



WEARDALE VINEYARD CHURCH

Safeguarding policy

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This document is based on a model Child Protection Policy supplied by the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service(CCPAS)

1. INTRODUCTION

Weardale VineyardCommunity Church (WVCC) is a member of Vineyard Churches, UK and Ireland, and is a registered charity(No 1134688), and a limited company (6973220)

WVCC has a thriving children's and young people's ministry. The trustees and members take seriously their responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to the church's care, and recognise the need to work effectively with others to create safe environments for children and young people in line with Every Child Matters and the Children's Act 2004. The Every Child Matters agenda states that every child should : *Be safe, Be healthy, Enjoy and achieve, Make a positive contribution and Achieve economic well being.*

For the purpose of this policy, a child or young person is someone under the age of 18.

As part of its mission, WVCC is committed to

- Listening and relating effectively and valuing children and young people whilst ensuring their protection within church activities
- Creating safe environments for children and young people to flourish
- Encouraging and supporting parents/carers
- Ensuring that children's and young people's workers are given support and training
- Having a system for dealing with concerns about possible abuse

- Maintaining good links with the statutory child care authorities

WVCC is committed to ongoing training for all such workers in the church to ensure that all volunteers understand their responsibilities to safeguard children, understand the nature of, and possible indicators of, child abuse and what to do if they have a concern

2. PROVIDING A SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

WVCC will ensure that all facilities and equipment that are used or accessed as part of its work with children and young people meet appropriate health and safety standards, and that any risks associated with their use have been identified and action taken to minimise potential hazards. This will include an appropriate level of first aid provision, safe storage of furniture and equipment and fire precautions.

WVCC will also ensure that all such activities are adequately supervised in line with ratios (see section 6), outlined in this policy, appropriate records kept relating to attendance and incidents and any concerns reported to the appropriate responsible person, and will ensure that all other requirements of the Health and Safety Policy are effectively implemented, recognising that they are an essential element to creating a safe and healthy environment

3. CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

WVCC recognises that many children and young people today are the victims of neglect, physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Accordingly, WVCC has adopted the policy contained in this document. The policy sets out agreed guidelines relating to the following areas:

- Responding to allegations of abuse, including those made against workers, leaders or members of the church
- Appointing childrens /youth workers
- Supervision of activities and practice issues
- Helping victims of abuse
- Working with offenders

WVCC recognises the need to build constructive links with the childcare agencies. Accordingly, these guidelines have been prepared with reference to CCPAS (Churches Child Protection Advisory Service)

The local Social Services office numbers for all concerns regarding the protection of a child are below.

First Contact- 03000 267 979

4. GUIDANCE FOR WORKERS/VOLUNTEERS

a. What to do if you suspect that abuse may have occurred

If you have a concern about a child/young person, the key actions to take are:

- If a child/young person has disclosed abuse of some form, although you should make sure you are clear about what they are saying, you should not question them any further, but make an accurate record of what they have said(see further advice in” How to respond to a child”). The Child Protection co-ordinator should immediately be informed, and a referral made to Social Services and/or the police
- If the concern arises because of things you have noticed, heard or witnessed, then this should be reported to the Child Protection Co-ordinator, who will , wherever possible, and without raising the issue of abuse, check out the concerns by asking appropriate open questions of the child/ young person and or parent/carer. If there is reasonable evidence that the child/young person is suffering significant harm, then a referral to Social Services should be made
- If there are concerns, but not enough to report, then a record must be kept and the situation kept under review. It may also be appropriate to encourage the parents/carers to seek medical help for a child, or support from Social Services. Where the Co-ordinator is unsure whether or not to refer a case to the Social Services, then advice should be sought from CCPAS and followed. CCPAS will confirm its advice in writing in case this is needed for reference purposes in the future. Exceptionally, should there be any disagreement between the person in receipt of the allegation, and the Co-ordinator, as to the appropriateness of a referral to the Social Services Department, that person

retains a responsibility as a member of the public to report serious matters to Social Services, and should do so without hesitation.

- Under no circumstances will the Co-ordinator or any other member of WAVC attempt to carry out an investigation into the allegation or suspicions of abuse. Any enquiries will be to clarify facts and situations only
- If a child/young person needs medical attention, seek medical help and inform health staff of any concerns
- If there is an immediate risk of danger to a child/ young person, then contact Social Services or the police immediately
- If the child/young person is old enough to understand , make sure they know what action is going to be taken
- When it has been decided that a referral should be made, parents/carers should be informed of this **UNLESS** doing so would a- put the child/young person at greater risk, b-interfere with criminal investigations, c- put volunteers or church members at risk

b. Who to report to

You must report concerns as soon as possible to

Church leaders (Jen Lennox)

The Trustees have nominated Diane Farrer and Jane Bateson to act on their behalf in referring allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities .

In the absence of Diane or Jane, the matter should be brought to the attention of Adrian and/or Linda Hancock.,

If the suspicions in any way involve the Co-ordinators, or Leaders of children ministry, then the report should be made to Adrian and/or Linda Hancock. Suspicions should not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.

