



Free to Grow

Safe to Grow

Guidelines for good practice in work with children and young people within Upton Vale Baptist Church

Safeguarding

Safeguarding has a broader definition than child protection, as it includes the important element of prevention.

It can be defined in the following terms:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development, and
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully

UVBC our Safeguarding Team/Officer

As a church we have a responsibility to God and each other to care for, nurture and protect our children and young people.

For this reason we have a Youth Leadership Team who fulfil the role of Safeguarding Team, which includes the Youth Pastor, Children and Families worker and at least one lay Elder/Trustee.

Safe to Grow – Safeguarding Officer Job Description

The team's responsibility is to work together under the guidance of the chair (Youth Pastor) to fulfil the following objectives:

- Receive and record information from anyone who has safeguarding concerns
- Assess the information properly and carefully, clarifying and obtaining more information when needed
- Consult with outside bodies where appropriate to discuss concerns
- Make a formal referral to social services or police if appropriate or advised to do so
- Ensure that all members of YLT/Safeguarding Team and the Senior Pastor are aware of any referral as appropriate.

Any member of this team can be consulted if parents, leaders or young people themselves, have concerns or comments about any aspect of the church's work with children and young people and, particularly, if there is suspicion of abuse of a child within any area of their life.

Safe to Grow – Safeguarding/Youth Leadership Team members must exhibit the following qualities:

The churches advocates will be people who exhibit the following qualities:

- Committed Christian faith
- Ability to keep confidences
- Experience of work with children/young people
- Respect for the church leadership
- Emotional stability
- Ability to act both independently and as part of a team
- Ability to take difficult decisions
- Ability to work with other people and organisations (Social services, NSPCC, police etc.)

NB – All members of this team are required to attend and complete the Baptist Union's training for Safeguarding Officers within one year of joining the team.

UPTON VALE BAPTIST CHURCH CHILD SAFETY POLICY

AIM: This policy has a threefold aim, namely:

1. To protect children attending the church or any associated activities from being abused or mistreated.
2. To protect those involved in children's work from malicious allegations by children, or their parents; and
3. To foster relationships of trust between those involved in children's work and the children (and where appropriate their parents), such that the children feel safe to talk about any matters with adults, should the need arise.
4. To ensure clear lines of communication exist between those working with children/families and the Safeguarding Team/Officers.

DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS POLICY:

"Adult" - A person aged 18 or over.

"The appropriate outside agency" - The Police; Social Services or other Child Care Agency.

"Child or Young Person" - A person under 18.

"The Eldership/Church Leadership Team (CLT)" - The trustees of Upton Vale Baptist Church, constituted of elected 'lay' elders and staff members of Upton Vale Baptist Church, Castle Circus, Torquay.

"I.R.B." - Incident Report Book which will consist of individual reports, on single sheets, and entered by the "leader in charge" in a loose-leaf folder, numbering each entry consecutively.

These are located in the Basement and cupboards in rooms in which activities regularly take place.

"The Leader in charge" - The person appointed by the Church, as designated leader of a particular group or area of work. e.g. Youth Clubs, Kidzone group, Morning out.

"Leader" – any person with a role of influence working directly with children or young people.

"Safeguarding Team/Officer (SGT)" – The Team appointed by the Church to oversee the Children's / Youth work within the church in terms of safety and good practise.

POLICY:

1. Leaders in charge of children's and youth organisations in the Church must make known the names of all Leaders, and their roles, to the Safeguarding Team (SGT) in writing. The Children's and Youth Administrator on behalf of the SGT will require every Leader to complete a "Volunteer helper's form". On behalf of the SGT we require all Leaders to complete a DBS check (formerly CRB check).

If leaders are appointed to activities, such as Boys/Girls Brigades, which fall under the governance of the Church, the same rules regarding volunteer helper forms and DBS checks apply.

2. All leaders working with children and young people should understand their role within the Children's and Youth work and will know to whom they are responsible. *Each worker must be given a copy of the summary of these guidelines.* They must agree to do all in their power to prevent abuse taking place or to take the appropriate action (as described in this policy) should they discover any such abuse taking place.
3. All appointments to participate in the Children's and Youth work will usually be dependent upon that person attending the Church for a period of six months.
4. All activities involving children and young people are to be supervised by sufficient adults to ensure that all rooms in use can be supervised at one time. This means a minimum of two adults per room (possibly more depending upon age-related ratios). Best practice would be a mixed gender team, however we realise that in some situations this is not possible.
5. No person shall use physical violence towards any other. An adult may need to take hold of a child, using no more force than is necessary, to:
 - (a) Stop, or prevent, harm or damage to others in the group
 - (b) Remove them from the room (contacting the parents if possible), when it is appropriate to exclude them and they have disobeyed an order to leave.
 - (c) Safeguard them from danger.[This is to prevent physical harm, caused by violence. It applies to adults and children. The provision with regard to an appropriate adult taking hold of a child is necessary to protect people and enable discipline to be maintained. Such force must only be used with great care.]
6. A record shall be made in the I.R.B. of any incident referred to in 5(a), (b) or (c) above, setting out the reasons for the action. This shall be done on an 'Incident Report Form'. [This is as a protection for all, should anyone question the incident at a later date.]
7. Single person meetings taking place between an adult and a child/young person should be conducted in the following format:

