

# Welcome Hall Evangelical Church

## Child Protection Policy



March 2011

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## Do we really need a Child Protection Policy?

Some may question whether these requirements are really necessary, and some may not be too concerned about instances that have occurred in other Churches and Communities, believing that we are different, as we all know each other's background and history.

Most of the requirements in the Policy have been suggested for the following reasons:

- **Child protection.** The Church has a legal duty to protect the children in its care. We want to protect the children in our care and do not wish the reputation of the Gospel to be harmed by any Child Protection issue.
- **Legal.** In the eyes of the law, the Church is a commercial organisation providing activities (& holidays) to children. During the course of those holidays, we have a legal responsibility for the safety of the children. This means that we have to be careful about the suitability of the volunteers that we appoint. In addition, the Church has a legal duty to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of the children in other respects. For example, the Church has a duty to ensure that the volunteers transporting the children from one venue to another are properly qualified to do so and have the experience required to transport the children safely. For the same reason, we should now ask volunteer drivers to confirm that their vehicle is properly insured and safe.
- **Insurance.** As the UK becomes increasingly American in its desire to litigate, Insurers have felt it necessary to protect themselves by requiring their customers to adopt higher and higher standards of practice. Where insured organisations fail to comply with these standards, the Insurer reserves the right to decline to offer cover, or decline to pay out in respect of a claim. Therefore, even when the Church is not legally obliged to take a particular safeguard, we may be obliged to by our Insurers.
  - Without Insurance, the Sunday School Outing & Church Holiday would not be possible in their current formats.
  - Without Insurance, the Games activities would need to be reviewed.

Unfortunately, due to the world in which we currently live, we may have to accept the fact that we need to take greater safeguards than were once felt necessary and we have to apply these requirements strictly for the sake of the children and for the sake of the Gospel.



## 1. AIMS OF CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

- Our church has a sizeable and growing ministry to children and young people, and we have a responsibility to protect and safeguard their welfare. This involves valuing them, listening to them and relating effectively to them. It involves encouraging and supporting their parents and carers, and training and supporting the church's members who work with children and young people.
- Increasingly, churches are having to deal with problems arising from abuse of children. Sometimes this relates to children attending church activities, and sometimes allegations involve church members.
- As an organisation working with children, the church has a general responsibility to act if abuse comes to light and, as far as possible, to protect children from the possibility of being abused within the church. Children's workers will need to be prepared for the fact that a child could disclose abuse, and be able to respond to such disclosure in appropriate ways.
- This Child Protection Policy sets down guidelines for:  
Recognising and responding to allegations of abuse, appointing children's and youth workers, supervision of activities and practice issues, and is based on the Home Office document *Safe from Harm* published by the Home Office London 1993.
- Children are valued yet vulnerable members of the Christian community, who need our special care. We take seriously the charge given by Jesus to welcome children (Luke 9:48), to protect them (Matt 18:6-10) and to allow them free access to him (Mark 10:13-16). Churches today have a unique opportunity to enact these commands of Jesus, and to stand with children and young people in the face of a rapidly changing culture, which is still very ambivalent towards them. Every church should model in its worship, fellowship and mission a community where:
  - Children are listened to, given a sense of belonging, nurtured, and kept safe:
  - Parents are supported and encouraged;
  - Those who work with children and young people are supported and protected.

Sadly, abuse is not something new. It has been evident in our culture for many generations but has been hidden and ignored. It is only gradually during the past twenty years that abuse, particularly sexual abuse, has been recognised, named and condemned. The protection of children from harm is now a very real and important issue and needs to be addressed very seriously by churches and individuals. As a consequence many adults who suffered secretly in their own childhood feel able for the first time to explore the pain and the grief of what happened to them, and to seek help.

## 2. HOW CHILDREN CAN BE HARMED

- When children and young people receive loving care and discipline in a safe environment they have every chance to grow into healthy, stable adults. They can be prevented from growing and developing normally by adults or by other children who do wrong things to them. Damage of this kind is termed 'abuse'.
- Children who suffer abuse will behave in a variety of abnormal ways as they struggle to cope with a world that is going wrong for them. Workers with children and young people need to be able to detect the signs, because they are the cries for help which, in most cases, cannot or dare not be articulated.
- However, there may be other reasons for what a child is doing, and a church worker ought not to make a decision independently as to whether abuse is taking place. The worker should consult with the Pastor or Elders if abuse is suspected.

