

# Draft Policy for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

Updated May 2015

Amendments in red are following change in legislation January 2013

Updates in green May 2015 and throughout document adding “vulnerable adults” as appropriate

## Introduction

This document is in three parts:

- A. Draft Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Document
- B. Guidance notes for Youth Leaders and Sunday School Teachers
- C. Appendix of Risk Assessment Templates

## A. SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE GROUPS POLICY

This document is the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Policy specifically in respect of children or vulnerable Adults

of the Christadelphian Ecclesia in \_\_\_\_\_

It has been discussed with parents, youth leaders and Arranging Brethren, and was adopted at an Ecclesial Members’ Meeting on \_\_\_\_\_

It has been created because of the concerns of the members of the ecclesia that children and vulnerable adults should be properly cared for, guided and protected, and that the ecclesia itself should act responsibly in these matters. All those involved with youth work and ecclesial welfare will be provided with a copy of it and will be familiar with its contents.

### Some definitions of terms

- A vulnerable Adult is defined in Appendix 2
- The terms ‘children’ and ‘young people’ will be taken to be synonymous, and to include anyone under the age of 18.
- A ‘youth activity’ refers to any activity arranged under the auspices of the ecclesia in which children are supervised in the absence of their parents; ‘youth leaders’ are those in a position of leadership during these activities.
- The pronoun ‘he’ should be taken to include those of either sex.
- ‘Parents’ should be taken to mean anyone in a position of parental responsibility, guardian or official Carer
- The use of the word ‘should’ does not indicate that the action is optional; it means that youth leaders will do their utmost to carry it out.
- “Safeguarding Persons” is the recognised term used in context of Safeguarding Children and vulnerable adults and to avoid possible confusion, especially in an emergency, it is the term used in this document.

### Statement of Intention

- the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount
- no child or group of children or vulnerable adult will be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs

- all children and vulnerable adults without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs
- the policy is reviewed, approved and endorsed by the Trustees annually or when legislation changes
- this policy applies to all members and volunteers who have access to children or vulnerable adults
- children and parents are informed of the policy and procedures as appropriate
- all concerns, and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously by members and volunteers and responded to appropriately - this may require a referral to children's social care services, the independent Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for allegations against members and other volunteers, and in emergencies, the Police.
- a commitment to safe recruitment, selection and vetting.

## **B. GUIDANCE NOTES FOR YOUTH LEADERS AND SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS AND WELFARE TEAMS**

It is sad to have to discuss this subject in the context of ecclesial life, but it has to be recognised that abuse has happened in the past, in situations in which no problem was suspected.

Because brothers and sisters share a faith in the Lord Jesus does not mean that they are immune to temptations. It also has to be recognised that the very nature of ecclesial life, with the close and trusting relationships that may develop, creates an environment in which temptations can arise. A failure to act appropriately may not only damage those involved but may harm the reputation of the ecclesia, the community and, more seriously, the name of the Lord Jesus.

### **1. A SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

#### Ecclesial Responsibility

Youth activities should be regarded as the responsibility of the ecclesia as a whole, not just of youth leaders.

- those who work with children and young people should be carefully selected, trained, supported and their work reviewed by the ecclesial committee (arranging/managing brethren).
- Ecclesias and other organizations such as Youth Camps should consider whether to apply for checks for all who work with children and young people that are available through the Disclosure and Barring Service (the former Criminal Records Bureau and Independent Safeguarding Authority combined). This will provide a level of reassurance to those with parental responsibility that their children are being properly cared for. The major benefits of these checks will be lost if not carried out for ALL those involved in children's activities. More information can be obtained from the Sunday School Union's Lead Counter Signatory Gill Holden ([gill.holden@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:gill.holden@blueyonder.co.uk))
- one or, preferably, two Safeguarding Persons should be appointed to watch and advise on Safeguarding Children matters. See later for more information.
- Children and young people should have their attention drawn to the expectation that they will be cared for and be safe while engaging in activities organized for them. This could be through a poster, verbal statement and/or a written statement. Suggested wording is given in Appendix 1

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- buildings and equipment should be assessed for safety, especially with regard to fire, and maintained in a safe condition. Evacuation procedures should be agreed and displayed. Ensure that access to the building is safe and well lit.
- Public Liability insurance and possibly Legal Expenses insurance should be taken out by the ecclesia and regularly reviewed.
- all vehicles and drivers must be appropriately insured and fit for the task and the information recorded.
- procedures should be agreed for responding to illness or accident. An accident log should be used to record all significant incidents. A first aid kit (regularly checked) kept in an obvious place. Ideally a trained first aider should be present.

