assumptions and don't ignore them - genuine enquiry regarding how a child is/how they may have got a mark/why they seem so upset or tired or hungry in a non-threatening and child-friendly way is part of caring and may alleviate concerns or heighten them.

(see Section 2 of Policy/Procedures)

## Safe Practices

**Alone** - Where possible, ensure that you are not alone with a child/young person but when this might be necessary another worker should be informed and be available in the building.

Children/Young people under 16 years of age should not be left in charge of any children of any age. Nor should children or young people attending a group be left alone at any time.

**Boundaries** - All workers should maintain appropriate boundaries, and ensure that their relationships with children and young people are not a way of meeting their own needs.

**Physical contact/touch** - Physical contact between adults and children/young people can be quite healthy and encouraged in public settings but should not occur where an adult is alone with a child/young person. For example-

- Keep everything in public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors
- Touch should be related to the child's/young person's needs, not the worker's
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally be initiated by the child/young person rather than the worker
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be construed as, sexually stimulating to the adult or child, e.g. fondling, touching private parts of the body, etc.
- Do not let play fighting happen even in the context of an organised activity
- Children/young people are entitled to determine the degree of physical contact with others except in exceptional circumstances, i.e. when young children needs urgent medical attention. (Disposable latex gloves should always be used when dealing with broken skin or bodily fluids.)
- Children under the age of 5 should be accompanied to the toilet with their parent. Over this age workers can provide general supervision and basic assistance if requested, such as with fastenings but no more.
- Any form of physical response to misbehaviour is unlawful unless it is by way of restraint. On those occasions when it proves necessary for workers to restrain a child or young person physically to prevent him/her from inflicting injury to others or damage to property, only the minimum force necessary should be used. Any such incident should be logged with the Safeguarding Officer (confidentially). Accounts from those who witnessed the incident should also be recorded.

### **Responding to concerns about a child (see section 3)**

If a child directly discloses abuse to you it is important you:

- Take seriously what the child says (however unlikely the account may sound)
- Keep calm
- Look at the child directly and do not look surprised or shocked
- Be honest
- Reassure the child they are not to blame for the abuse

- Be aware that the child may have been threatened not to say anything
- Never push for information - your role is not to investigate the matter; it is to listen to what the child wants to tell you and if possible get enough information to clarify whether abuse is being alleged, by who, when was the last time and if the child safe to go home
- Let them know you will need to tell someone else - don't promise confidentiality
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what might happen
- Immediately refer the matter to the leader of the activity who may need to consult with the Safeguarding Co-Ordinator or Advisor. Do not wait until the end of the session to share the concerns because the sooner they can be considered, the easier it is for the most appropriate action to be taken.
- Record the disclosure on the Recording Concerns form as soon as possible which should be within one hour. If you do not have the right form, still make notes and date them, but transfer to the correct form when this is possible. All notes, whether rough or not should be kept as they could be used as evidence in a criminal investigation (p13).

It is generally good practice to talk about concerns regarding a child with the parent and the child to offer support as necessary. However, in the cases where significant physical injury or sexual abuse by a family member is alleged, DO NOT talk to the parent until advice has been sought by the Advocate or Minister and/or Children's Service/Police. This could hinder getting to the truth of the matter.

**Where there are lower level concerns or no direct disclosure**, discuss this in the first instance with the activity leader. They may have additional information regarding the child which could affect how your concerns are viewed.

**It is important to log concerns, whether minor or significant in written form** using a "Recording Concerns" form. (see appendix B Policy & Procedures) This is important to track frequency or patterns and may, if they persist, highlight the need for a referral to Children's Services.

### **Social Networking**

In order to protect both young person and volunteers by avoiding over familiarity by the child or young person with the volunteer's life and to help to avoid the forming of inappropriate relationships between an adult and a child Brandon Baptist Church asks:

Volunteers who are adults not to accept children or young people they are

working with as a 'friend' on social networking sites. They should only accept adults (18 and over). Young volunteers (16 - 18 year olds) will have social network 'friends'. It is recommended that they do not accept children and young people they are working with unless they are their friends in the real world. They should definitely not accept a child or young person they are working with below the age of 13 years.

When a Young Volunteer reaches the age of 18 they should aim to only have as social network 'friends' those who are also over 18, we recognise that this may take a little time but by the time they are 25 years this should be the case.

### **Use of Mobile Phones**

Texts and calls to children and young people from volunteers should only be made in connection with organisational or safety issues. For example the leader of a group needs to organise a session or is concerned about the safety of a child or young person.

Mobile numbers should only be held by the leaders of the group with the permission of parents/carers

**If an allegation is made against somebody working with children**, then the matter should be passed to the Activity Leader (unless this person is implicated in which case go straight to the Safeguarding Officer or Advisor or in their absence the Minister. There are procedures for dealing with allegations against those working with children and this needs to be taken seriously, however unlikely the account seems to be.

Whilst workers are encouraged to refer matters in the first instance to the Activity Leader, if you don't feel that appropriate action is being taken by them or the Safeguarding Officer or Advisor or Minister then you have a right as a member of the public to refer the concern to Children's Services or the Police MASH Team (Southwark - **0207 525 1921**) The NSPCC Helpline is 0808 800 5000 can also give advice.

### **Support for the worker**

Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed. However, please do not divulge specific information regarding the child/young person or the case.