### 3. HOW MIGHT A CHILD SUFFER ABUSE?

There are several categories of abuse officially defined in government documents. Of these the following are the most common:

- Physical abuse - where children's bodies are hurt or injured.
- Emotional abuse, - Where children don't receive love and affection, may be frightened by threats and taunts, or are given responsibilities beyond their years.
- Neglect - Where adults persistently and severely fail to care for children and protect them from danger, leading to serious impairment of the child's health or development.
- Sexual abuse - where adults will use children and young people to satisfy sexual desires.

A variety of personal circumstances can cause adults to abuse children physically or to neglect them. These kinds of abuse may be easier to detect than signs of emotional or sexual abuse, which are very difficult to spot. With sexual abuse in particular, secrecy imposed by the offending adult is part of the abuse pattern, so the child may not readily disclose what is happening.

### 4. WHO ABUSES CHILDREN?

An abuser is most often someone known to the child. They may be a parent, sibling, other relation, family friend or neighbour. Sometimes, the abuser may be an adult who holds a position of authority over children, as in a church. They can be people of any background. There is no certain way of identifying a would-be abuser; they don't appear different from the rest of society. They are people who are themselves in desperate need and require help. Many adult abusers have been abused themselves as children.

### 5. RECOGNISING ABUSE

The following behavioural signs may be indications of child abuse, but they should not be taken in isolation. It is important that these signs are not taken as indication that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered far more than in the past.

#### **Physical signs:**

- Injuries, which have not received medical attention.
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures, etc., which do not have an accidental explanation.
- Cutting/slashing/drug abuse.

#### **Indicators of possible sexual abuse:**

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse.
- Child with excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.

#### **Emotional signs:**

- Nervousness/frozen watchfulness.
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration.
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults.
- Attention-seeking behaviour.
- Running away/stealing/lying.

## 6. RESPONDING TO ABUSE

### What to do if you suspect abuse may have occurred:

- Report it as soon as possible to the Pastor or Elders.

### How to react when a child wants to talk about abuse:

*It is not easy to give precise guidance but the following general points may be of help.*

- Accept what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound).
- Keep calm and look at the child directly.
- Be honest and let them know you will need to tell someone else – don't promise confidentiality.
- Even when a child has done something wrong they are not to blame for the abuse.
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened.
- Never push for information. Listen carefully without prompting or using leading questions.

### Helpful things to say or show:

- I accept what you say (or showing acceptance of what the child says.)
- I am glad you have told me.
- It's not your fault.
- I will help you.

### Avoid Saying:

- 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:

- Again, reassure the child they were right to tell you and that you accept what they say.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
- Immediately refer to someone appropriately qualified, normally in the first instance to the Pastor or Elders

### What to do once a child has talked to you about abuse:

- Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within an hour of the interview), writing down exactly what the child said and when she/he said it and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. Description of activity).
- Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all hand-written notes, even if subsequently typed up.
- Report your discussion as soon as possible to the Pastor or Elders
- You should not discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than the Pastor or Elders

## **7. RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE BY A THIRD PARTY**

In cases where a third party makes allegations, the church worker should elicit as much information as possible from the referrer. Unless the person wishes to remain anonymous this should include:

- The referrer's details (name, address, Tel No.)
- As much factual detail as possible about the child and family concerned (names of family members, address, name/date of birth of subject child, etc).
- The cause of concern, nature of the injuries/observations.
- The church worker should inform the referrer that information relating to any child at risk, or potentially at risk, will be shared with the Pastor or Elders and may result in referral to the Social services Department, and in this event the Social Services Department may wish to interview the referrer (if known) as part of a Child Protection Investigation.
- The church worker should pass this information on to the Pastor or Elders as soon as possible, and should not pass it on to anyone else.