### General Considerations for youth work

In general, youth leaders should take an attitude of responsibility for the well-being of the children in their care. It is suggested that all youth leaders be provided with a copy of the 'Youth Leader's Handbook' published by the Christadelphian Sunday School Union, and be familiar with its contents, and wherever the safety of children is concerned should try to follow to follow its guidance.

Attendance records should be maintained with parents' names, addresses and telephone numbers recorded and kept available. It is recommended that there be a telephone on the premises.

Leaders should be in attendance before children arrive and remain until after they leave.

Staffing and supervision ratios need to be heeded and, for day or residential trips, there should be consent forms signed by parents. Parents should be given a programme of events.

A documented Risk Assessment should be maintained for all activities held away from the premises.

### **2. SUGGESTED GOOD PRACTICE.**

Children and vulnerable Adults have a right to feel safe, to be understood and to say 'No' to doing something that they feel is wrong.

Parents should recognise the responsibility of youth leaders, should cooperate with them, and should encourage children to treat them with respect.

- DO treat all children and vulnerable Adults with respect and dignity befitting their age.
- DO provide an example you would wish young people to follow.
- DO ensure that parents know where their child is.
- DO get parental permission for every youth activity: games in the park, picnics, rambles, outings.

For special events, swimming, ice-skating, orienteering, mountain trekking, canoeing, or any other adventure type activity it is essential to obtain consent in writing. Template letters are available in the Youth Leader's Handbook' published by the Christadelphian Sunday School Union

- DO in the event of an accident, inform the parents and take all necessary steps to safeguard the child.
- DO take special care if children and vulnerable Adults need to be helped with the toilet.
- DO be alert to the issue of bullying and deal with it promptly and sympathetically.

- DO provide opportunities for children or young people or vulnerable adults to talk about any concerns they have.
- DO remember that caution is required in sensitive moments, such as when dealing with bereavement, bullying, abuse, etc.
- DO consider carefully arrangements for residential holidays, camps, weekend studies and whether adults should share sleeping accommodation with children. This should be avoided if at all possible, but may be appropriate with very young children, say for parents, or if the activity is based on a youth hostel where single sex sleeping is customary.
- DO remember that another person can misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned.
- DO NOT use physical discipline at any time.
- DO NOT engage in any inappropriate physical or verbal contact.
- DO NOT let youngsters involve you in excessive attention seeking, crushes or inappropriate language or behaviour.
- DO NOT show favouritism.
- DO NOT invite a child or young person or vulnerable adult into your home alone nor visit them alone.
- DO NOT where possible, carry a child or young person or vulnerable adult alone in your car, but where this is unavoidable, arrange for them to sit in the back. If possible, make sure that the parents know of this arrangement.
- DO NOT meet alone with a child, or vulnerable adult where others cannot always see you. If possible, keep the door open and other people around.

### **3. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SAFEGUARDING PERSONS**

- Acquaint yourselves with the current regulations and implications of the Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004, Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 and 2013 and The Children and Families Act 2014 and advise the arranging brethren if action should be taken in order to comply.
- See that every teacher and youth leader and welfare team member has their own copy of the Guidelines.
- Be available to give advice on the matters concerning the safety and welfare of children and young people, or vulnerable adult and protective measures for teachers and leaders and Welfare team members
- Carry out an annual review of the care provided for children and vulnerable adults by the ecclesia, in particular the working of this policy, to which all interested parties should be invited
- Be the first point of contact in the event of any problems occurring during a youth activity.
- Inform and consult with the Recording Brother.
- Act as the persons who, in the event of an accusation, would receive information and support the informant (child or adult) in reporting the matter to the Social Services, in accordance with the Safeguarding Children Guidelines.

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- Each nominated person should familiarise themselves with the procedures of their Local Authority. This should include Child protection referrals processes, and contact details also the details of the local Safeguarding Children Board (SCB) and name and contact details of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (and understanding of the LADO role)
- The NSPCC's National Safeguarding Children Hotline is 0808 800 5000.
- The Safeguarding Person is NOT the person whom children are supposed to tell, nor the one who investigates concerns or determines outcomes.
- It is suggested a deputy be appointed, whose responsibility is to act if for any reason the Safeguarding Person is not available. The two Safeguarding Persons should not be closely related. The names of the Safeguarding Persons should be published each year in the ecclesial address roll, and youth leaders should be familiar with their contact details.

### 4. SAFE FROM HARM

Having taken all possible precautions within the ecclesia and its activities for the children's and vulnerable adults' safety, it needs to be acknowledged that children and young people and vulnerable adults may be significantly harmed within their homes, their schools, the community or even within the ecclesia.

