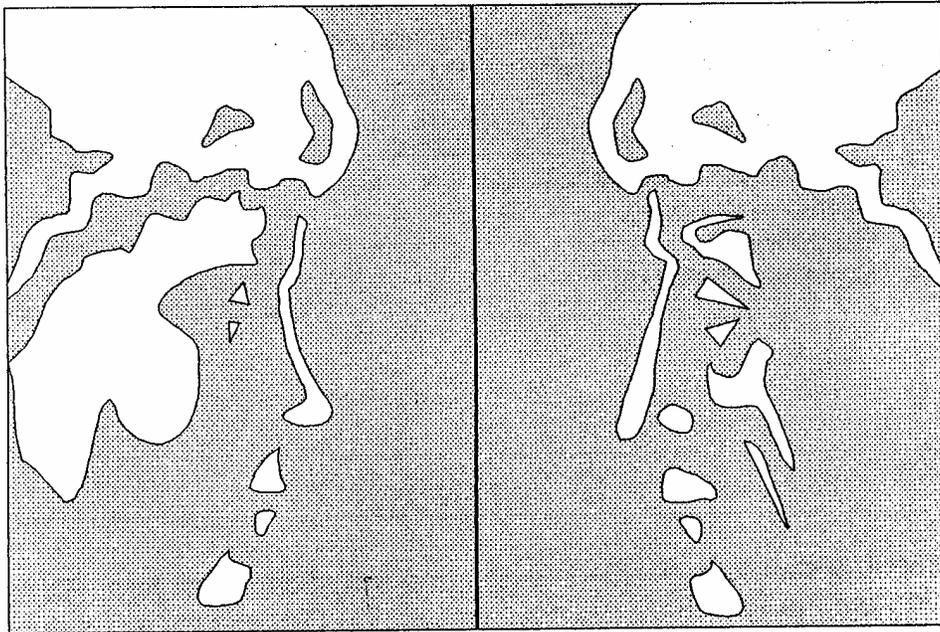


*Ecumenical Partnership of
West Swindon and the Lydiards*

‘SAFE TO GROW’

Policy Statement and Procedures Manual



2007 EDITION

Ecumenical Partnership of West Swindon and the Lydiards

SAFE TO GROW

Policy Statement and Procedures Manual
(Revised Edition 2007)

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Overview.

This document is based on the Home Office publication, '*Safe from Harm*' (1993), the Baptist Union publication, '*Safe to Grow*' (1994), the Diocese of Bristol publication '*Safe and Sound*', the Methodist Church Division of Education and Youth publication '*Safeguarding Children and Young People*' (1995), and Swindon Youth for Christ's '*Guidelines for Work with and the Pastoral Care of Young People*' (1996). The policy and procedures contained in this document are intended for adoption throughout the Ecumenical Partnership of West Swindon and The Lydiards, with the precise intention of minimising the risk of abuse to children and young people; and of ensuring identification and appropriate action if abuse occurs, or is thought to occur.

SAFE TO GROW POLICY STATEMENT

Agreed by the ECC/PCC of the Ecumenical Partnership of West Swindon and The Lydiards

Children and young people belong to our church today. They have much to give as well as receive. We need to listen to them. As we nurture them in worship, learning and in community, life, we will pay appropriate respect to the wishes and feelings of children and young people.

- o The Ecumenical Partnership of West Swindon and The Lydiards commits itself to the nurture and safekeeping of all, especially children and young people, and their spiritual and social development in a safe and secure environment.
- o It is the responsibility of all church members to seek to prevent the physical, sexual, spiritual and emotional abuse of children and young people, and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.
- o We recognise that our work with children and young people is the responsibility of the whole church.
- o The church is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children and young people.
- o The church is committed to following the Home Office Code of Practice 'Safe from Harm'.
- o Each worker with children and young people will be working in accordance with the church's agreed procedures and will receive supervision especially with appointment procedures, requiring references and Criminal Records bureau checks
- o As part of our commitment to children and young people, the church has appointed:

_____ and _____

to be their Advocate(s). Their name, photograph and phone number will be publicly displayed. The role of the Advocate, is as someone with whom children and young people can chat and share their problems and concerns.

