

**St Andrews with Castle Gate
United Reformed Church**

**Safeguarding Children, Young People and
Adults at Risk**

Policy and Guidelines

Contents

Introduction	3
Responsibilities	4
Safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk	5
General guidelines for working with children, young people and adults at risk	6,7
Safe from Harm (Home Office Publication 1993)	8
Adult/Child Ratios	9
Using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) – A Summary	10
Sample Application Form for Volunteers	11,12
Sample Parental Consent form	13, 14
Recognising Possible Signs of Abuse	15, 16
How to Respond to a Person Wanting to Talk About Abuse	17, 18
Responding to Abuse – Workers Action Sheet	19

Introduction

This policy document covers information relevant to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk who attend activities organised by the St Andrews with Castle Gate United Reformed Church.

An Adult at Risk is defined as “someone who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness; and is or may be unable to take care of unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation”. This definition of an Adult covers all people over 18 years of age.

A separate document is available covering all other aspects of Health and Safety Policy and is available on request from the Church Secretary.

A copy of the Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy and Guidelines' will be given to all paid employees, volunteer leaders and helpers of the St Andrews With Castle Gate United Reformed Church, who work with children, young people or adults at risk at activities organised by the Church. It will also be given to other group leaders who use the premises without a hiring charge. Signatures will be obtained from those given the document to confirm that it has been received, understood and the principles underlying Safe from Harm will be upheld.

For those who hire the church premises the 'Application to Hire Premises' contains the following statement which offers a copy on request of the URC document 'Good Practice Guide':

'Hirers working with children and young people under the age of 18 years are required to comply with The Children Act 1989 and the principles of the Home Office Document “Safe from Harm” (as outlined in the URC document “Good Practice Guide” copy available on request, or in the Hirer’s own policy document).'

The policy covered in this document must be reviewed by the Child Protection Contact Persons annually, who will report to the Elders and Church Meeting.

St Andrews with Castle Gate URC

Responsibilities

It is the policy of St Andrews with Castle Gate URC:

- to safeguard all members and users of our church premises
- to ensure the safety and supervision of those taking part in activities relating to the church, giving particular attention to the needs of children, young people, adults at risk and any other vulnerable groups
- to provide, as far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy working environment for employees and voluntary helpers.

St Andrews with Castle Gate URC commits itself to the principles of 'Good Practice' (URC third edition 2004) which incorporates the Child Protection Policy based on Government 'Safe from Harm' Guidelines.

Overall responsibility for the 'Good Practice Policy for Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk' is that of the Elders.

The policy relates specifically to the following areas:

1. Children and young people
2. Adults at Risk
3. Employees and voluntary helpers

The following are responsible for safety in particular areas:

Vetting of workers with children and young people Church Secretary

Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines Junior Church Co-ordinator

Child Protection Contact Persons Dorothy Brown
 Richard Gaunt
 Phil Hodgson
 Ron Kenyon

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk

As one of its major activities, St Andrew's with Castle Gate United Reformed Church seeks to serve the needs of children and young people, promoting holistic development. It also aims to serve the needs of any adults that are at any time at risk due to age, disability or illness.

In doing so, St Andrew's with Castle Gate United Reformed Church takes seriously the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk who come onto its premises or who are involved in its activities.

St Andrew's with Castle Gate United Reformed Church aims to ensure that children, young people and adults at risk are welcomed into a safe caring Christian environment which has a happy and friendly atmosphere.

St Andrew's with Castle Gate United Reformed Church recognises that it is the responsibility of everyone, paid worker or volunteer, to prevent the neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children, young people and adults at risk and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.

St Andrew's with Castle Gate United Reformed Church recognises its responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review procedures which are designed to prevent and to be alert to such abuse.

St Andrew's with Castle Gate United Reformed Church is committed to supporting, resourcing, and training those who work with children, young people and adults at risk and to providing supervision.

St Andrew's with Castle Gate United Reformed Church is committed to accessing the statutory child care authorities when necessary.

This policy is in addition to the Good Practice guidelines as described in the 3rd Edition of "Safeguarding children and young people in the church" published by The United Reformed Church. We adhere to the contents of this publication and will follow its guidance in relation to other issues in our ministry with children and young people.