## **8. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHURCH WORKERS**

- Where a church worker suspects abuse may have occurred, or has been told of alleged abuse by a child or a third party, the church worker should report the matter to the Pastor or Elders who will take the matter on from there.
- Suspicions and allegations of abuse should not be discussed with anyone else.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies. While we hope that members of the church will use the procedures outlined in this document, there may be exceptional circumstances when a church worker will decide to report directly to the Social Services Department or Police

## **9. ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL INJURY OR NEGLECT**

If a child has a physical injury or symptoms of neglect, the Pastor or Elders will consider:

- Speaking with the parent/guardian and suggesting medical help be sought for the child. The doctor will then initiate further action, if necessary. Alternatively, encourage the parent to seek help from the Social Services Department. With older young people it will be important to take their wishes into account with regard to speaking with parent.
- If the parent/guardian is unwilling to seek help, then it may be appropriate in some cases for a church worker to offer to go with the parents/guardian to the most appropriate agency. If they still fail to act, the Pastor or Elders should make a referral to the Social Services for further action.
- Where emergency medical attention is necessary then this should, of course, be sought immediately. The Pastor or Elders will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.

## **10. ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE**

If there are allegations of sexual abuse, the Pastor or elders will:

- Contact the Social Services Child Protection Team or Police Child Protection Officer directly. The Pastor or Elders should not speak to the parent (or anyone else).
- In no circumstances will the Pastor or Elders attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse. Their role is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to the Social Services Department, whose task it is to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Child Act 1989.
- Allegations of sexual abuse are usually denied and are often difficult to prove one way or the other. Because of this, in the interests of all concerned, a different approach is needed from that taken in other types of alleged abuse.
- It is important to keep an open mind, and even if you think the child's story is unlikely you should not speak to the parent or anyone else, as there is always the possibility that they could be involved. It is

in the best interests of both parties to involve the child protection authorities from the very beginning. Procedures exist for cases to be jointly investigated by social workers and police officers.

## **11. ACTION AFTER REFERRAL**

The church worker should make a careful written note of what has been observed and action taken, and this should be dated and signed. The Pastor or Elders should consider confirming the referral in writing to the Social Services Department within 48 hours.

## **12. APPOINTING CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH WORKERS**

- All appointments of children's meetings staff will be made by the Pastor or Elders.
- The Pastor or Elders may interview the potential worker, and will discuss with the applicant the church's policy on safeguarding children and their expectations in relation issues of practice as outlined in this document (which the applicant will be required to read).
- It is a legal requirement for the Church to have Public Liability Insurance cover. Ansvar, our Insurance Company now require us to obtain Criminal Record Bureau checks on all key workers who work and care for children, as recommended by the Home Office.

## **13. EMPLOYMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS**

- As a Church we are committed to the complete, full and divine authority of the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. Within the teachings of the Bible, the church is also committed not to discriminate against any of its workers or members on the basis of race, gender, age or physical disabilities; nor of offences committed in the past as long as they do not create a risk to children or vulnerable adults.
- As a Church, we believe that God in his grace forgives sins through Christ, and that the Holy Spirit transforms repentant sinners. We also believe that while we are in this life, temptation to sin will remain with us. In view of these beliefs, we will treat people with criminal records according to their merits and to any special criteria of the appointment being made.
- Applicants for posts within the Church will be asked if they have any criminal records. In itself a criminal record will not necessarily debar a person from being appointed to a post, but it may do so in certain circumstances. For example, if it is felt that a recent or serious offence might mean someone presents a risk to children or vulnerable adults, then that person will not be appointed.
- All appointments will be subject to the approval of the Pastor and Elders who will take into account any criminal records. If the appointment of a person with a serious record could lead to outsiders criticising the church, the application will be prayerfully scrutinised by the leadership.

## **14. SUPERVISION OF ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES OF PRACTICE – BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**

The Welcome Hall Evangelical Church believes that children are happiest in an ordered environment, in which every-one knows what is expected of them and children are free to enjoy the games and activities without fear of being hurt or hindered by anyone else.

We aim to create an environment where children, parents and staff all value, respect and care for each other. We aim to apply simple rules fairly and consistently, and provide a happy, caring environment with challenging activities.

### **Supervision:**

All aspects of the operation of the children's work, including responsibility for behavioural issues, are under the authority of the Elders and Deacons.

At every activity or outing involving children or young people, one or more Church Officer will be present, so that experienced help will be on hand if any of the workers meet problems too difficult for them.

When counselling a young person (or in circumstances where confidentiality is important and it is necessary for a worker to be alone with a child), the worker should let others know that the interview is taking place and ensure that someone else is around in the building. It may be advisable to leave doors open, or to counsel the child where you can be seen but not heard.