Harm, under section 31(9) of the Children Act 1989 is defined as "ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development". Section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 added to this definition: "... including for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another". To decide whether harm is significant, the health and development of the child is "compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child" (Children Act 1989).

#### TYPES OF ABUSE

**NEGLECT:** where adults fail to care for children and vulnerable adults and protect them from danger, seriously impairing their health and development.

**PHYSICAL:** where injury is caused non-accidentally, either maliciously or as a result of over-chastisement. Includes the fabrication of symptoms or inducement of illness

**SEXUAL:** where adults (and sometimes other children) use children or vulnerable adults to satisfy sexual desires.

**EMOTIONAL:** where children or vulnerable adults don't receive love and affection, may be frightened by threats or taunts, or are given responsibilities beyond their years. Includes the impact of witnessing domestic violence

#### SIGNS OF ABUSE

These signs may indicate abuse, but do not jump to conclusions. There could be other explanations. Their presence does not necessarily mean a child or vulnerable adult is suffering abuse and their absence does not mean they are not!

So a child or young person or vulnerable adult may:

- have injuries – bites, burns, bruises, fractures – for which there are either no explanations\or the explanations offered raise are not consistent with the injury.
- be unresponsive, nervous, watchful, lethargic, or, conversely, be demanding of attention and\aggressive, stealing or lying.

- behave like a much younger child.
- harm themselves.
- confuse affection with sexual behaviour, or seek to have relationships with adults which are\secretive.
- display sexualised behaviour through their actions, words, play, and writing or appear to\have sexual knowledge beyond their age.
- look ill cared for and unhappy, become withdrawn and 'depressed'.
- run away.
- Act in a way that is markedly different from their normal behaviour.

A child or vulnerable adult showing any of these signs is in need of support, but it could be as a result of a number of different emotional upsets, such as bullying, bereavement or severe illness in the family; abuse is only one possibility. Do remember, however, children and vulnerable adults are rarely abused by a stranger, so if abuse is occurring it is likely to be by someone known to, and who has control over, the person. The child or young person or vulnerable adults may choose to talk to you about what is happening to them.

#### **5. HOW TO RESPOND TO A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON OR VULNERABLE ADULT WHO APPROACHES YOU**

- Allow them to speak in their own words.
- Listen but do not push for information nor ask leading questions. At this stage, it is not important that you have the full story.
- Early in the discussion, make it clear to the child or young person or vulnerable adult that you will need to tell someone else. Do not promise to keep any secrets.
- Accept what the person says. Reassure them they were right to tell you and that they are not to blame.
- Offer the child or young person or vulnerable adult your continued support and friendship.
- As soon as possible after talking with the child or young person or vulnerable adult ensure that you make notes of your discussion, where possible writing down exactly what the person said. Remember to record the dates and times of events and keep your notes in a safe place.
- Be aware that the child or young person or vulnerable adult may have been threatened.
- **MAKE SURE THE CHILD OR VULNERABLE ADULT IS SAFE.**
- The next step should be to speak, as soon as possible, to the Safeguarding Person, unless he is implicated or unavailable, in which case the deputy should be consulted. There should be a brief discussion of the facts of the case, to attempt to exclude any false allegation. There should be no failure to act simply because the story seems improbable, and anyone hearing allegations has a duty to take responsibility if the Safeguarding Person is unable or unwilling to act appropriately.

#### **6. HOW TO RESPOND IF YOU HEAR FROM SOMEONE ELSE ABOUT A CHILD/YOUNG PERSON OR VULNERABLE ADULT BEING HARMED**

This is an extremely difficult situation but one which cannot be ignored.

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- Remember every single concern about a child or young person or vulnerable Adult being significantly harmed should be taken seriously, whoever expresses the concern, be it from an adult or another child/young person.
- Tell the informant at an early stage that you will have to share the information.
- Ensure that you listen carefully to what you are being told and ensure you have heard correctly. Take notes at the time or immediately afterwards.
- Encourage the person who is expressing concerns to talk to the Safeguarding Person.
- If the person sharing the concerns is unwilling, or feels unable, to pass on information to the Safeguarding Person then you should do so and inform the person that you have taken this action.
- Warn them also that what they have told you may have to be referred on to a Safeguarding Children Agency.
- Do not under any circumstances question either the alleged victim or the alleged abuser.

## 7. WHAT TO DO NEXT

If you have been told by the child or young person or vulnerable Adult that abuse has occurred, or if you have concerns purely from your own or others' observations, then certain actions need to be taken. Speed is of the essence.