General guidelines for working with children, young people and adults at risk

1. Each group must be properly supervised at all times according to the adult / child ratios in the Children Act 1989 (see p.8).
2. An enhanced disclosure must be applied for from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for each worker with children, young people and adults at risk. (See page 9)
3. Leaders or those in positions of responsibility should not be alone with a child, young person or adult at risk.
4. Leaders or those in positions of responsibility should not meet a child, young person or adult at risk on church premises or elsewhere without a parent or another adult present. With regards to elders visits to members' homes (private residence, NH or RH), the situation should be risk assessed prior to the visit. Elders are aware that it is up to the individual being visited to decide whether to grant them access to their home and elders will respect their wishes.
5. When transporting children, young people or adults at risk there should, as far as possible, be more than one passenger in the vehicle. It is advisable to transport children in the rear passenger seats. Private car owners should contact their insurance company for additional cover.
6. At least two adults should be present when meeting with a group of children, young people or adults at risk.
7. Leaders should know where the accident book and first aid kit are kept, and have a working knowledge of basic First Aid.
8. No medication should be given to a child under 18 without the written consent of the person with parental responsibility.
9. A parental consent & health form should be completed for each child taking part in an organised activity. (Suggested format see page 12)
10. Leaders should know what to do in case of fire.
11. Leaders or those in positions of responsibility should be aware of signs of abuse and follow the guidelines (specified on pages 14 to 17) for dealing with any allegations.
12. All adults working with children, young people and adults at risk should be prepared to listen to their concerns.
13. All children, young people and adults at risk must be treated with respect and dignity fitting to their age.

14. Boundaries should be set for acceptable behaviour.
15. Each child, young person and adult at risk should be treated as an individual in their own right.
16. No leader should invite a child, young person or adult at risk to their home alone.
17. Groups meeting within the Church should be supported by prayer.

SAFE FROM HARM

(Home Office Publication 1993)

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Adopt a policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children and adults at risk.
- Plan work to minimise situations where the possible abuse of children and adults at risk may occur.
- Have a system whereby children and adults at risk may talk with an independent person.
- Apply agreed procedures for protecting children and adults at risk to all paid staff and volunteers.
- Give all paid staff and volunteers' clear roles.
- Use supervision and support as a means of protecting children and adults at risk.
- Treat all would-be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children and adults at risk
- Gain at least one reference from a person who has experience of the applicants paid work or volunteering with children and adults at risk.
- Explore all applicants' experience of working or contact with children and adults at risk in an interview before appointment.
- Find out whether an applicant has any conviction for criminal offences against children or adults at risk.
- Make paid and voluntary appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period.
- Issue guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse.
- Train paid staff and volunteers, their line managers or supervisors and policy makers in the prevention of child and adult abuse.

Adult/Child Ratios

Never work alone with a group or individual child/young person or adult at risk.

There must be enough adults for the numbers of young people/children in the group. The ratios given below are a minimum and may need to be increased for groups with special needs. Sometimes an extra adult with a willingness to listen or be an extra pair of hands is invaluable.

Indoor activities

These are ratios for adults to children. On no account should a worker be by themselves. The minimum number of adults should always be two, one of whom should be female.

The ratios required under The Children Act are:

- 0 to 2 years 1 member of staff to three children
- 2 to 3 years 1 member of staff to four children
- 3 to 7 years 1 member of staff to eight children

8 Years and over

The Children Act specifies the ratios for under eight's. The recommended ratios for children over eight and young people are:

- up to twenty children/young people, two adults (preferably one of each gender)
- one additional adult for every 1 to 10 extra children/young people
- example: 20 children = 1 male and 1 female adult (at least)
21 children = 1 male and 1 female plus one extra adult
31 children = 1 male and 1 female plus two extra adults

Outdoor activities

Events in the neighbourhood of the building require the same care and attention during the planning stage. The adult/child ratio should be increased.

Using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) – A Summary

Those working with children and young people in local churches, whether they are full time workers or regular volunteers, need to obtain an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The DBS check searches details against criminal records and other sources, including the Police National Computer. The URC works through an ecumenical body, the Churches' Agency for Safeguarding (CAS), in order to process these checks as simply as possible. DBS checks form a vital part of the recruitment process, enabling churches to assess if an applicant is suitable for a particular role. If an applicant wishes to work with children then the only way a church can check if they are barred from working with this group is by carrying out a DBS check.