Take immediate action if any incident occurs during which any member of staff appears to have lost their self-control in connection with the children and to ensure the restoration of a harmonious atmosphere and the safety of all the children.

### **Boundaries:**

- Touching a child MAY be appropriate. Physical contact between adults and children can be healthy: like for example a comforting arm on the shoulder of a child in trouble, or a pat on the back of encouragement. Care should be taken however, in circumstances where an adult and child are on their own.
- Workers should treat all young people with dignity and respect in attitude, language used and actions. They should respect the privacy of young people, and avoid unnecessary enquiry into home and family matters. Any questionable activity such as rough or sexually provocative games or comments should be guarded against.
- Young people should be invited to the homes of workers only with the knowledge and approval of the Elders and the parents. The same applies to arrangements for transporting young people. In some circumstances it may be unwise to transport a particular child on her/his own.

### **Safety matters:**

- Workers should exercise vigilance and care so as to minimise the risk of accidental injury. Potentially dangerous activities should be properly supervised.
- In the church building, young children should normally be kept away from the kitchen areas.
- Workers should discourage youngsters from tampering in any way with fire extinguishers, or behaving in ways likely to endanger others. Workers should be able to locate and make use of the first aid equipment kept at the church.  
[NB. This applies to the safety of children using the church at times when supervised group activities are being held. At other times the safety of children is the responsibility of their parents/guardians, and more generally of everyone present.]
- Any accident or injury to a child while under our supervision must be reported to the appropriate staff and recorded in the Accident Book, which is kept with the First Aid Kit.
- Outside the church building, special care should be exercised in supervising both activities and travelling arrangements. (See Section 15)

### **Discipline.**

Discipline is the education of a person's character. It includes nurturing, training, instruction, correction, verbal rebuke, teaching and encouragement. It brings security, produces character, prepares for life and is evidence of God's love. Heb 12:5-12; Prov.22: 6.

### **Dos and don'ts of discipline in children's work:**

- We need to be consistent, insistent and persistent.
- **In no circumstances should any member of staff strike a child, no matter how gently, as this constitutes criminal assault.**

- We will never use any form of corporal punishment or threaten it in any way. In the case of a particular serious incident or persistent unacceptable behaviour, we will discuss possible solutions with parents/guardians.
- Speak firmly, but without ill temper and shouting, to a mis-behaving child. Make it clear that certain behaviour is unacceptable in our buildings and vehicles. (e.g. deliberate foul language, racist comments, violence to others, or any conduct likely to cause an accident or damage to property.)
- It may be necessary to part two fighting children, or to direct miscreants with a firm hand to the vehicle or room where they are supposed to be. Where possible, secure the presence of another church worker where it becomes necessary to apply constraint.
- Keep the ground rules simple and clear, and make sure the children understand what action will be taken if they are not kept.
- Talk to a child away from the group, not publicly. (Explain what she/he has done wrong, encourage remorse – leave them on a positive note.)
- Never reject a child, just the behaviour. (Re-assure the child that you want her/him, but are not willing to accept the behaviour).
- Each child is unique, special and individual, and each child needs individual care. We, therefore, need to ask ourselves 'Why is the child behaving like that?'
- Then: *Ask God for wisdom, discernment and understanding and pray for the child.  
What is the best method for disciplining and encouraging that child?  
Work on each individual child's positives; do not compare them with each other, but encourage and build them up.  
Set a good example; don't expect children to do what you can't do & vice versa.  
Be consistent in what you say and ensure that other team members know what you have said, this avoids manipulation.*
- Report incidents urgently, whether in the Sunday School, during the activities or in the vehicles, to a Church elder.  
Be careful to co-operate with any plan of action decided on to deal with a problem.
- No individual worker whether a teacher, helper or member of the transport team should ever ban a child from attending Sunday School or evening activities, or refuse transport. These are decisions for Church Elders only.