- o As part of our commitment to children and young people, the church has appointed:

as the Safe to Grow Coordinator

SAFE TO GROW IMPLEMENTATION AND TRAINING

Implementation

- o The Policy Statement will be explained to the churches once a year and the Policy Statement adopted at full meetings of the fellowship, rather than only in committee.
- o A copy of the Policy Statement along with the section on Good Practice for the Whole Church will be displayed on a prominent notice board.
- o A leaflet containing the Policy Statement and the section on Good Practice for the Whole Church will be available for every person attending the church.
- o All those working with children and young people will require references and a Criminal Records Bureau check.
- o Advocates and all who have a supervisory role will be given a complete copy of the Policy Statement and Procedures Manual.
- o Those working with children and young people, on completing a probationary period and 'Safe to Grow' training, will receive a document containing a copy of:
 - The Policy Statement
 - Good Practice for the Whole Church
 - Good Practice for those Working Directly with Children and Young People
 - Good Practice for Residential or Excursion Activities
 - Procedures if Abuse is Disclosed or Discovered
 - A 'Safe to Grow' Certificate (Appendix 2 - Form C)
 - A signed Volunteers Contract (Appendix 2 - Form D)
 - A signed Declaration Form (Appendix 2 - Form E)

Initial Training Programme

- o All who wish to work with children or young people, in whatever capacity, are required to attend an initial 'Safe to Grow' training programme. This initial training programme will be provided during a six-month probationary period, or equivalent time period.
- o Ideally this initial training programme will be conducted by Social Services and/or qualified children / youth worker and/or a Child Protection Officer from a Parent denomination and/or a representative sent by the Parent denomination.
- o This initial training programme will allow for discussion and feedback on the policy and how it is working, with suggestions for improvement and alterations.

Continuing Training

- o All who wish to work with children and young people, in whatever capacity, are required to attend a Refresher 'Safe to Grow' training program every three years.
- o Ideally this Refresher training programme will be conducted by Social Services and/or qualified children / youth worker. The training programme is open to any who wish to attend (for example those working with children but not as part of the church).

SAFE TO GROW

GOOD PRACTICE FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH

Adoption of the 'Safe to Grow' Policy Statement implies acceptance that it is the responsibility of the whole church (and not simply those working directly with children and young people) to seek to prevent the abuse of children and young people in our churches and in activities connected with them. To that end ALL should adopt the following practice, unless in so doing a greater risk of abuse is generated. Good practice in all aspects of disability and discrimination procedure is also expected.

The church leadership should ensure that:

- As far as possible no one other than a parent/guardian should be alone with a child or young person where their activities cannot be seen. On church premises this may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working together.
- In a 'counselling' situation with a child or young person, where privacy and confidentiality are paramount, try to ensure that another adult knows the interview is taking place and with whom. If possible seek approval from the child or young person for another adult to attend, or in the building and that the child or young person is aware that they are there.
- Ensure that access to the building is safe and well lit.
- Include the following statement in any licence with organisations letting church premises:

'The licensee confirms that it is familiar with the Home Office Code of Practice 'Safe from Harm', has an understanding of it and undertakes to follow its guidelines in relation to work with those aged 18 or under. '

Members of the church should:

- Be aware of the contents of the Policy Statement and ensure that they follow its principles 'when with children and young people.
- Advise the children's advocate when they feel anyone (including a leader) is acting in a way which might be, or construed to be, not in accordance with these guidelines and consequently potentially harmful to a child or young person.
- Ensure that as far as practically possible they are not alone with a child or young person where their activities cannot be seen.
- Ensure that language, tone of voice and body language are appropriate.
- Not engage in any of the following:
 - Invading the privacy of children or young people when they are showering or toileting.
 - Sexually provocative games.
 - Making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or young person. Even in fun.
 - Inappropriate or intrusive touching of any form.

- Any scape-goating, ridiculing or rejecting of a child or young person.
- Ensure that any event or excursion organised involving children or young people has been discussed with the appropriate church leader.
- Not let any child or young person involve them in excessive attention seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature.

SAFE TO GROW

GOOD PRACTICE FOR THOSE WORKING DIRECTLY WITH CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE

If you are appointed by the church to work directly with children and/or young people you should be aware of the following:

- The church's procedures and requirements for being accepted to work with children and young people.
- That the church operates a policy of supervision for the protection of both adult and child, and that observations will be made from time to time.
- The need to be alert for signs of abuse.
- Be aware of what to do when abuse is disclosed or discovered.