In any dealings with welfare agencies or with parents the Safeguarding Person, and the individual to whom suspected abuse has been reported, should work closely together; the following paragraphs describe the actions they should take.

Their role is not to investigate what may be a criminal offence, but if a welfare agency is contacted they will need to pass on information, so it is important that notes should be taken and kept safe.

If serious physical or sexual abuse is suspected, The lead Safeguarding Children Agencies are the Social Services, the NSPCC and the Police and they recommend that:

- In cases where there is a serious allegation of abuse, particularly sexual or physical, made by a child (section 6) or a third party (section 7), then, in the interests of the safety of the child, the matter should be reported to an official agency such as Social Services or the NSPCC by the person who received the information. If for any reason these agencies are not available, and the allegation is of a recent criminal act, the matter should be reported to the police.
- This should be done promptly, bearing in mind that delays are unhelpful and may result in greater suffering to the individual concerned.
- You do not need evidence before referring to a Safeguarding Children agency. It is sufficient to have reasonable cause for concern.
- The agency will require clear information such as names, age of the child or young person, or vulnerable Adult, addresses, nature of the complaint and where you received the information.
- the person against whom the allegation is being made is not told, because this could lead to the child or young person or vulnerable Adult being threatened or harmed and crucial evidence being destroyed.
- If it is obvious that the child's parents are not involved, they should be contacted, but otherwise the allegation should not be mentioned to them or to anyone else; abuse is most commonly carried out by close relatives, and is often difficult to prove.

- It may be preferable the parents of the child are not told until there has been consultation with, and clearance by the Safeguarding Children agency.
- Individuals should not attempt to investigate; this may have the effect of hindering an official investigation and may indirectly harm the child.
- If it is not clear whether an allegation is 'serious', advice should be sought from Social Services or the NSPCC.
- If an ecclesia or other organisation provides a regulated activity, **as defined by the Protection of Freedoms Act, the 'employer'** has a legal duty to refer information about individuals who may pose a threat to vulnerable groups to the **Disclosure and Barring Service**. This could be in a situation where they have prevented that person from commencing or continuing to work with children.
- **People who provide a regulated activity are those who:**

Teach, train, instruct, provide advice/guidance on wellbeing, care for or supervise children, or drive vehicle only for children at least once a week, four or more days in a 30 day period or overnight and are unsupervised.

Or

Provide personal care, including assisting with eating, drinking or toileting, because of a child's or vulnerable Adult's age, illness or disability, even if done just once (as part of responsibilities as a youth leader).

Or

Are involved in day to day supervision of individuals carrying out any of the above.

In other situations

- In some situations, if the concerns are not as great and if the law has not been broken, it may be appropriate to speak with the parents and suggest that help or advice be sought from brothers and sisters in the ecclesia, the Christadelphian Support Network or child care agencies. With older young people it is important in a case such as this to bear their wishes in mind. Great care must be exercised when considering not to pass concerns to a statutory agency, particularly as there is a natural tendency to minimise risk and avoid difficult decisions. If there is any doubt a Safeguarding Children agency, the local Social Services Department or the NSPCC, should be contacted for advice.
- Families, parents as well as children, should be supported as much as possible in these circumstances in order to help them ensure the wellbeing of children.

## **8. KEEPING IT IN MIND**

A check list may be helpful

- Safeguarding Children or vulnerable Adult should be an annual item on AGM agendas.
- Safeguarding Persons should be an annually appointed ecclesial office.
- A Health and Safety audit for the meeting room should be carried out annually.
- Public Liability Insurance should be reviewed annually.
- The First Aid Kit should be kept in a prominent place and its contents checked regularly.

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- The Accident Book should be kept in a prominent place.
- The supply of Parental Consent Forms and Risk Assessment forms for activities should be kept stocked.
- The attendance Register should be readily available.
- You do not need evidence before referring to a Safeguarding Children agency. It is sufficient to have reasonable cause for concern.
- This should be done promptly, bearing in mind that delays are unhelpful and may result in greater suffering to the child.
- The agency will require clear information such as names, age of the child or young person or vulnerable Adult, addresses, nature of the complaint and where you received the information.
- the person against whom the allegation is being made is not told, because this could lead to the child or young person being threatened or harmed and crucial evidence being destroyed.
- If it is obvious that the child's parents are not involved, they should be contacted, but otherwise the allegation should not be mentioned to them or to anyone else; abuse is most commonly carried out by close relatives, and is often difficult to prove.
- It may be preferable the parents of the child are not told until there has been consultation with, and clearance by the Safeguarding Children agency.
- Individuals should not attempt to investigate; this may have the effect of hindering an official investigation and may indirectly harm the child.
- If it is not clear whether an allegation is 'serious', advice should be sought from Social Services or the NSPCC.