### **Some practical ideas:**

- Never threaten what you are not prepared to do.
- Change voice tone, but try not to shout.
- Separate children who have a tendency to be disruptive when together. These children are often friends. Give them a chance, perhaps warn them and only separate them if they are disruptive.
- Have the child sit right in front of you.
- Get a helper to sit next to the child.
- Be pro-active and encourage helpers to be pro-active and not wait to be told to deal with a situation.
- Take the child aside and talk to them, challenging them to change, whilst encouraging them on their strengths.
- If a child's behaviour is constantly disruptive, seek advice and guidance from the Pastor or Elders.
- Don't be afraid of discipline.
- Warn them, take them outside the room, but ensure they are supervised, and consider banning them for a week. Encourage good behaviour.
- Remember each child is individual and unique. We need God's wisdom and love to encourage each one to reach their potential, and to address their needs.
- Pray before you meet and at other time too!

## **Helping Children to protect themselves:**

- Teach about safety generally, strangers, good and bad secrets and touches, etc. Sometimes this teaching can be drawn naturally from bible stories.
- Help children develop common sense rules.
- Talk about suspicions or situations where they feel uncomfortable.
- Examine the way in which we present Christian truths – e.g. children obeying their parents. This can be a real problem for a child who is being abused: are we telling the child to accept the abuse? Tell children that if they feel uncomfortable or that something may be wrong, they can always check things out with another adult. This will need to be explained: e.g. If someone asks you to steal sweets from a shop; it doesn't include complaints about bedtimes!

## **Golden Rules**

Our agreed rules are clearly explained to the children and are on the Church notice board. (Appendix 1.) They are based on the following principles:

*Unacceptable behaviour by a child is behaviour likely to hurt, injure or upset themselves, another child, or an adult. Unacceptable behaviour shows a lack of respect for others, disrupts their activities or damages Church property. Below are our procedures for managing the children's behaviour.*

## **Positive procedures for encouraging good behaviour**

- Positive role models - all staff will lead by example with regard to friendliness, care and courtesy
- Prevention - anticipation and removal of potential problems (stop the fight before it happens)
- Interaction - plenty of adult attention (so there is no need to misbehave to attract attention)
- Praise or reward - all staff will offer explicit praise for good behaviour, for example turn taking, co-operation, sharing, and good listening. We will draw attention to the good rather than the bad.
- Provision - we will provide activities suited to the children in our care.
- Expectations to be applied clearly and positively

In certain circumstances, such as use of racist language, physical abuse or dangerous behaviour a member of staff must respond immediately, and report to a Church Elder.

## **Procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour**

- Possibly ignore - we will limit attention or even ignore in the first instance certain types of attention seeking behaviour, unless that behaviour involves another child.
- Redirection - distract to another activity or join in with the activity.
- Correction - a firm "No" and a clear explanation of why the behaviour is unacceptable.
- Tone - speak calmly, clearly and firmly to gain attention and control.
- Consequence - give a warning of the consequence if the behaviour does not stop.
- No hard feelings - it is always a fresh start afterwards.

## **Unacceptable procedures in managing behaviour:**

These should never be used and if seen, should be reported immediately to the person in charge.

- Shouting, criticism and comparison. Shouting conveys a loss of control.
- Labelling the child, rather than the behaviour, as naughty or undesirable.
- Use of any form of corporal punishment, including smacking, pinching, poking or rough handling
- Use of any other humiliating and frightening punishment, including shouting, offensive language, name calling or isolation.
- Use of sarcastic comments, belittling a child's performance or behaviour. Poking fun at a child's limitations.

In past years the Lord has greatly blessed the efforts of our team of committed helpers. Many have sacrificed time and comforts to provide this invaluable service to local children, enabling our Sunday Schools and weeknight meetings to expand to their present size. May this spirit of commitment continue in the days ahead knowing that our labours will not be in vain in the Lord.

*If any parent/carer is concerned about any child's behaviour or the Church's responses or have any other comments on this policy please contact:*

Martin Wells (01527 874994) or Peter Jack (01527 836427)

## 15. PHYSICAL HANDLING POLICY

### Definitions

Positive handling

- Giving guidance to children (e.g. how to hold a table tennis bat)
- Providing emotional support (e.g. placing an arm around a distressed child)
- Physical care (e.g. first aid or toileting)

Restrictive physical intervention (RPI)

- Physical force is used intentionally to restrict a child's movement against his or her will.