- (a) Best practice is that single person meetings between an adult and child should be between a leader and child/young person of the same gender.
 - (b) Another adult must be present in the building (ideally in an adjoining room or at least in close proximity) and that adult must be aware of the meeting taking place;
 - (c) This second adult must be given permission to visit the meeting at least once every half hour; those visiting are asked to be mindful of their timing particularly if a child/young person is in the middle of talking to the adult
 - (d) The child and, in most cases, the parent must be aware of these arrangements.
 - (e) It is also recommended that the child is invited to bring a friend with them if they so wish.
 - (f) The adult should make clear to the child that they will have to pass on any information to the SGT should they believe it to be in the child's best interest and must not promise to keep it to themselves.
8. All activities are to be carried out in rooms, or places, to which there is free and ready access for other adults. Doors are not to be locked or secured in such a way as to prevent such access. If possible, doors should be left open. [This again avoids suspicion, temptation and misunderstanding.]
9. All children and young people should be treated with dignity and respect, befitting their age. In particular be aware of the language used, the tone of voice and an individual's own personal space.
10. Adults are not to engage in the following:
- (a) Invading the privacy of any child at any time when they may be in a state of undress (e.g. toileting).
 - (b) Making sexually suggestive comments to, or about, or in the presence of, a child even in 'fun'.
 - (c) Inappropriate or intrusive touching in any form.
 - (d) Any scapegoating, ridiculing or rejecting of child.
11. Children and young people shall be discouraged from engaging in activities listed in item 10.
12. If a child or young person has had any form of accident which has injured their genitalia or breasts, the parents should be informed immediately and, if necessary the child should be taken to Accident and Emergency. Leaders should not examine the child's injury.
13. If a child or young person has had any form of accident/incident which results in an adult seeing or having contact with the child's genitalia or breasts, then a record should be made in the I.R.B. The child or young person's parents and the leader in charge should be informed immediately.

14. Adults should not allow a child to involve themselves in excessive attention seeking, whether it is sexual, physical or emotional in nature.
A leader should inform the leader in charge if they are concerned this is happening.
15. If young people are invited to a leader's house it should be in small groups and not as individuals. It should be best practice to ensure that another adult is present. Also, the child's parents must be aware that this is happening.
16. If it is necessary for a leader, or desirable to give a child or young person a lift in their car then, generally lifts should not be given to children or young people on their own other than for short journeys. It is always preferable to have another adult present in this scenario. However if this is not possible the child should always sit in the rear of the car. When giving a lift to a group of children or young people the last child to be dropped off should sit in the rear of the car and, with regular lifts, the route should be adapted so that the same child is not always the last. Best practice is that leaders are of the same gender as the young person they are transporting.
- 16a. No-one is to drive a car for an official church activity that is under the age of 20 yrs or within one year of passing their test.
17. If there is an overnight activity either at the church or elsewhere it is preferable to arrange separate accommodation for leaders/adults. Where necessary for leaders/adults to share accommodation with young people there must be at least two leaders of the same gender as the young people with whom they are sharing the room.
18. If any adult is concerned about the bad practice of another adult, or of any concerns regarding bad practice disclosed to them by another adult or child, then that adult should talk to the person whom they are concerned about (if they are happy to do so) and inform the leader in charge or a member of the SGT (as appropriate).

If the leader in charge is satisfied with the response they need take no further action. If they are unsatisfied or if the same concern is raised more than once, the leader in charge should fill out an I.R.B.
19. If at any time an adult is not satisfied with the action taken following a concern raised, then an I.R.B. should be completed by them AND the SGT informed.
20. When an entry has been made in the IRB book, the Youth Pastor or Children/Families Worker should be notified of the entry and they, as members of the SGT will consider the contents of the entry and sign and date it to show that it has been inspected. The other SGT members will be contacted if necessary.

21. If, when the inspection in 20 above is carried out, or at any other time, it is found that concerns about any person have been expressed on more than two occasions then the Safeguarding Team shall bring the person and the reports to the attention of the leader in charge and the eldership (CLT) in writing, within seven days. The SGT and elders will determine what action is to be taken.
22. If any adult suspects that a child or young person has been, or is being abused sexually, emotionally, physically or through neglect by a person then the adult MUST discuss their concerns with one of the Safeguarding Team (SGT) who will then work with that adult to notify the appropriate outside agency. A record shall be made in the I.R.B. of the concerns and an explanation recorded of why action was or was not taken.
23. Any breaches of these guidelines should be recorded in the I.R.B. using an incident report form, whether they are by adults or children/young people.
24. The Elders, in agreement with the SGT, shall have the authority to determine that a person shall not work with children or young people at the church at their own discretion. This would be in circumstances of reasonable doubt about a person's conduct or character.
25. In some Church organisations the responsibility for the children remains with parents or guardians who stay with and supervise the children (for example in a 'Toddler Group' or 'Messy Church'). Even in such groups it is important that leaders of these organisations are aware of the guidelines contained in this document especially in regard to concerns they may have on the behaviour of leaders, parents or children, and report such concerns according to the guidelines laid out in this document. It is also important that such groups have their own guidelines on how to deal with inappropriate behaviour on behalf of parents and children who come to their groups.
26. It is the duty of the Safeguarding Team, including the Children's/Families Worker and Youth Pastor to ensure that this policy is, to the best of their ability, kept up to date with current best practice, and that the church leadership, Youth/Children's leaders and the Church membership shall be informed of any changes in the policy.