How to use the DBS - The Process

1. The process is overseen by the Church Secretary (the designated person) who acts as the Verifier.
2. The applicant (the person involved in youth and children's work) completes the DBS application form online at <https://disclosure.capitarvs.co.uk/cas> using the password and organisation reference number available from the Church Secretary or Junior Church Co-ordinator.
3. The applicant meets with the Church Secretary who checks the applicant's identity against original documents verifying their date of birth, current name, address and (if applicable) their National Insurance number, Driving Licence number and passport number. The Church Secretary completes the online form verifying the applicants identity.
4. There is no fee for volunteers but there is a charge for paid employees.
5. The applicant will receive a Disclosure certificate which they will need to show to the Church Secretary and the Junior Church Co-ordinator
6. Within 14 days of a certificate being issued, the applicant can apply to the update service via www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service. The Church Secretary is then able to check on the status of an individual's certificate whenever required and as a minimum, every three years.

If there is a problem the URC DBS/CAS Reference group will be informed and will liaise with the Church Secretary and the applicant as to what happens next.

Further information about this process is available from the CAS website:

www.churchsafe.org.uk/resources

Sample Application Form for Volunteers

Everyone who is involved in any capacity in working with children and young people will want to ensure care and protection within a safe environment. This application form is for volunteers and unpaid workers to record information and ensure that the best possible care is taken for the protection and safety of all.

Please complete in black ink

Application for the post of:

Location / Church:

PERSONAL DETAILS

Surname:

First names:

Title:

Address:

Post Code:

Home:

Work:

Mobile:

Email:

All/any former names:

Date & place of birth:

If you have lived at the above address less than three years please give previous address/es with dates:

SKILLS, ABILITIES, KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

Why do you want to apply to do this work?

What ability, knowledge, commitment and experience do you have?

What is your church background and current place of worship?

Is there any other information you think should be known?

REFERENCES	
References will be taken up as one way of checking your suitability and to demonstrate the church's attention to proper care for children. Please give the name, address and contact number of two people who can provide an assessment of your suitability for the post.	
First Reference	
Name:	
Address:	
	Postcode:
Tel:	Connection with you:
Second Reference	
Name:	
Address:	
	Postcode:
Tel:	Connection with you:
DISCLOSURE OF CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS	
Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 ex-offenders have to disclose their criminal convictions when applying for Exempted posts. Work with Children and young people are 'Exempted' posts.	
Do you have any criminal convictions, cautions or bind overs: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If you have answered yes please enclose details with your application form	
Is there any other information you should declare that might affect your suitability for working with children and young people? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> e.g. Allegations which have been the subject of investigations; any current criminal investigations.	
If you have answered yes please enclose details with your application form	
DISCLOSURE	
Do you agree to undergo the relevant vetting processes, including 'Enhanced Disclosure' through the Disclosure and Barring Process, that shall be in place from time to time to establish your identity and your suitability for work with children and young people. The processes are in accordance with legal requirements and Good Practice Guidelines of the United Reformed Church. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
DECLARATION	
I declare that the information in this application is true and complete. I agree to references being taken up. If I am successful in obtaining this post and the information is later discovered to be incorrect I understand the appointment will be cancelled.	
Signed:	Date:

Sample Parent or Guardian Consent Form

Details of participant

Full name:

Address:

.....

Postcode:

Gender: Male / Female Date of birth:

Doctor's name, address & telephone number:

.....
.....

Current medical conditions (including asthma, allergies, migraine, diabetes, epilepsy, etc):

.....

Any medication currently being taken:

.....
.....

(To request that medication be administered, please complete a Request to Administer Medication form.)

Any additional needs (e.g. special dietary requirements, disability, etc):

.....

Contact Details of parent/carer

Name:

.....

Address:

.....

Home phone:

Other phone:

Email address:

.....

Details of alternative emergency contact

Name:

.....

Home phone: Other phone:

.....

Event details

Name of group (or event):.....