### Principles

- We aim to do all we can to avoid using restrictive physical intervention, and restrictive physical handling will only be used in extreme circumstances.
- Restrictive physical handling is only used when we believe it's use is in the child's best interests.
- Duty of care. Everyone working at our church has a duty of care towards the children in our care. When children are in danger of hurting themselves or others or of causing significant damage to property we have a responsibility to intervene, which may involve the use of restrictive physical handling.
- Reasonable minimal force. We will use as little restrictive force as necessary in order to maintain safety and this will be used for as short a time as possible.

### 'What if' Scenarios

What if:

- a child persists in inappropriate behaviour such as chasing the opposite sex
- a child refuses to go somewhere when told. e.g. into the main hall for S & T, leave a game on the field when being disruptive, go to the back during S & T
- a child refuses to sing
- a child talks and distracts others during S & T or during Sunday school
- a child won't stand up during the singing of a hymn

Clearly, none these would **need** RPI, but there have been cases in the past where it has been inappropriately used e.g. physically forcing a seated child to stand for singing, carrying a child to the back when he has refused to move.

### Responding to the 'what if' scenarios

- We do **not** have a 'No Touch' Policy.
- We **may** touch, or very lightly tap, children to attract their attention.
- Those children who will not respond to positive encouragement during a class/service, and persist in bad behaviour, may need to be challenged afterwards, rather than disrupt the whole event.

- Those children who take exception to it, and say that we are not allowed to ‘tap’ them, need to have it clearly explained to them (& maybe their parents) of our position in this area. It’s a useful advance warning of a potential trouble-maker who threatens reporting a helper for tapping them.
- If children will not obey the instructions of the helpers, then ultimately there is no place for them in our church activities. We cannot be responsible for children who will not follow instructions.

### **Use of restrictive physical intervention (RPI)**

Restrictive physical intervention can be justified when

- Someone is injuring themselves or others
- Someone is damaging property
- There is suspicion that although injury or damage has not yet happened it might do

Duty of care means that we may use restrictive physical intervention if a child is trying to leave the site and we judge the child to be at risk.

This duty of care also extends away from church when we are in charge of children off site (when out on walks or outings).

There may be occasions when RPI is justified, but we judge it may make the situation worse. In that instance we would not use it but would use some other method consistent with our duty of care (e.g. issue an instruction to stop, seek help or make the area safe)

The aim in using RPI is to restore safety to the child and to those around him/her.

### **What type of RPI can be used?**

Any physical intervention we use is consistent with the principle of reasonable minimal force.

Where judged that RPI is necessary we will:

- Aim for side-by-side contact with the child
- Aim for no gap between the adult’s and the child’s body where they are side to side
- Hold children by the long bones (to avoid pain and damage to joints)
- Ensure there is no restriction to the child’s ability to breathe (in particular avoiding holding a child around the chest cavity or stomach)
- Try to avoid lifting children
- We never use seclusion, i.e. send children out of the room on their own.

### **Planning**

In an emergency we will do our best within our duty of care and with the use of reasonable minimal force. After such an emergency we will review the situation and plan future responses based on risk assessment. This will consider

- What the risks are
- Who is at risk and how
- What can be done to manage the risk

This risk assessment can be used to consider:

- How the environment can be adapted to better meet the child’s needs
- How the child can be taught and encouraged to use new and more appropriate behaviours
- How staff will respond when the child’s behaviour is challenging

We will pay particular attention to responsive strategies such as humour, distraction, relocation and offering choices.

When we know that an individual child's behaviour is likely to need RPI we will seek the views of all those working with the child. Above all we will work closely with the child's parents/carers and keep them fully informed.

### **Recording and reporting**

Any use of RPI will be recorded as soon as possible in the Accident/Incident record book and will be reported to one of the Elders. Parents/carers will be informed on the day of the incident.

### **Supporting and reviewing**

The key aim of after incident support is to repair any potential strain to the relationship between the child and the adults who restrained them.

### **Exclusion**

We will do everything possible to avoid excluding any child from our church, but in the event that all our strategies have been exhausted and that in the opinion of the Elders we are unable to meet the needs of the child, a decision may be made to exclude the child from Church. This decision will not be taken lightly and will only be done after all possibilities have been explored.