In addition to the requirement laid on all church members (see previous section) you must:

- Treat those in your care with respect and dignity befitting their age.
- Learn to control and use appropriate disciplinary procedures with children and young people without ever resorting to physical punishment.
- Ensure there is the appropriate leader to child ratio (see Appendix 1 B – Ratio Guidelines)
- Where possible, leaders of the same gender as the children or young people need to be present, especially where older children and young people are concerned. (see Appendix 1 B - Ratio Guidelines)
- Control the level of aggression or exclusion particularly in games.
- Make sure another adult is present if, for example, a young child has soiled their underclothes and needs to be thoroughly washed.
- Not invite a child or young person to, or have them remain in, a leader's home alone. (Invite a group, or ensure a third person is present).
- Ensure the parent/guardian knows where their child is.
- Not to be alone in a car with a child or young person.
- Keep a register of up to date information concerning child or young person membership. (See Appendix 3 A - Register). Each session to be registered properly including names of children and young people, and all leaders and helpers. This register, in turn, can be used for essential checks in the event of building evacuation.
- Ensure provision is made for medical help if required.
- Be aware of where the nearest telephone for use in emergencies. (The installation of a telephone, on church premises, with easy access, or mobile, is recommended).
- Know where the fire extinguishers and alarms are, as well as emergency exits. (It is recommended that an agreed fire drill is drawn up indicating how and where children and young people ought to congregate in cases of fire).
- Not place one person alone with a child, children, young person or people.
- Allow unknown adults access to children or young people. Visitors should always be accompanied by a known person.

SAFE TO GROW

GOOD PRACTICE FOR RESIDENTIAL AND EXCURSION ACTIVITIES

Great care should be exercised when taking children or young people away from the place where you usually meet them. In particular, when taking children or young people away on excursions that involve overnight stays. In addition to the previous pages you must:

- Ensure the trip is well planned and fully discussed and suitable for the age group concerned.
- Inform the church committee and their approval obtained and minuted.
- Obtain signed consent from parents/legal guardians. The Children's Act (1989) states that consent has to be obtained from both parents. All reasonable steps should be taken to ensure this. (See Appendix 3 B - Consent Form).
- Ensure there is the appropriate leader to child ratio (See Appendix 3 B – Consent Form).
- Ensure that in the case of overnight stays:
 - There must be same sex leaders as the children or young people attending.
 - Leader's and children or young people have separate sleeping accommodation.
 - Separate sleeping accommodation is provided for each gender.
 - Where possible, provide sleeping accommodation for differing age groups.
 - Do not invade the privacy of children or young people unnecessarily. Leaders are to knock before entering dormitory accommodation and, except for emergencies, to enter the accommodation of children or young people of the same sex only.
 - For residential work longer than 90 days, or where a young person under 18 is employed by the organisation and living away from home, the organisation shall register with the Social Services as an organisation which takes children and young people away, and shall register both with the Social Services Department and the location's Social Services Department when using a specific venue.
- Have back up plans should you be unable to complete the original planned program.
- Ensure provision is made for medical help in necessary. Ensure that there is a complete First Aid kit, and that it is checked frequently.
- Be advised that it is good practice for, at least, one leader or helper to be qualified in First Aid.
- Where minibuses are used it is expected that all drivers and leaders will adhere to the legal (and where appropriate, local authority) regulations.

SAFE TO GROW TRANSPORT

Private transport

- Children and young people should not be taken out in private cars without the prior consent of their parents. This also applies to giving lifts to and from a church activity.
- If any leaders or helpers use their own cars for youth and children's work, it is essential that they consult their insurers about such use and confirm this to the PCC.
- Whoever makes the transport arrangements it is always the responsibility of the driver to ensure the vehicle is roadworthy and adequately insured.
- Any driver who has an 'unspent' conviction for a driving offence should not transport children.
- At no time should the number of children in a car exceed the usual passenger number. There must be a seat belt for every passenger and these must be worn.
- There should be 2 adults in each car in which children are travelling and a minimum of 2 children. If, in an emergency, a driver has to transport one child on his or her own the child should sit in the back of the car and this should be recorded on an incident sheet. (see Form D)
- Drivers who are not normal children's/youth workers should be recruited for the task through the parish's normal recruitment processes.

Minibuses

- If a minibus is hired then motor insurance will need to be arranged and this should be available as part of the hiring arrangement. A minibus with seat belts should be used and all children/young people must have a proper seat. Some hire companies require evidence of a Midas Mini Bus test

Coaches

- The PCC should check that any independent coach company used for transporting children has appropriate insurance in place.

SAFE TO GROW

PROCEDURE FOR SELECTING CHILDREN'S WORKERS AND ADVOCATES

We should not assume that anyone could automatically be excluded from being a potential abuser. Therefore the Home Office guidelines (see appendix 1) must apply to anyone in contact with children or young people.