Venue of event:

Date(s) of event:

Declarations of consent

The following declarations must be signed by someone with parental responsibility for the participant:

General consent (including emergency medical treatment)

I have read the information sheet and give consent for to attend and participate in the normal activities of the above group / event. I acknowledge the need for them to behave responsibly and to take special note of any safety instructions.

I understand that while involved they will be under the care and supervision of the approved adult workers appointed by the church, though during periods of free time close supervision by workers may not always be possible. While these workers will take all reasonable care of the participants, they cannot necessarily be held responsible for any loss, damage or injury suffered during, or as a result of, the activity.

In the event of illness or accident requiring emergency treatment, I give consent for them to receive emergency dental, medical or surgical treatment as considered necessary by the medical professionals present. I understand that every effort will be made to contact me first.

Signed:

Dated:

Consent for photography and video:

From time to time we may take photographs or videos of the participants to provide a reminder of the event for those involved and to use on church displays, posters and flyers, church website, and occasionally in the local press. Photos or videos used publicly will focus on activities and groups rather than individuals; they will not show the outside of an identifiable building; and participants will not be named or linked with any personal details. Photos or videos will not be taken if the participant is themselves unwilling.

I give consent for photos/videos of the participant named on this form to be used..

Signed:

Dated:

.....

RECOGNISING POSSIBLE SIGNS OF ABUSE

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

PHYSICAL SIGNS OF ABUSE

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries which occur to the body which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Neglect - under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care etc
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinal infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse*

INDICATORS OF POSSIBLE SEXUAL ABUSE

- Any allegations made by a person concerning sexual abuse
- Child with obsessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age- inappropriate sexual play
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbance with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders – anorexia, bulimia*

EMOTIONAL SIGNS OF ABUSE

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging. Also depression, aggression, extreme anxiety
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness

- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden underachievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

RACE CULTURE AND RELIGION

Crucial to any assessment is knowledge and sensitivity to racial, cultural and religious aspects. Remember also that differences exist not only between ethnic groups but also within the same ethnic group and between different neighbourhoods and social classes. While different practices must be taken into account, it is also important to remember that all children have basic human rights.

Differences in child rearing do not justify child abuse.

* These signs may indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming, mostly by cutting, burning or self-poisoning. Approximately 20,000 are treated in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year.

HOW TO RESPOND TO A CHILD/ADULT AT RISK WANTING TO TALK ABOUT ABUSE

GENERAL POINTS

- Above everything else, listen, listen, listen
- Echo back to them what they are saying
- Show acceptance of what they say (however unlikely the story might sound)
- Keep calm
- Look at them directly
- Be honest
- Tell them you will need to let someone else know – don't promise confidentiality
- Even when a person has broken a rule they are not to blame for the abuse
- Be aware that they may have been threatened or bribed not to tell
- Never push for information. If they decide not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know you are always ready to listen
- As soon as possible write down what has been shared

HELPFUL RESPONSES

- You have done the right thing in telling
- That must have been really hard
- I am glad you have told 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

Again reassure them that they were right to tell you and show acceptance. Let them know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (you might have to consider referring to Social Services or the police to prevent a child or adult at risk returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse).

Contact one of the link people in the church responsible for co-ordinating child protection concerns.

If they are not available or for further advice, contact Jane Henderson (Children and Youth Development Officer, East Midlands Synod URC 07572 291007) or an agency such as CCPAS (The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service) for advice or go directly to Social Services (Tel: 01158765600), the Police or the NSPCC.

Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed.

MAKING NOTES

Make notes as soon as possible, preferably within one hour of the child or adult at risk talking to you. Write down exactly what they said and when s/he said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (eg a description of the activity). Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all hand written notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept for an indefinite period in a secure place.

RESPONDING TO ABUSE - WORKERS ACTION SHEET

CONFIDENTIAL

Name of Church/Group

.....

Name of Child/Young Person/Adult at Risk.....

Address

.....

.....

Date of Birth//

Name of Person Reporting Incident

Date//

Time of Incident

Sequence of Events/Actual Words Used/Observations

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Action Taken (including person(s) contacted)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Date// Time

Notes:

.....

This form should be given to your church/organisation child protection co-ordinator

(link person)