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SOURCE MATERIAL	published by:
National action plan to tackle child abuse linked to faith or belief	<a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/.../DFE-00094-201">www.education.gov.uk/publications/.../DFE-00094-201</a> .
<a href="http://www.gov.uk/crb-criminal-records-bureau-check">www.gov.uk/crb-criminal-records-bureau-check</a>	Name to be updated shortly
The Churches' Safeguarding Children Advisory Service	<a href="http://www.ccpas.co.uk">www.ccpas.co.uk</a>
Safe from Harm – a code of practice for safeguarding the welfare of children in voluntary organisations	The Home Office
Safeguarding Children for non-statutory organisations	Derbyshire County Council Social Services Department
Safeguarding Children	Birmingham City Council Education Department
Safeguarding Children in Churches	Connections Christian Counselling
Safeguarding Children Guidelines	Diocese of Derby
Safe to Grow	Baptist Union
Young People First	Scout Association
Draft Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Policy	Knowle and Dorridge Ecclesia
Risk Assessment Templates	Lichfield Ecclesia

## Appendix 1

- Suggested wording to make children and young people aware of the intention to care for them and what to do if they feel unsafe

### **Written Statement:**

Our Promise to Look after You at CYC\*

When you are here at CYC you can expect to be in very good care. Leaders will do their best to help you learn about God and the Lord Jesus Christ while being safe and enjoying yourself.

We will try to set a good example in the way we behave. Leaders are 'in charge' so may need to tell you what to do and make sure everyone behaves - but will not say or do anything to upset or harm you.

If you are ever worried about how a leader is behaving you can tell any adult you trust. You can ask him or her to help stop it from happening and it will not get you into trouble.

If you are at CYC and do not feel safe you can ask to phone someone you know and, if you want, be picked up early. You will not have to explain why to a leader.

Jesus called children to be with him and said no one should stop them; we hope CYC will bring you closer to Jesus and nothing will get in your way.

\*Replace with name of Sunday School/ Camp etc. and where CYC is given elsewhere

### **Poster:**

When you are at CYC you can expect:

To be in very good care

to be safe

to enjoy yourself

for leaders to be good examples

not to be upset or harmed

If you are worried about how a leader is behaving:

Tell an adult you trust

Ask him or her to help stop it from happening

Remember - telling will not get you into trouble

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### **Verbal Statement**

Can anyone remember what Jesus said when his disciples tried to stop children from being taken to him?

He called the children to him and said that no one should stop them. We hope that CYC will bring you closer to Jesus and nothing happens to get in your way.

As leaders it is our job to help you learn about the Lord Jesus, to make sure you are safe and to help you enjoy yourself. When leading activities we may need to tell you what to do and get everyone to behave, but we will try never to say anything that would upset you or do anything to harm you.

It is also our job to be good examples so you should never be worried about how any of us behaves – but if you ever are we want you to know that you can tell an adult you trust and you will not get into trouble. Hopefully that person will help stop whatever it is that you don't like happening.

If while you are here you do not feel safe and we can't sort it out you can ask to phone someone you know and, if you want, be picked up early. You won't have to explain it to us if you do.

We have got a poster here to remind you about this [show and say where it will be].

Now, let's get on with learning about Jesus, being safe and having fun!

## Appendix 2

Who is a Vulnerable Adult and what is Adult Abuse?

Some adults are less able to protect themselves than others, and some have difficulty making their wishes and feelings known. This may make them vulnerable to abuse; within the Safeguarding Adults policy a Vulnerable Adult is defined as someone 18 years of age or over:

- who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness ...and
- is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation

Abuse is defined as: 'a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons'

Abuse may be physical or sexual, it may involve people taking money without permission, or not looking after someone properly. It may include poor care practices, bullying or humiliating, or not allowing contact with friends and family. Abuse often involves criminal acts and South Yorkshire Police are key members of the Safeguarding Adults Board.

Abuse can be a single act or may continue over a long period. It can be unintentional or deliberate, but will result in harm to the victim, either physically, emotionally or in its effect on the person's wellbeing or development.

The definitions used here come from the Department of Health's guidance document 'No secrets'. The overall work of the Safeguarding Adults Board is also governed by the document 'Safeguarding Adults' which was produced by the Association of Directors of Social Services.