## **16. GUIDELINES FOR COLLECTING CHILDREN**

### **Purpose**

- Pick-up teams have a key role in our Sunday School work. They provide the chief means of communication between parents and teachers. The continued attendance of children may depend as much on their collector as on their teacher. Endeavour to build a happy relationship with all the families from which you collect children. On occasions collectors may have very real missionary opportunities with the families because of the contact provided through the children.
- Children are entrusted to our care by their parents. We must therefore give constant, serious-minded attention to their safety and well-being. These guidelines together with the Child Protection Policy are designed to assist in this demanding task and must be observed if we are to continue to have the privilege of so many children at Sunday School.

### **Safety**

- It is easy to see that our spiritual objectives could be dashed if children were to be hurt or lost. We therefore remind you of the following rules:
- Never bring a child to Sunday School without the permission and knowledge of their parent/s or without having the details required on the registration cards (name, address, date of birth, telephone number) - even if this means delaying their attendance for a week, during which you can call for the necessary information. A dangerous situation could arise if we had a child at Sunday School who became ill and whose address we did not know or whose parents did not know where they are.
- Always advise parents if a child you have collected decides not to come or runs off.
- Always be on time. Children left waiting (whether at the church or on streets and estates) are open to danger.
- On returning home, ensure children get into their homes: do not just drop them off and leave them to find their own way indoors.
- Be sensible about physical safety. Keep careful control as children move between vehicles at the church, before and after Sunday School. At all times watch out and be alert for dangerous situations. ***Once children are in a vehicle, it must not be left unattended.***
- Doors **must** be firmly closed before a vehicle moves off. Whilst travelling ensure seat belts are in use and do not allow playing with doors, leaning out of windows or rough games. If children persist after a warning, please report the matter to Peter urgently.

## **New Children**

- Always take a new child to Peter on arrival at Sunday School, so that details are correctly processed.

## **Misbehaviour**

- The Discipline and Child Protection Rules must be adhered to by all of our children's workers. Many behavioural problems can be avoided if the rule is '**Prevention is better than cure.**' Staff must be punctual. Dangerous situations arise when children are left waiting. Be watchful and ready to avoid and divert potentially difficult behaviour, especially by seating children likely to be unruly separately on entry to the vehicle.

## **General**

- If you have to be away on a Sunday, advise Peter as soon as possible so that arrangements for another person to collect your children can be made in good time. If it will not be possible to collect children on a particular day, the parents should be informed, in advance.
- Relay information about the children you collect to their teachers. In the case of important or urgent information (e.g. child seriously ill, family moving, dissatisfaction with Sunday School, discipline problems, etc), let the Pastor know.
- Discuss cases of repeated non-attendance with teachers.
- Never ban a child – only the Pastor or Elders may take that decision.
- If children swear, insult staff, act abusively to other children or damage the vehicles (e.g. seating), that behaviour must be referred to the Pastor or Elders.
- Encourage each child to bring their Bible.
- Workers should avoid giving lifts in cars to just one child. If unavoidable, the child should sit in the back of the car.
- Drivers should ensure that the vehicle they are driving is **fully insured** to transport children to Sunday School, including third party passenger liability cover. If there is any doubt, please see Peter.

In past years the Lord has greatly blessed the efforts of our team of committed collectors. Many have sacrificed time and comforts to provide this invaluable service to local children, enabling our Sunday Schools and weeknight meetings to expand to their present size. May this spirit of commitment continue in the days ahead knowing that our labours will not be in vain in the Lord.

## Appendix 1.

### Links to The Early Years Foundation Stage Principles

- 1.3 Keeping Safe
- 1.4 Health and Well Being
- 3.2 Supporting Every Child
- 3.4 The Wider Context
- 4.4 Areas of Learning and Development

### Links to The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation stage

- Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare
- Suitable people, Suitable premises, environment and equipment
- Organisation

### Links to legislation and key guidance

- Children's Act 1989,2004
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Every Child Matters: Change for children 2004
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Race Relations Act 1976, Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
- Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986

### Useful Contacts:

- Childline, [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- NSPCC, [www.nspc.org.uk](http://www.nspc.org.uk)
- Direct Gov for information relating to legislation [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

## Ten Golden Rules for Young People

These are for **your benefit and safety** while you enjoy activities at the Church

- Always tell the truth
- Use kind words and never swear
- Always listen to adult helpers
- Respect yourself and others
- Care for and encourage each other
- Take turns and share
- Take care of church equipment
- Do not use any equipment without asking first
- Do not run indoors, only in the sports hall
- **Never leave the church premises without permission**