It is of course the right of any individual as a citizen to make direct referrals to the Child Protection agencies or seek advice from the CCPAS(PO BOX 133, SWANLEY, KENT, BR8 7UQ, 01322 650011

c. How to respond to a child wanting to talk about abuse

It is not easy to give precise guidelines but the following may help

General points

- Show acceptance of what the child says(however unlikely the story may sound)
- Keep calm
- Look at the child directly
- Be honest
- Tell the child you will need to let someone else know, don't promise secrecy
- Even when a child has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell
- Never push for information- if the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen.

Helpful things to say or show

- I believe you(or showing acceptance of what the child has said)
 - Thank you for telling me
 - It's not your fault
 - I will help you
- Don't say
- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
 - I can't believe it !
 - Are you sure this is true?
 - Why? How? When? Who? Where?
 - Never make false promises
 - Never make statements such as I am shocked, don't tell anyone else

Concluding

- Reassure the child that they were right to tell you and show acceptance
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens(you might have to refer to Social Services/Police to prevent a child returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse)
- Contact the person the church has designated to co-ordinate child protection concerns
- Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed

d. What to do once a child has talked to you about abuse

- **Make notes as soon as possible**(preferably within an hour of being told), writing down exactly what the child said, your reply, description of activities, date, times of events, when you made the record. Keep all hand written notes securely, even if they have later been typed
- Report your discussion as soon as possible to the relevant leader
- You should not discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those nominated

- Once a child has talked about abuse , a decision may need to be made about whether the child can return home safely. On rare occasions it might be necessary to take immediate action to contact Police/Social Services to discuss putting safety measures in place for the child.

5. WORKERS/VOLUNTEERS

Appointment of workers/volunteers

On appointing volunteers/workers, WVCC will be responsible for the following:

- All prospective workers/volunteers will be asked to complete an application form, with name, D.o.B, current and previous addresses, details of employment history, previous church if applicable, declaration of any convictions
- Others who know the applicant will be spoken to , as well as formal references be taken up
- A discussion will occur between the applicant and the co-ordinator, to determine their suitability
- A check will be made with DBS to determine any convictions
- A discussion needs to occur to ensure the applicant is familiar with WAVC Safeguarding policy and expectations
- Any new appointee will be initially be 'on probation', usually for 3 months
- At the end of the probationary period, feedback will be given from the co-workers on the progress of the 'trainee'
- If successful, the worker/volunteer may be subjected to regular reviews and support if necessary

Working with people who have lived outside the UK

Where someone who wants to be a worker with the children and Young people has not always lived in the UK the DBS check is different. Each person will be treated appropriately, according to their circumstances.

A certificate of good conduct will be required from the police of the country of origin, along with two references from church, close associate, or work colleague

Working with offenders

Where someone attending church is known to have abused children, a member of the leadership will meet with the individual, and discuss and implement appropriate boundaries within which the person will be expected to stay. This boundary will always exclude any form of contact with children

Helping victims of abuse

As a church we are committed to supporting victims of abuse and encouraging them in their faith. We will also encourage and support the person to access help from specific agencies when appropriate

Abuse of trust guidelines

As a church, we undertake to follow the principles found within the Abuse of Trust guidance issued by the Home Office, which contains principles of good practice, aimed at protecting Young people over the age of consent, but less than 18 years of age, and vulnerable adults, where there is a relationship of trust with an adult looking after them. It is therefore unacceptable for those people in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop while the relationship of trust continues

6. Guidelines for working with children and young people

Child's age	Ratio of adult: child
Under 2 ½ years	1 adult:3 children
2 ½ to 5 years	1 adult:4 children
5 years and older	1 adult:8 children

Pre school/Reception-(3-5 years) –

Key Stage 1(5-7 years)-

- Children to be supervised by parents until the time that the children leave the main body of the church to undertake their teaching
- Children do not leave the room, unless they are going to the toilet
- Parents are encouraged to take their children to the toilet before activities start
- A register of children attending and adult workers will be kept
- A helper may be involved with children work whilst waiting for DBS clearance, but should not be allowed to work on 1:1

Key Stage 2(7 years-10 years)-

- A register of young people and the workers attending the session will be kept
- All adults leading or co-leading a session must be approved as Children's workers
- A helper may be involved in working with young people prior to DBS clearance, but at no time should they work on 1:1

Key Stage 3(11-14 years)

Key Stage 4(14-16 years)

Key Stage 5(16-18years)

- A register of young people attending must be kept and also the adult workers
- Avoid sending private messages to the YP (Text, SMS, twitter, Facebook) .
To protect everyone, it is our policy to discourage all but essential electronic communication, and to let a leader know.
- Children should be advised about this policy and given appropriate information about the danger involved

Key Stage 1 and 2 to meet as one younger group

Key stage 3 and 4 to meet as one older group

Transporting children and young people(see Transport policy)

- Children's workers can only give lifts to children and young people if they have appropriate insurance cover for carrying young passengers. Please check with your insurer, and add it if needed
- The children and young people must wear a seat belt, according to the Highway code
- If a young person needs to be taken home, ensure a leader is aware, This should only occur in the case of an emergency