

Caring for Children and Young People



ashwood
church

Charity Number 517739

**Safeguarding
Children, Young
People and
Vulnerable Adults
Policy**

Our Values

This policy has been prepared to ensure the protection, well-being and safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in Ashwood activities and those working with them.

As an organisation we believe that:

- Children young people, and vulnerable adults should be respected and valued as individuals.
- We should provide a safe, caring environment with a happy and friendly atmosphere
- We have a responsibility to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults and report suspected or disclosed abuse to the appropriate statutory authorities
- We have a responsibility to support and train those who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults, and to provide ongoing support and supervision
- We have a commitment to best practice as far as our work with children, young people and vulnerable adults is concerned

Vulnerable Adults

The term “**vulnerable adult**” refers to a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability, illness, old age, emotional fragility, distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired. They will not always regard themselves as vulnerable. Factors which MAY increase vulnerability include:

- A mental illness, chronic or acute
- A sensory or physical disability or impairment
- A learning disability
- A physical illness
- Dementia
- An addiction to alcohol or drugs
- Failing faculties of old age
- Those who are homeless
- Refugee families or individuals (including those seeking asylum)
- Victims/survivors of domestic abuse – direct violence and/or significant emotional coercion
- Those who have suffered historic abuse in childhood
- A permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events – for example bereavement, abuse or trauma

The legal context

The Children’s Act (1989) clearly established in law that the welfare of a child is always paramount and takes precedence over everything else.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that:

- Children must be kept safe from harm
- They must be given proper care by those looking after them
- They have the right not to be punished cruelly or in a way that belittles them

ABUSE

How to deal with abuse

As an organisation we have a duty to prevent abuse and to report any abuse suspected or discovered.

Abuse of Children and Young People:

Physical abuse

Actual or likely injury to a child or failure to prevent physical injury.

Possible signs include unexplained injuries or those which have received no medical attention e.g. Bruising in unusual places, finger marks, bite marks, burns, scars, allegedly unnoticed fractures.

Sexual abuse

Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child.

Possible signs include allegations made by the child or young person, preoccupation with sexual matters, sexual activity through words, play or drawings, severe sleep disturbances with fears and phobias, being sexually provocative with adults.

Emotional abuse

Actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child.

Possible signs include regression in behaviour, nervousness, sudden under-achievement, inappropriate relationships with peers/adults, attention-seeking, running away/stealing/lying, looking uncared-for.

Neglect

The persistent or severe neglect of a child or the failure to protect them from danger, leading to a serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Physical abuse and neglect are difficult to hide. Sexual abuse can be almost impossible to identify and prove. An overall sign/indicator of any abuse might be sudden, unexplained changes in behaviour, personality and unusual quietness or withdrawal. Many symptoms of distress can point to abuse but there may be other explanations. It is important, therefore, that the above signs are not taken as indications that abuse has taken place. They should make us stop and think, but not necessarily jump to conclusions.

Domestic Abuse - Witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse, and teenagers can suffer domestic abuse in their relationships.

Sexual Exploitation - Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed and exploited online. Some children and young people are trafficked into or within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Bullying and Cyberbullying - Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else – such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It is usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Bullying that happens online, using social networks, games and mobile phones, is often called cyberbullying. A child can feel like there is no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night.

Online Abuse - With the ever-growing use of the internet, mobile telephones and online gaming (e.g. Xbox/ PlayStation), there has been a corresponding rise in the use of the internet and other electronic communication to target, groom and abuse children. Adults may target chat rooms, social networking sites, messaging services, mobile phones, online gaming sites and the internet generally. Children are particularly vulnerable to abuse by adults who pretend to be children of comparable ages when online and who try to obtain images or engineer meetings.

Electronic Images - The downloading, keeping or distributing of indecent images of children are all classified as sexual offences. Such offences are sometimes referred to as non-contact sexual offences. However, it must be remembered that children will have been abused in the making of the images. The texting of sexual messages and photographs can be particularly problematic and abusive amongst children and young people.