In particular we are asked:

To treat all would be workers as if they were job applicants, whether volunteers or not.

- To give all paid staff and volunteers clear roles.
- To gain at least one reference
- That appointment is conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period.
- To explore the applicants previous experience.
- To discover whether the applicant has any convictions for criminal offences against children.
- That written acceptance of the Church's Policy Statement on child protection is condition of service for all workers.

Therefore the Ecumenical Partnership of West Swindon and The Lydiards has agreed the following procedure:

Stage 1 - Interview and Application

- An interview will be arranged with the supervisor at which the applicants' experience of working with children and/or young people will be explored.
- All new applicants will be asked to complete an Application Form (Appendix 2 – Form A)
- This shall be done, either during or, shortly following the interview. In either case it must be completed prior to commencement of work with children or young people.
- The applicant must provide two references one of which should be from a person who has experience of their work with children or young people.
- The supervisor will inform the Safe to Grow Co-ordinator of the new application.
- **A CRB check and registration will subsequently follow for every applicant.**

Stage 2 – Reference (Appendix 2 – Forms B)

- Due to the importance of maintaining confidentiality, references will be sought and held by the Safe to Grow Administrator at the Partnership Office.
- Using the Reference Request Form (B), references will be sought.
- All Reference Forms (B) will be returned to the Partnership Safe to Grow coordinator, at the Partnership Office.
- It is advised that verbal confirmation and clarification is also sought from references.
- Confirmation of the client's CRB Check will be received from the Diocese of Bristol

Stage 3 - Probationary Period and Training

- Appointment is conditional on the successful completions of a six-month probationary period or equivalent time period. This needs to be agreed with the applicant.
- The person responsible for supervision should use this time to give support and monitor the way the applicant Works with the children or young people.
- During the probationary period the applicant will receive training in 'Safe to Grow', on completion of which the 'Safe to Grow' Certificate (Appendix 2 - Form C) is to be signed by the 'Safe to Grow' trainer and awarded to the applicant.
- A record of all trained 'Safe to Grow' applicants to be held on file in the Partnership Office.
- The Applicant shall receive a 'Safe to Grow' pack containing:
 - The Policy Statement
 - Good Practice for the Whole Church
 - Good Practice for those working Directly with Children and Young People
 - Good Practice for Residential or Excursion Activities.
 - Procedures if Abuse is Disclosed or Discovered
 - A 'Safe to Grow' Certificate (Appendix 2 -. Form C)
 - A signed Volunteers Contract (Appendix 2 - Form D)
 - A signed Declaration form (Appendix 2 – Form E)

Stage 4 - On Completion

- On completion of the agreed probationary period, the supervisor will recommend to the church committee whether the person is suitable for the post. If the committee so decides they will confirm the appointment and minute their decision. A contract with the church will be issued.
 - The Contract (Appendix 2 - Form D) should:
 - Give an accurate and clear description of the work agreed to.
 - Describe the support to be provided by the church.
 - Two copies shall be signed. One shall be held on file the other held by the applicant.
 - The applicant will complete the Declaration Form (Appendix 2 - Form E) indicating that they understand agree to the commitment being taken.

Additional Information

- All new applicants will follow the procedure set out above.
 - Current workers will also be asked to complete any forms currently not on file.
 - Advocates will be appointed annually at the church AGM, on the recommendation of the Church Committee or Leadership team.
 - All forms will be kept in the Partnership Office.

SAFE TO GROW CHURCH POLICY AND PRACTICE ON SUPERVISION

Those supervising work with children and young people will:

- Hold regular meetings with workers to review and plan work.
- Support those working with children and young people. And enquire as to their working and personal relationship with the children or young people.
- Take or create opportunities for observing those working with children and young people.
- Watch for any child or young person receiving exceptional treatment. For example being highly favoured, excluded, or treated unduly harshly.
- Hold regular meetings with the Advocate(s) and Church Leaders to review the work.
- Provide, under direction of the Church Leadership, appropriate training opportunities for those working with children and young people.
- Keep written records meetings, training and observation sessions.

If the Supervisor has concerns relating to good practice between an adult leader/helper and a child or young person, they should explore further by talking:

- Confidentially with the leader/helper concerned.

The issue should not be abandoned until the Supervisor/ leader is sure there is no possibility of abuse.

SAFE TO GROW

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

The Church and all its appointed children and youth workers are committed to the protection of children from physical, sexual or emotional abuse.

Definition of Child Abuse

An abused child is a boy or girl under the age of 18 years who has suffered from or is believed to be at significant risk of neglect, physical injury, emotional abuse or sexual abuse.

An adult who has a position of trust or authority with respect to a child may perpetrate Child abuse. These adults may be the parents or carers of the child or any other person known to the child or family who may have contact with the child. A child may also be the victim of abuse where the abuser is another child.

Child abuse may be the result of direct acts towards the child by any of those mentioned above, or by the failure of those who have responsibility for the child to provide reasonable care, or both.

Categories of Child Abuse:

Physical the actual or Likely Physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child, including deliberate poisoning, suffocation, or Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

Emotional the actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe and emotional ill treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment. This category should be used when it is the main or sole form of abuse.

Sexual the actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. The child may be dependent and/or developmentally immature.

Neglect the persistent or severe neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation, or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Organised Abuse

Organised or multiple abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of related or non-related children and young people. The abusers concerned may be acting in networks to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation, or maybe using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse. They may use children themselves to recruit other children.

Organised abuse can be in a quasi-religious or ritualised form.

Spiritual where an adult with spiritual authority uses that authority to coerce, control or exploit a follower causing spiritual wounds

Although there is no statutory definition of 'significant' the word 'harm' is defined in The Children Act 1989 in Section 31 (9) as "ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development".

'Development' is defined as "physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development". 'Health' means "physical or mental health" and "ill-treatment" includes "sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical". For example, with a case of neglect it will be necessary to consider whether it involves actual or likely significant harm and whether it involves ill-treatment or impairment of health or development, in each case, as defined by the Children Act 1989.

SAFE TO GROW PROCEDURE IF ABUSE IS DISCLOSED OR DISCOVERED

Possible Signs of Abuse

The following may indicate abuse, but do not jump to conclusions. There could be other explanations.

- Physical** unexplained or hidden injuries, lack of medical attention (See Appendix 1 - C)
- Emotional** reverting to younger behaviour, nervousness, stealing, lying, sudden underachievement, attention seeking, running away; may be frightened by threats or taunts, or are given responsibilities beyond their years.
- Sexual** preoccupation with sexual matters evident in words, play, drawings; being sexually provocative with adults; disturbed sleep, nightmares, bedwetting, secretive relationships with adults.
- Neglect** looking ill -cared for and unhappy, being withdrawn or aggressive; having lingering injuries or health problems.
- Spiritual** where an adult with spiritual authority uses that authority to coerce

Where there is clear evidence of abuse:

- Do not delay
- Do not confront
- Do not act alone
- Do not start to investigate
- Consult with your Children's Advocate as soon as possible.
- Seek advice from the Diocesan Child Protection Officer a.s.a.p. – see telephone number below
- As and when appropriate and following advice given: Inform the local Social Services and/or the Police immediately and in any event within 24 hours.

In an emergency involving a child protection issue ring one of the following statutory child protection agencies:

- The Police Dial 999 or 01793 528111
- Social Services Children's Intake (Office hours only) Dial 01793 463000
- Child Protection Officer – Diocese of Bristol Dial 0844 892 0104
- NSPCC Dial 0800 800500
- Childline Dial 0800 1111
- Vulnerable Adults Unit Dial 01793 507828

The following is a summary, for reference only and is no substitute for training.

When talking with a child:

- Look at the child directly
- Reassure the child that they are right to tell you and you believe them.
- Accept what the child says
- Do not press for information.
- Tell the child they are not to blame.
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened.
- Do not appear shocked or appalled.
- Let them know that you may need to tell someone else; do not promise confidentiality.
- If you are informed of anything illegal you must inform your **Children's Advocate(s)**.
- Let them know what you are going to do next, who you are going to inform and why.
- Let them know roughly what will happen next, yet be sensitive. (See below)
- Finish on a positive note.
- As soon as possible afterwards make hand-written factual notes of exactly what the child said and the date and time of your talk.
- Do not take on board other people's problems as if they were your own. Remember, empathy is standing in someone else's shoes with your feet firmly in your own.

HOME OFFICE GUIDELINES

In order to safeguard the welfare of the children and young people in their charge, voluntary organisations should consider the issues raised by each of the following statements of principles and then, if they wish to do so, take any action which they deem to be appropriate in the light of their circumstances, structures and the nature of their activities.

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

Safe from Harm: Summary of Recommendations page 2
(Pub: Home Office, London 1993, ISBN 0 62529 93-X)