(please also see the Ashwood use of mobile phone and use of social media policies)

Abuse of Vulnerable Adults:

The UK central government categorises and defines adult abuse in terms of:

- **Physical abuse** including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.
- **Sexual abuse** including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented or could not consent or was pressurised into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse** including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse** including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Neglect or acts of omission** including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- **Discriminatory abuse** including racist, sexist, that is based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.
- **Domestic abuse** that is usually a systematic, repeated and often escalating pattern of behaviour by which the abuser seeks to control, limit and humiliate, often behind closed doors.
- **Organisational abuse** including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional

practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

- **Modern Slavery** including human trafficking; forced labour and domestic servitude; traffickers and slave masters using whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment

If you suspect a child, young person or vulnerable adult is being abused

1. Do not delay – act quickly.
2. Seek an explanation of your concerns from the parent, carer of the child without raising the question of abuse.
3. Carefully make a hand-written, dated note of your observations, and pass to the Safeguarding Coordinator as soon as possible. Do not keep a copy of the notes.
4. Talk to the group/activity leader or to the Safeguarding Coordinator who will decide on an appropriate course of action. Do not discuss with anyone other than this.
5. If you remain suspicious, you have a personal responsibility to refer to Social Care Services or the Police, although we would expect that the Safeguarding Coordinator would be informed of your decision.
6. Please note that it is not your role to interrogate or investigate suspected abuse and this could compromise any subsequent legal action that might be taken.
7. The Chair of trustees will be informed if it becomes necessary to contact the police or other statutory body.

It is important to note that a disabled child or young person may be at increased risk due to their greater vulnerability or lack of or limited verbal communication.

If a child or young person wants to talk about abuse

- Find a quiet, appropriate place to talk.
- Accept what the child or young person says, keeping calm and looking at them directly.
- Let them know why you need to tell someone else, do not promise confidentiality, being clear about 'no secrets' is really important.
- Be aware that they may be being threatened.
- Listen carefully but never push for information. Do not ask leading questions or suggest abusive actions that may have happened.
- Don't speculate or accuse anybody. Do not put words into their mouth or finish their sentences.
- Don't make promises that you can't keep.
- Reassure the young person that they were right to tell you.
- Let them know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens. Make sure you do this.
- Do not confront the person who is alleged to be responsible for the abuse.
- Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what was said and when he/she said it. Record dates and times of these events and keep the hand-written record, even if these are subsequently typed up, for an indefinite period. These notes should be given to the Safeguarding Coordinator as soon as possible. Do not keep a copy.

- Report immediately to the Safeguarding Coordinator or, if they are not available, a Trustee Member. If neither are available, immediate contact should be made with Social Care Services.
- Offer ongoing support to the child/young person.

The Safeguarding Officer will make a decision as to any course of action to be taken. The Chair of trustees will be informed if it becomes necessary to contact the police or other statutory body.

Any worker, staff or volunteer can bypass the procedures and share concerns with an outside agency – Social Care Services, Churches Child Protection Advisory Service or the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children – if they feel that the company/charity is not dealing adequately with their concern or that people concerned (e.g. Trustee, Member or Employee) are implicated in some way.

We wish to encourage people to voice their concern should they have any reason to do so. Please contact the Safeguarding Coordinator if any matter comes to light which you think needs acting upon.

Prevent Duty

Under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, charities are encouraged to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. This duty is known as the Prevent duty. Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation should be seen as part of our wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other harms

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to a terrorist ideology. As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children’s behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Children at risk of radicalisation may display different signs or seek to hide their views. Staff and volunteers should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately.

General safeguarding principles as set out in the rest of this policy apply to keeping children safe from the risk of radicalisation.

Guidelines for appointing workers

Care should be exercised in the appointment of workers, both voluntary and paid. This will be done by:

- Asking the potential worker to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Check with the DBS. This will be updated every 3 years.
- Asking the potential worker to complete a form giving their name, current address and telephone number. These forms will be kept up to date by the Safeguarding Coordinator. Workers may be asked to produce their birth certificate or other proof of identity

- Talking to a potential worker and finding out about any past experiences which may affect their ability to work with young people
- Talking to others who may know the person
- Making all appointments, paid and voluntary, conditional upon the satisfactory completion of a period of probation
- Only confirming appointment after due review and consultation with the worker and any other interested party e.g. Other workers, leaders
- Taking references, particularly when the potential worker is unknown

Note: Individuals who have a previous record of abusing children or vulnerable adults will not be allowed to work with children and young people. Nor will they be permitted to be present when youth and children's activities are taking place.

Support, training and supervision of workers

All those working with children and young people will be expected to undertake regular training and updates in safeguarding issues. Workers should be clear about their roles and responsibilities. They should have read the safeguarding policy and accompanying policies which are available from the Safeguarding Coordinator.

All workers should be aware that their contact with children and young people puts them in a relationship of trust (i.e. In a position of power and influence) both within and outside the activity/group concerned.

Regular opportunities should be made for workers to meet together to review and plan their work, to share their experiences, to receive training and to talk about their relationships with the children and young people.

Where possible, those with overall responsibility for a group should take opportunities to observe those for whom they are responsible as they work.

A Safeguarding Coordinator will be appointed to have responsibility for the coordination and implementation of Ashwood's Safeguarding policy and procedures.

Leadership of activities

Records should be kept detailing the name and address of children and young people under 18 attending groups, as well as the name and contact number of a parent/guardian. These should be available at each session.

As far as possible, no activity, group, or event with children or young people is to take place where there is not at least one male and female worker present, unless the group of young people concerned is made up of the same sex whereupon these shall be not less than two workers present of this sex.

If counselling or one-to-one work is to take place, other workers should be informed when and where this is taking place, and take place in a public setting. Where the young person and their family is new to Ashwood, or is of different gender to the worker, another worker should always be present.

Children and young people are to be treated with respect and dignity, with importance being given to appropriate use of language, touch and attitude.

If a young person or child is to be taken home on their own, they should occupy the rear seat of the vehicle.

Consent should be sought for those under 18 wishing to participate in activities taking place off site.

Activities should be planned in ways which minimise risk to children and young people.

The minimal staffing levels for activities should be as follows:

- 0 - 2 years - **one adult** to three children.
- 2 - 3 years - **one adult** to four children.
- 4 - 8 years - **one adult** to six children.
- 9 - 12 years - **one adult** to eight children.
- 13 - 18 years - **one adult** to ten children.

Acceptable Touch

Sympathetic attention, humour, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by children and adults. Some physical contact with children, particularly younger children, is wholly appropriate. The following guidelines regarding touching are suggested:

- **Always** ask permission.
- Be mindful of your body position.
- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be in response to a child's needs and not related to the worker's needs. It should be age appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the child, not by yourself
- Avoid any physical contact that is or could be construed as sexual and/or abusive/offensive.
- Allow the child to determine the degree of physical contact with others except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. when they need medical attention).
- In addition:
 - ✓ You can allow people you support to give you brief hugs if you feel comfortable with this.
 - ✓ You can allow people you support to hold hands or link arms with you to help with travel and stability.
 - ✓ You should discourage people you support from touching your face. You can offer your hand instead.
 - ✓ You should discourage people you support from sitting on your lap. You can offer to sit side by side.
 - ✓ You should avoid using touch if the person you support is very distressed and is unlikely to tolerate it.

Useful phone numbers

Safeguarding Coordinator

Zoe Bell

T: 07736317366

E: zoe@ashwoodchurch.org.uk

Chair of Trustees

Elaine Torr

T: **01623 440405**

Other useful contacts

Children Social Care Services – **0300 500 80 80**

Emergency Out of Hours Duty Team – **0300 456 4546**

thirtyone:eight – (advisory body for church safeguarding)
helpline – **0303 003111**

NSPCC **0808 800 5000**

ChildLine (for children/young people) **0800 1111**

Groundlevel Network

Responsible for our DBS checks and safeguarding issues

01522 542166

Last updated October 2020

